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Life under the Grace of Ethics

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This text which is authored by Ayatullah al-Uzma Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi, sheds light on how life would look under the grace of ethics. The topics of morality and ethics, its hygiene, principles and how social life is affect is thoroughly discussed.

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What we are looking for in this book?

Global stalemates, groans of victims of aggressions, wars, crimes and increasingly cutting ties of family relations are all true evidences of one reality, that current rules of world, despite all attempts apparently made for their reform, improvement and enforcement, not only have been ineffective in granting an ideal life to men, but also have killed this hope for the future.

We don't know how long we shall try these worn principles. They cannot even support their

own custodians, what about the others?

These rules are like deep wells, which sometimes reach massive underground stone pieces, and the more we try to pierce into these stones and progress inside them, the more we exhaust ourselves, and finally there is no trace of water.

So we shall look where the fault is, recognize it, contemplate, and think about the solution.

First, we find that such regulations resemble the drugs which are only for external use and their effect is completely superficial. They have neither succeeded to penetrate into the depth of human conscience, which is the inspiration of his attempts, endeavors, and movements, nor to mobilize his powers in a bid to eradicate the roots of pain.

For example, which law can revive human intellect and affection of those riches that have made testament for allocation of their wealth to their cats and have provided the facilities for establishment of a village for millionaire cats, and invite them to support millions of African hungry men? Which law can restore the sense of philanthropy in those who wear precious diamond pieces, and several millions value stamp albums are one of the little decorations of their drawing rooms, and invite them to save the life of millions of leprous, cancerous and tuberculosis patients?

Which law can manage obstinate and destructive instincts, and control man's feelings and utilize his great industrial powers for urbanization and reclamation of the countries?

Is any law able to penetrate into the territory of their spirit and soul, and cause these changes? It goes without saying that there is not such law among the existing ones.

It is here that the necessity of training and development of another principle called "ethic" is clarified. The principle which passes any obstacle just like the powerful waves of gravity and even passes through vacuum and accedes to the interior of man's soul, alters him, and creates a new person which is excellent and heavenly and in the real sense, humanistic attributes.

The man who sympathizes in grief and distress of others.

The man who considers his own and others' interests the same.

The man who never seeks relief in discomfort of others.

And finally, a man whose wide horizon of thought causes him to be relieved from disturbances, offences, intolerance and vindictiveness, and forms a real unity along with his fellowmen, in which there is welfare and blessing.

Yes, these principles, which are called "ethic", should be revived, and present book is written for this purpose and has originated from Islamic rich and powerful resources.

Qom, Theological Center
Nasir Makarim Shirazi
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Translator's Preface

Thanks to the Almighty God, Who gave me success to accomplish translation of this book.

Allah may send blessings on our Prophet, Muhammad (S), who guided us to His Straight Path, and illuminated our heart with His guidance.

I offer the reward of this book to the spirit of my late grandmother, May God have mercy on her, and beseech Allah to make it, for me and her, a means of attainment to His reward and pleasures on the Day of Judgment.

I shall acknowledge that my reference books have been: ``A Glossary of Islamic Technical Terms'', Islamic Research Foundation of Astan Quds Razavi, ``Holy Qur’an'', Arthur J. Arberry, and ``Nahjul Balagha'', S. Ali Reza.

Dear readers are requested to send their views, suggestions, comments, questions, problems, to my email address: monirshafiei@yahoo.com [11]

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Ethic and Training

Is it possible to alter individuals' morality and mentality through training?

This is the question, which clarifies the position of ethics, because if we accept that morality and mentality of individuals depend on the structure of their body and soul, ethics will be vain and purposeless. But if we accept that it is changeable, the importance and value of this science is manifested well.

Some of the scientists have accepted the first possibility and believe that as some of trees bear bitter fruits, and as a gardener cannot change his nature, mentality of the lowborn and impure-hearted will not be changed through training and even if it is changed, it will be very transitory and superficial, and will soon be restored to its first mode.

They suggest that structure of body and soul has a close relation with morality, and in fact morality of each person depends on the disposition of his soul and body, and for this reason, it is not changeable. They cite as a proof the traditions like:

«النّاسُ مَعادِنٌ كَمَعادِنِ الذّهَبِ وَ الْفِضّةِ»

The people are like the mines of gold and silver. 1

In contrast to this attitude, majority of scientists believe that morality and mentality of individuals is completely alterable through training.

A great deal of experiences on the immoral persons has fully proved this reality that a lot of wicked and vicious individuals are perfectly corrected by a "healthy environment", "good association" and "high training". Otherwise, all of divine instructions of prophets and religious leaders were cancelled, because all of them are concerned with training men's souls. On the other hand, all punishments having a corrective aspect, being common among all nations throughout the world, were vain and ineffective.

We see that even fierce and wild animals are domesticated through training, and are used for the purposes against their original disposition. How can we believe the ill-humour in men to be more rooted than ferocity of wild animals?

We believe that the best way for proving this claim is studying the procedure of formation of a "moral habit" in a bid to find the way of eradicating it in the same way it is formed. We know that every good or bad action leaves a similar effect in man's soul and "attracts" man's soul to it.

Practice and repetition of the action increases this effect and gradually a feature called "custom" is achieved and with more practice, it changes into "habit", and thus man's interior tendency to perform that action is increased by rooting of customs and habits. This reality is proved by experience.

Therefore, if moral customs and habits are formed through repetition of an action, they are removable in the same way. That is to say, first, "action", then "repetition" and then "formation of a moral attribute and habit".

Of course, suggestion, reflection, correct instructions and healthy environment- which have a suggestive effect are very effective in predisposing soul for acceptance and formation of a good morality.

Ill-humour is a sort of disease

All of us know that man enjoys a special and particular position among all living creatures, because his personality is composed of antagonistic powers. On one hand, rebellious sensual desires as well as animal instincts and inclinations invite him to insolence, aggression to the rights of others, sensuality and lechery, lie and treachery, and on the other hand, the powers of intellect and cognition, humanistic affections and conscience call him to philanthropy, chastity, honesty and virtue.

Struggle of these powers exists in all men and relative dominance of one of these factors causes men to be in completely different levels in view of humanistic values, and increases the distance of man's "ascending" and "descending" curve. At times he becomes superior to the nearest-stationed angels, and at others he becomes more inferior to the most dangerous predator animals.

This fact is also deduced from several traditions. For instance, Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«إِنّ اللهَ خَصّ الْمَلَکَ بِالْعَقْلِ دُونَ الشّهْوَةِ وَ الْغَضَبِ، وَ خَصّ الْحَيواناتِ بِهما دُونَهُ وَ شَرّفَ الإِنسانَ بِإِعْطاءِ الْجَمِيعِ فَإِن انْقادَتْ شَهْوَتُهُ وَ غَضَبُهُ لِعَقْلِهِ، صارَ افْضَلَ مِنَ الْمَلائِكةِ لِوُصُولِهِ إِلى هذِهِ الرّتْبَةِ مَعَ وُجُودِ الْمُنازِعِ. »

God granted to the angel only intellect, without lust and wrath, and gave to the animals only lust and wrath, without intellect, but ennobled man to granting all of these. So if his lust and wrath are controlled and ordained by his intellect, he will be superior to the angels, because he has achieved such station despite the existence of an opposing power. 2

But it should be noted that instincts and dispositions and lusts in an original, natural and balanced form are not only harmless, but will also be an essential means for continuation of life.

In other words, as no useless and idle limb is created in the structure of man's body, any incentive, instinct and disposition has a vital role in the structure of his spirit and soul, and only in case of deviation from normal condition and disturbance of the balance, they will appear dangerous and fatal.

For instance, who can deny the role of "wrath" in man's life? Suppose when the rights of a person are transgressed; if all of reserve powers of his body are not excited and mobilized, thanks to the wrath; is it possible for him to defend his rights in a composed mood, in which he may not utilize more than one tenth of his reserve powers? But when this anger and wrath is deviated from its main path, and is not any more a powerful tool under control of intellect, it alters man into a fierce animal who does not recognize any boundary.

In addition, the role of man's moderate desire to wealth, rank and such like in more attempts for development and progress is as obvious as the destructive effect of Mammonism and ambition that is extravagant in these desires.

Thus, as disturbance in corporeal balance is always accompanied with undesirable results called "disease", disturbance in balance of spiritual powers and instincts and desires too is considered as a sort of "mental disease", and ethics scholars call it "heart-sickness".

This concept has basically originated from Holy Qur’an that has considered hypocrisy of a hypocrite as a disease, where it says:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّهُ مَرَضًا

In their hearts is a disease, and Allah increaseth their disease. A painful doom is theirs because they lie. (2:10)

Purification of carnal soul or the greater warfare

Calling purification of carnal soul as "the greater warfare" suffices for its importance, and this interpretation is derived from the famous tradition in which Prophet (S) told to the warriors of his companions after returning from one of the battles:

«مَرْحَباً بِقَوْم قَضَوُا الْجِهادَ الْاَصْغَرَ وَ بَقِىَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهادُ الْاَكْبَرُ. فَقِيلَ: يا رَسُولَ اللهِ مَا الْجِهادُ الْاَكْبَرُ؟ قالَ: جِهادُ النّفْس.»

Bravo to the crowd who performed lesser warfare and the greater warfare is still left undone. They told: what is the greater warfare? He answered: warfare and conflict with rebellious sensual desires. 3

This phrase too is narrated from the Prophet following this tradition:

«اِنّ اَفْضَلَ الْجِهادِ مَنْ جاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ الّتِى بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْهِ»

The highest warfare is warfare with rebellious desires, which are inside man's chest. 4

This statement can explain Islam's logic in this critical issue and after studying and reviewing, following facts are found out thereof:

1- There are always antagonistic powers in man like a battlefield, and destiny of man depends on the dominance of one of these two parts of powers.

2- This warfare is called "the greater warfare" since it is an eternal and unceasing one. Moreover, an internal battle is always more dangerous than an external battle, and more importantly, defeat in this warfare has no result save misery and misfortune, while defeat in common warfare may result in acquiring the honour of "martyrdom". That is to say, warfare with external enemy has never a real defeat, but there is a high possibility of defeat in inner warfare.

3- Although this warfare is painful, it is the code of man's perfection, because perfection is usually the outcome of conflicts and struggle of "negative" and "positive" powers, and this is the reason why man does not become experienced and trained unless he is involved in the events and struggles with problems as Imam Ali (A.S.) says: The wood of forest trees (which are always exposed to a lot of incidents) is stronger and their fire is more durable.

And herein the mystery of creation of these antagonist powers and sensual desires is manifested.

4- Warfare with outward enemy may occasionally be performed for material purposes (collecting booties or achieving fame and such like), but inner warfare will always be for gaining perfection and achieving virtue. So overcoming therein indicates decision, will and belief power as well as prominence of ambition and greatness of man's personality.

Prosperity and happiness

Ethic scholars have mentioned prosperity and happiness as the final end of ethics. This is the same reality that men are always trying and struggling for prosperity and happiness, and are often complaining for not gaining it.

What is prosperity?

We can define prosperity in one short phrase: gaining any possible perfection that man has capacity and competence for achieving, and in other words, correct utilization of different material and spiritual powers being available for man.

But since to the same extent that "perfection" and "utilization" are clear in view of general sense, they are ambiguous and complicated in view of partial concepts, most often people have mistaken the path of prosperity so that for example, one egoist rich man, who has exchanged the heart’s ease and relief of his spirit and body with accumulation of a massive wealth, may consider himself prosperous, while his capricious child, after death of father, deems scattering of this wealth for satisfaction of his lusts as prosperity, and in the meantime both of them are wrong.

Anyway, herein we shall recognize man's real perfection and the correct way of utilizing these material and spiritual favours, although this recognition may need a great deal of study and inconvenience.

Does prosperity have only a spiritual aspect?

A number of Greek ancient philosophers like Cynics believed that prosperity has only a spiritual aspect and whatever corporeal and material condition may be, it does not have the least effect on man's prosperity, and therefore considered acquiring moral perfection and virtues as the only way of prosperity.

Rather, they believed that absolute prosperity for man would not be possible in this world and as far as the spirit is connected to this material body, and tainted to corporeal impurities, it is deprived of real prosperity. Only when it is disconnected from body, it may achieve absolute prosperity. On this end, they spurned and neglected all material affairs.

The conditions of Dewjanse, the famous physician of Cynics, and his life in a jar! Instead of house and room, and his contentment to one drinking cup from all life facilities is well-known. Even it is said that once he saw someone drinking water from a water course with his hands, then he threw away that cup too.

Existentialists are on the opposite side to this idea and consider prosperity only in an unconditional utilization from material pleasures and condemn any obstacle on this way.

They assume absolute happiness only through material pleasure and go ahead in this way till the threshold of insanity, and practically disregard all social and moral limits and habitudes for achieving it.

It is obvious that we cannot call this ideology, which is unfortunately spread nowadays among some nations, a doctrine. Rather, it is a sort of delusion and mental disease. However, we can assume it a reaction to the extremist doctrines like Cynics who have totally ignored corporeal aspects in prosperity.

Moderate doctrine: since man is not merely a body or a soul, and the reality of his essence is composed of two parts, he should seek prosperity too in both parts and surely any program focusing in one part of his essence, shall not guarantee his prosperity, because it is not in conformity with the outward realities.

Among Greek philosophers, the first teacher, Aristotle and his followers advocated this doctrine and Islam's superior instructions have explicitly supported it, and have mentioned new principles for it. This reality is reflected in Qur’an and sayings of our great leaders, and motto of Islam in this regard is summarized in the following verses:

فَمِنَ النّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلاقٍ*

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النّارِ

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمّا كَسَبُوا وَاللّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

But of mankind is he who saith: "Our Lord! Give unto us in the world," and he hath no portion in the Hereafter.

And of them (also) is he who saith: "Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire."

For them there is in store a goodly portion out of that which they have earned. Allah is swift at reckoning. (2:200-202)

The point, which should be carefully considered in such discussions, is that the relation and connection of soul and body is so close that the effect of any deviation in one of them is manifested in the other.

Today psychoanalysis has proved that a part of moral and mental deviations is caused by incorrect satiation of corporeal and material instincts.

Repressed desires and instincts always emerge as mental complexes. Such complexes are a big problem for ethic scholars, and removing them through the ways available for training souls, is usually not possible. Rather, they should be treated in the same way they are created, that is, physical instincts should be satiated in a correct manner.

There are a lot of people suffering from suspicion, fear, jealousy, pride and hatred and such

like vices and its cause is deprivation and repression in correct satiation of their physical instincts. Thus for being successful, now it is necessary for all ethic scholars and mental trainers to consider both physical and mental conditions for treating moral diseases.

Islam has studied this issue subtly and it explicitly says:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرّمَ زِينَةَ اللّهِ الّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطّيّبَاتِ مِنَ الرّزْق قُلْ هِيَ لِلّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدّنْيَا

Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah which He hath brought forth for His bondmen, and the good things of His providing? Say: Such, on the Day of Resurrection, will be only for those who believed during the life of the world. (7:32)

And we read in aphorisms of Imam Ali (A.S.):

«لِلْمُؤْمِنِ ثَلاثُ ساعات: فَساعَةٌ يُناجِى فِيها رَبّهُ وَ ساعَةٌ يَرُمّ مَعاشَهُ وَ ساعَةٌ يُخَلِّى بَيْنَ نَفْسِهِ وَ بَيْنَ لَذّتِها فِيما يَحِلّ وَ يَجْمُلُ.»

The believer's time has three periods: the period when he is in communion with Allah, the period when he manages for his livelihood, and the period when he is free to enjoy what is lawful and pleasant. 5

And this phrase is added to some traditions:

«وَ ذلِکَ عَوْنٌ عَلى سائِرِ السّاعاتِ.»

"And the last part is tonic and refreshing for the other parts."

Individual and Social Morality

Some believe that all moral principles return to the man's special social relations with others so that if there was no society, and any man lived completely apart from the others, and any individual lived unaware of existence of others, "ethics" was basically meaningless because envy and jealousy, modesty and pride, good opinion, justice and injustice, chastity, generosity and stinginess, and such like are all strictly meaningful within the society and contact of man with others. Thus man minus society will be accompanied with man minus ethic.

But while confessing that most of moral virtues and vices are concerned with social life of man, we believe this could not be generalized. Because there are a great number of moral cases which have only an individual aspect, and are true for a single man too.

For instance, patience or impatience for afflictions, bravery or fear for events, endeavour or laziness in achievement to one's objective, ignorance or attention to the Creator of the world, thanksgiving or ingratitude for His endless favours and such affairs, which ethics scholars have discussed in ethical books and have called them moral virtues or vices, that could have an individual aspect, and are truthful for one living completely isolated from the society.

Hereof division of morality into "individual morality" and "social morality" is clarified. However, it is obvious that social morality is more important in ethics, and man's personality focuses on it, although individual morality too has a considerable part in respect to oneself.

Big Mistake

It should be mentioned herein that those who isolate themselves from the society for purification of morals and training their souls, secluding themselves and supposing that they can achieve this great aim better in this way, are completely wrong.

Because they actually destroy the subject of social morality, and although they avoid some vices in this way, it is not really considered a virtue. It looks like the one who cuts his sexual apparatus for avoiding adultery and lewdness, although he is not tainted with unchastity, but this will not be a virtue for him.

Moreover, experience has shown that isolation and seclusion from society will cause a series of moral vices such as peevishness, suspicion, vanity and conceit, and suspicion of divine predestination in man, which will be illustrated in a separate discussion in detail.

So, Islam has encouraged Muslims to have a social life and to live in large cities and has recommended observance of moral principles in the heart of society.

Way of treatment of Moral Deviations

Now, we shall study details of "moral virtues" and ways of treatment of "moral vices". However, two points are noteworthy:

First point: We shall always treat those involved in moral deviations like a patient, because as it was already referred, moral deviations are in fact a sort of mental disease, which sometimes result in physical diseases too, and or vice versa sometimes they originate from physical diseases. Thus, we shall observe herein the same principles which we observe in the treatment of physical diseases.

Second point: we always consider three principles in the treatment of diseases:

1- Diagnosis of disease

2- Finding causes of disease

3- Way of treatment of disease

We usually use symptoms and consequences of disease for its diagnosis. Of course, this is a relatively simple task in respect to physical diseases, especially with existing facilities and equipment. But in view of moral cases, it is a very complicated matter, because moral deviations often have similar manifestations and symptoms, or there are some manifestations which are caused by a mixture of several moral diseases, and their diagnosis becomes difficult, and thus the ethics scholar and soul physician should study this science patiently and carefully for treating himself or the others.

For finding the causes of a disease, one should also carefully study biography of the deviated person, specially the backgrounds of his childhood period, which constitutes foundation of man's personality, as well as his family and social environment, his occupation and job and geographical area for recognizing the causes of a moral disease. Even heritage should not be ignored, because ill-humour (like physical diseases) is sometimes inheritable.

And for treating moral vices, it should be noted that if they have become chronic, they should be treated patiently and carefully and vigilantly, and one shall never get tired by lapse of time. However, if they are superficial and extrinsic, they will be treated in a shorter period.

For this reason, correction of moral vices of youths and children is much easier than adults. Because the former are both tainted and treated soon.

Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) said:

«عَلَيْکَ بِالْأَحْداثِ فَاِنَّهُمْ اَسْرَعُ اِلی کُلِّ خَيْر.»

Pay attention to the youths, who are ready for quick acceptance of any goodness. 6

Hygiene of morality

It is also noteworthy that current medicine is actually divided into two parts: "therapeutic medicine" and "hygienic medicine". What is meant by therapeutic medicine is clear. But hygienic medicine refers to preventing occurrence of diseases and destroying their causes, and since preventing a disease is much easier than curing it, hygiene has a precious importance in the life of individuals and destiny of the societies. On this account, heavy budgets are spent for it.

These two parts exactly exist in moral cases and mental diseases. So, we shall avoid occurrence of moral deviations as far as possible, and try for hygiene of morality of ourselves and others through adopting necessary counsels.

1- Avoiding poisonous and suspicious associations

Surely, a lot of moral deviations are caused by association, and just like contagious and epidemic diseases, particularly in cases that mental condition is ready for acceptance of morality of others, due to little age or little knowledge or weak belief and such like, association with immoral individuals is a fatal and noxious poison.

It is seen in a lot of cases that destiny of a man is completely changed due to such associations and thereby, direction of life is changed.

Effects of association in correcting man's personality are so significant that it is said for knowing someone; look at the companions and friends he keeps. Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«مَن اشْتَبَهَ عَلَيْكُمْ اَمْرُهُ وَ لَمْ تَعْرِفُوا دِينَهُ فَانْظُرُوا اِلى خُلطائِهِ.»

When you are uncertain about someone and do not know his religion, look at his friends. 7

The Prophet (S) says:

«اَلْمَرْءُ عَلى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ وَ قَرِينِهِ.»

A man has the same religion of his friend and companion. 8

Association with evil doers darkens soul, and weakens moral sense, and reduces ugliness of evil deeds and ill-humour, and it is interpreted as "heart death" in the traditions. The Prophet (S) says:

«اَرْبَعٌ يُمِتْنَ الْقُلُوبَ... وَ مُجالَسَةُ الْمَوْتى; فَقِيلَ لَهُ: يا رَسُولَ اللهِ! وَ مَا الْمَوْتى؟ قالَ: كُلُّ غَنِيٍّ مُتْرَف.»

Four things extinguish heart ..., including association with the dead. They asked: O God's messenger! Who are the dead? He said: lavish rich men. 9

Association with evil doers stimulates sense of suspicion in man and makes him pessimistic to everybody.

Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«مُجالَسَةُ الاَشْرار تُورثُ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ بِالاَخْيار.»

Association with evil doers causes suspicion on good doers. 10

In brief, the issue of association is so critical that God even premonishes His messenger from association with evil doers in Qur’an.

In contrary, association with good doers is one of the most important means of training, purification and developing moral virtues and reviving heart and acquiring personality.

Islam emphasizes greatly on association with good individuals and righteous doers. Holy Qur’an says:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا

Restrain thyself along with those who cry unto their Lord at morn and evening, seeking His Countenance; and let not thine eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who followeth his own lust and whose case hath been abandoned.(18:28)

The Prophet (S) says:

«اَسْعَدُ النّاسِ مَنْ خالَطَ كِرامَ النّاسِ.»

The most prosperous people are those who associate with good and honourable people.[11]

2- Correcting Environment

Tainted environments, particularly those in which display of sin and vice is popular, increase the risk of involvement to moral vices, and this is an undeniable truth. Thus, one of the actions for hygiene of morality is conflicting vices in the environment and preventing display of sin and vice.

Basically, one of the most important hindrances for involvement in sin and moral vice is the importance and greatness of vice and sin in view of man and his hatred towards them. Display of moral vices and sins decreases its importance in view of people and lessens its hatred and prepares soul for accepting it.

And on this account, for renewing importance of sin in public opinion, it is instructed in Islam to punish evil doers publicly and in presence of people:

وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And let a party of believers witness their punishment. (24:2)

Thereby, the significance of sin is renewed for people and the barrier which was violated, is restored.

Islam has put a great emphasis on open sin and vice, and has assumed immodesty and open debauchery as the causes of a person's defamation. Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) says:

«إذا جاهَرَ الْفاسِقُ بِفِسْقِهِ فَلا حُرْمَةَ لَهُ.»

Whenever an evil doer debauches openly, is defamed.12

Imam Al-Baqir (A.S.) says:

«ثَلاثَةٌ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ حُرْمَةٌ: صاحِبُ هَوىً مُبْتَدِعٌ وَ الإِمامُ الْجائِرُ و الْفاسِقُ الْمُعْلِنُ بِالْفِسْقِ.»

There shall be no respect for three persons: Innovator, unjust leader, and evil doer debauching openly. 13

Even the narration of stories in respect to vice and adultery which taints minds and prepares environment for accepting vice, is forbidden in Islam's view. Prophet (S) says:

«مَنْ سَمِعَ فاحِشَةً فَأَفْشاها كانَ كَمَنْ أتاها، وَمَنْ سَمِعَ خَيْراً فَأَفْشاهُ كانَ كَمَنْ عَمِلَهُ.»

One, who hears an evil deed and divulges it, is like the one who has performed it, and one, who hears a good deed and divulges it, is like the one who has performed it.14

And as for fighting with physical diseases, we shall first destroy centres tainted with microbe and purify life environment and restrain contamination of air, water, food and such like, it is necessary to purify social life environment from morality deviation means.

3- Emigration and escaping from tainted environments

We shall do our best for correction of tainted and corrupted environments, but if, for any reason, it is not possible to correct the environment, and there is the possibility of being tainted in case of staying there, and we can immigrate to another healthier place, there is no alternative save immigration.

The same is observed in most of physical diseases, when those interested in their health immediately immigrate from the contaminated environment.

"Emigration" enjoys a special concern in Islam and it is interesting that it constitutes the foundation of Islamic Epic. Emigration of Islam's Prophet (S) from Mecca to Medina was nothing else than escaping from a tainted and unfavourable environment to a more favourable one for spreading belief and virtue.

The immigrants at the beginning of Islam enjoy a special privilege and prominence in Islam's history, and several verses are found in Qur’an concerning them. Several traditions are narrated in respect to immigration from parts tainted to sin and polytheism towards healthy parts indicating importance of the matter.

In Majmaol Bayan interpretation under verse:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْلأَرْضِ مُرَاغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً

Whoso migrateth for the cause of Allah will find much refuge and abundance in the earth. (4:100)

It is narrated from Islam's Prophet (S):

«مَنْ فَرّ بِدِينِهِ مِنْ اَرْض اِلى اَرْض وَ اِنْ كانَ شِبْراً مِنَ الاْرْضِ اسْتَوْجَبَ الْجَنّةَ وَ كانَ رَفِيقَ اِبْراهِيمَ وَ مُحَمّد.»

Whoso emigrates for his religion from a territory to another territory, although it may be as much as one palm of land, deserves paradise and will be companion of Abraham and Mohammad (two great emigrant prophets).15

Emphasis is indicated by the phrase "although it may be as much as one palm of land", and friendship and companionship with these two great prophets is for their immigration. Abraham (A.S.) departed from Babylon, the centre of idolaters and Nimrod, to Syria and Palestine, and Islam's Prophet from Mecca to Medina.

In Ali Ebne Abraham interpretation, under the verse:

يَا عِبَادِيَ الّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

O my bondmen who believe! Lo! My earth is spacious. Therefore serve Me only. (29:56)

It is narrated from Imam Al-Baqir (A.S.):

«لا تُطِيعُوا اَهْلَ الْفِسْقِ مِنَ الْمُلُوكِ فَاِنْ خِفْتُمُوهُمْ اَنْ يَفْتِنُوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ فَاِنّ اَرْضِى واسِعَةٌ.»

Do not follow sinful rulers and if you fear of being deviated from your pure religion (do emigrate) because My Earth is wide.16

Not participating in sin and vice meetings, which is mentioned in Islamic ordinances, and non-privacy with strangers and such like are all considered as sort of short term immigration from sin and mistake and risk area, and surely it is for preventing transmission of moral vices and not being tainted with sin.

1. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 61/65, tradition 51
2. Naraghi, Jami' as-Saadat 67/1
3. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 122/11, narration 1
4. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 123, narration 9
5. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 390
6. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 447/11
7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 197/74
8. Kulayini, Kafi 375/2
9. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, volume 2, page 128
10. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 191/74
11. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 185/75
12. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 604/8
13. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a,page 605
14. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, 609/8
15. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 31/19
16. Ali Ebne Ebrahim commentary, vol. 2, page 151

Quadruple principles of ethics in view of the Ancients

• Studying and criticism

• Scale for evaluation of good and bad morality

• Effect of seclusion and unsociability in morality

• Arguments of advocators of seclusion and association

• Exceptional cases in which seclusion is permitted

• Vigilance and self-examination or studying incentives and consequences. First, we shall review a prospect of the principles of ethics in view of pioneers of this technique, and study exactly the course of their discussion in brief.

Ethics scholars have summarized principles of moral virtues in four articles:

1- Wisdom

2- Chastity

3- Bravery

4- Justice

They believe that each of these four principles has a norm, between two extremes of sensual powers and instincts, and so moral vices are on two sides of them, and there are two vicious attributes for each virtue.

1- Wisdom means moderation in recognition and understanding of realities as they are, and the opposite side in its high extreme is "slyness and astuteness", which refers to hyperactivity of perception faculty and relying on the probabilities and doubtful matters and non-stability on correct theories and in its low extreme is "stupidity and dullness".

2- Chastity refers to moderation in using lusts and appropriate utilization from desires and instincts, and the opposite side in its high extreme is "greed and self-indulgence" and in its low extreme is "numbness".

3- Bravery is moderation in anger faculty and fearing of what should be feared and not fearing of what should not, and the opposite side in its high extreme is "rashness" and temerity, and in its low extreme is "cowardice" and horror.

4- Justice refers to listening of desire and anger powers to intellect power and their appropriate control for correction and prosperity, and the opposite side in its high extreme is "being oppressed and tolerance of oppression" and in low extreme is "injustice".

They assume moral vices infinite in one aspect, while moral virtues, as the normal limit and moderate point, have only one stage, and thus they have resembled it to the centre of a circle, which is only one point, and the vices to infinite points existing within the circle.

It is narrated from Mohaghegh Tousi, Khajeh Nasireddin and some other scholars that "the path" described in the traditions as:

«اَدَقُّ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ وَ اَحَدُّ مِنَ السَّيْفِ.»

"is thinner than hair and sharper than sword", is the same moral moderation. 1

Now, we shall see from where these quadruple principles have originated?

Ethics scholars say in reply: man's soul has three powers:

1- Power of perception and distinction

2- Power of acquiring benefit or "attraction" and in the other word "desire" (in its general sense)

3- Power of loss repulsion or "repulsion" and in the other word "anger"

Moderation in each of these powers forms one of the moral virtues, which are respectively,

called wisdom, chastity and bravery.

And when two powers of desire and anger are under control of distinction and perception power, justice is achieved.

In other words, balance in each of the above triple powers is considered as a virtue, but their combination with each other, that is desire and anger being controlled by perception power, will be another virtue.

It often happens that a man is brave and for example, is not afraid unduly in the battle field, but this bravery may be utilized in a wrong way, like fighting for little and worthless objectives, and this is bravery but not justice. But if this bravery is applied for a high and intellectual objective and mixed with wisdom, justice is achieved.

Studying and criticism

The principles mentioned by previous scholars for morality (good and bad) and described in the foregoing discussion are not perfect, although they may seem interesting:

1- There are some good moral habits that placing them in one of the above quadruple principles seems difficult. For instance, philanthropy, self-sacrifice and self-devotion, can hardly be included in "chastity", because it is possible that an individual's desires are moderate, while he lacks self-sacrifice, self-devotion and philanthropy. That is to say he neither aggresses to the rights of others, nor desires their loss, but at the meantime does not have any self-sacrifice and self-devotion.

Moreover, optimism could not be included in "wisdom", because "optimism" differs with "correct distinction".

Perhaps insisting on this quadruple division is caused by the ideology of the ancients who assumed most of world's issues based on the number four, and considered four things as the main elements, and divided body's components and temperaments into four. They considered four diseases as the principles of physical diseases, and assumed one of four temperaments for all medicines. While today it is certain for us that none of these quadruple divisions are correct. The same is true for division of principles of good ethics into four.

2- Including wisdom among principles of moral virtues, and its opposite point among the vices is not appropriate, because moral habits are along the perception system and deal with desires, affections and instincts, not with perceptions, and so interpreting braininess as "good morality" does not seem appropriate.

3- Insisting that all good moral habits are moderation between two extremes is baseless, because although this is true in some cases, it is untrue in others.

For example, considering tolerance of oppression as the high extreme for justice is not suitable, because high extreme is not applicable to justice. If tolerance of oppression means indolence and numbness, it will be the opposite side of chastity, and if it means fearing of adjudication, it will be low extreme of anger power, and anyway high extreme in justice is meaningless, especially when justice is considered as anger and desire powers being controlled by intellect. It is a certainty that high extreme in this control is senseless.

It is concluded that although moderation of good moral habits is true in the cases like bravery and chastity, but it is not a generalization and is untrue in the case of justice and wisdom.

It is also inferred from above discussions that dividing principles of good and bad attributes into four principles has no clear reason, and is even objectionable in different aspects.

Therefore, it is better not to restrict principles of moral virtues to four. Rather, we have good and bad moral attributes as many as different instincts, desires and affections entrusted in man, and training and balancing each of these instincts and desires for being useful and effective for individuals' and society's perfection is a virtue, and deviation of each of them causing degeneration of individual or society is considered as a vice.

On this account, there are vicious and virtuous attributes as many as man's instincts and desires, just as there are physical diseases as many as different systems of body and its components.

The figure mentioned in traditions and narrations of the Prophet's Household (A.S.) for moral virtues is much more than four. For example, in a well-known tradition at the beginning of Osoul Kafi, it is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) in respect to "hosts of intellect and ignorance", the number of intellect and ignorance hosts is counted to be 75, most part of which are among moral virtues or vices.

Scale for evaluation of good and bad morality

Not all of moral concepts are clear and obvious. Of course, some concepts such as bravery, generosity and self-sacrifice are so clear that nobody doubts in their virtue, and their opposite side (fear, stinginess and selfishness) are obviously among the vices.

But some others may be discussed and doubted in view of being a virtue or a vice. Thus, we cannot pursue moral discussions without having a clear evaluation scale.

For instance, nowadays some of materialist scientists like Bertrand Russell suggest: if performing an action, whatsoever it may be, does not cause a loss for the others, we do not have any reason for condemning it, and we cannot condemn an action only for being tabooed (something which religion or custom regards as forbidden with no reason) and called obscene by an old religion. We shall only consider profit and loss of the action. 2

Following this belief, he prescribes a lot of obscene moralities and actions of not being harmful for the others (including adultery and homosexuality if both parties agree).

Some other materialists like communists believe that most of ancient moral principles have been caused by capitalism economy, and since it is abolished, these principles are eliminated, and so they restrict ethic to the affairs which help in creation or continuation of proletarian revolution (proletariat)

Thus, we shall see what the evaluation scale in these cases is and how we can recognize that an action has a moral and virtuous aspect or is immoral and a vice.

If we want to discuss this with a religious view, our duty is exactly clear, because after recognizing Islam's legitimacy and rightfulness for definite reasons, we shall refer to definite evidences in Qur'an and practices of the Prophet (S) for evaluation of principles of

moral virtues and vices.

And in intellectual view, we shall consider this principle that any moral factor supporting man's perfection is a virtue, and any factor degenerating him, is a vice.

But it is noteworthy that a man should not be studied only in view of material aspect and primary requirements in this life. Rather, the spiritual and immaterial aspects in which most of man's honours are summarized and the material life to which is a means of attainment to it, should be exactly noticed.

Therefore, an evil and undesirable action may not cause any difficulty for others, but may result in degeneration of the doer in humanistic and spiritual aspects. Certainly, such action will be a vice.

Those who consider only material aspects, have actually known half of man's existence (the lesser and smaller half), while the ethical principles should be studied based on knowing man's overall existence (including body and soul).

And even worse is communistic ethics, which not only has ignored man's spiritual aspects, but also has focused merely on one part (economic part) in material aspects and has studied man in this respect.

It goes without saying that since such moral doctrines are not accompanied with correct realism and anthropology they cannot cause correct effects, and surely they will involve in great mistakes in distinction of moral virtues and vices.

Therefore, as it was already told, the correct intellectual and logical basis in studying moral principles is man's perfection in all aspects, and recognizing whatsoever helps it, and studying the virtues and vices accordingly.

Effect of seclusion and dissociability in morality

Is purification of carnal soul and acquiring moral virtues better possible in the society or in seclusion and dissociability? This is a question that a lot of people ask themselves.

Some believe that more seclusion for man means healthier morality for him, because a lot of deviations and moral vices and or most of them appear when facing others. Envy, pride, lies, slander, calumny, hypocrisy, grudge and such like are all caused by association with others. The one who does not associate with people, neither slander nor hears it, neither envies nor is envied, neither dissimulates nor is involved in lie, grudge and suspicion.

Arguments of advocators of seclusion and association

Advocators of seclusion and dissociability, among which there are some of ethic scholars and a number of famous pious men and votaries, have other reasons for preference of this action and its effect on improvement of morality in addition to above reasons.

They say: when a man secludes, he can better worship God, and pray Him heartily, can better mediate and reflect on the mysteries of creation and different fields of science and distinguish the realities. In seclusion, there is less love and hatred as well as debate and disputation hindering comprehension of facts and realities, and on this account most of great thinkers live in seclusion and dissociation.

Moreover, when associating and communicating with people, a man often faces the events which create heavy duties for him and it happens that a man neglects in performing his duties and consequently is deviated. For example, in association and living in the society, we often encounter unlawful things and sins and breach of duties that the obligation of bid to good and forbiddance of wrong necessitates to oppose, while we are not sure of performing always our duty in this part. So it is better to select seclusion and escape the responsibilities.

In addition, there are some verses and traditions encouraging seclusion and dissociation. For example, pay attention to the following verses and traditions:

فَلَمّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَكُلّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيّا

So, when he had withdrawn from them and that which they were worshipping beside Allah, We gave him Isaac and Jacob. Each of them We made a prophet. (19:49)

This verse indicates that the bounty of children, as a prophet, was granted to Abraham when he chose seclusion and dissociation.

وَإِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ إِلّا اللّهَ فَأْوُوا إِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ

And when ye withdraw from them and that which they worship except Allah, then seek refuge in the Cave; your Lord will spread for you of His mercy. (18:16)

This verse shows that People of Cave became liable to divine favour after seclusion and dissociation.

«قِيلَ لِرَسُولِ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) : اَىُّ النّاسِ اَفْضَلُ؟ قالَ: مُؤْمِنٌ مُجاهِدٌ بِنَفْسِهِ وَ فِى سَبِيلِ اللهِ تَعالى. قِيلَ: ثُمّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِى شِعْب مِنَ الشِّعابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبّهُ وَ يَدَعُ النّاسَ فِى شَرِّهِ.»

3- They asked the Prophet (S): who is superior to all people? He said: the believer who struggles in the way of God. It was asked: Then who is even superior to him? He said: one, in a valley, who has dissociated from people, worships God and people are secure of his

evil.3

This tradition too has put the position of seclusion and dissociation after holy struggle and has commended it.

4- In Mesbahol Sharia, it is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.):

«صاحِبُ الْعُزْلَةِ مُتَحَصِّنٌ بِحِصْنِ اللهِ وَ مُحْتَرِسٌ بِحَراسَتِهِ فَياطُوبى لِمَنْ تَفَرَّدَ بِهِ سِرّاً وَ عَلانِيَةً.»

The isolated people are in the divine castle and under God's protection; good for those who are with God publicly and in privacy.4

Disadvantages of seclusion and dissociation

Besides the above mentioned advantages and profits for seclusion and dissociation, there are several disadvantages for seclusion and numerous advantages for association which can be accounted for the reasons of excellence and preference of association:

1- The first point clarifying importance and value of association is that acquiring most of virtuous moral habits is only possible in the society and not in solitude, because most of these habits are concerned with the way of relations with each other. Courtesy, modesty, kindness, self-devotion, forgiveness, remission, bravery, patience, suppression of anger, affection, pity and soul appropriation, appear in the relations and associations of men and we surely have to live in the heart of society to acquire these virtues.

On the other hand, being secure from moral vices including envy, pride, lies, slander, through seclusion and dissociation is not actually a virtue and honour, rather it is a kind of "waive by waiver of subject", and it is just like a person who excludes himself from sexuality by any means for being saved from taint to adultery.

Although such person is protected from this stain, but this chastity is not a virtue, rather it is only a safety. The virtue is when a man lives in the society and goes ahead to the edge of crag in the critical moments like Joseph, and preserves his mastery on his soul and returns (of course not creating such events deliberately and on purpose).

Thus for acquiring virtuous habits which are considered as the scale of humanistic values, there is no alternative save living in the society and associating with people.

And in the other words, such typical attributes are achieved through challenge with desires and vicious factors, as resistance and strength of forest wood is due to growing in the hard storms of events, and if they are grown in seclusion and in a closed and restricted environment they lose their resistance, similarly, secluded and dissociable individuals will also gradually lose their spiritual and moral powers. The following tradition may refer to this reality:

At the time of Prophet (S) one of the Muslims went to the mountain for worship and secluded himself. He was brought to Prophet (S) The Prophet said him:

«لا تَفْعَلْ اَنْتَ وَ لا اَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ، لَصَبْرُ اَحَدِكُمْ فِى بَعْضِ مَواطِنِ الاِسْلامِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِبادَةِ اَحَدِكُمْ اَرْبَعِينَ عاماً.»

Neither you, nor none of the Muslims do this, because patience and resistance of one of you in the Islamic environments is better than forty years of worship. 5

This phrase is a reply to the first reasoning of advocators of seclusion.

2- Solitude and seclusion is the source of several mental deviations as well as taste of distortion, because even if a man is brainy, virtuous and tasteful, he still has some mistakes, which are only revealed when encountering others. In association, man finds his mistakes very soon, but in seclusion, since there is not any way of correcting them, he continues his deviated courses, and like the one who is going astray, the more he proceeds, farther he becomes from the main road, and sometimes he finds other deductions based on that deviated thought and gradually a mass of mistakes will occupy his brain, devaluating his thoughts in general.

Meanwhile, this is another reply to the advocators of seclusion who say meditation in seclusion is better possible, as the danger of deviation is much more in seclusion.

3- The other big fault, in which man is involved in seclusion, is vanity and selfishness. Based on self-love instinct, man is usually very interested in himself and his works, and "self-love" instinct is in fact like a magnifier which through its magnification power, shows man's thoughts and actions greater than what they actually are. On other hand, it shows man's faults smaller than what they actually are, and the sum of these two aspects is "vanity and selfishness".

Seclusion and dissociation is a very favourite environment for culture of this vicious attribute. But man knows himself as he actually is, through association with others, he is informed of the real degree of his perfection and virtues, and becomes aware of his faults, and also faces individuals who are more prominent and perfect than himself, and consequently finds his fault, and this cuts the root of vanity in him and or minimizes it. And on this account, it is widely seen that secluded and dissociable persons have made big and sometimes odd claims all showing their deep vanity and selfishness.

Moreover, another great advantage of association with people is clarified herein, that is recognizing one's own faults. People, particularly those who do not have friendly relations with us or are our enemies, are a good mirror for our faults, and if they were not, a lot of our faults may remain unknown to us forever. If we live in seclusion, we have broken this mirror and our mental appearance will be like the discordant appearance of those who never look at the mirror!

4- Suspicion on God's servants: one of the other disadvantages of seclusion and dissociation is suspicion on people, and in fact this is one of the effects of "vanity" which involves such people, because after being affected by "severe conceit" and extremist belief on oneself and not observing an appropriate reaction from people (appreciation and gratitude as much as such people expect), this idea is gradually formed in them that people are engaged in mistake, ill-will, misunderstanding, prejudice, and disregard to values in their judgment and such people being ungrateful, partial, and disregardful to virtues are

vicious, astray and deviated and do not deserve any association and communication.

As such, seclusion itself is a factor for intensification of seclusion and support of this mentality and more isolation from people.

5- Peevishness and anger: Dissociable people are peevish and angry, and they are very intolerant of disturbing encounters with people. They may be disturbed by observing a little harshness or hearing a sentence against their desire, and so called lose their temper, and show offensive and rigorous reactions. Although, this is not a generality, it is observed in several cases.

In contrast, associable people are often gentle and good tempered and become angry less often.

The reason is obvious. Patience and tolerance is usually acquired through exercise and by facing unpleasant events and the spirit getting accustomed to them, and since social life is naturally accompanied with disturbing encounters, man gradually becomes patient.

Moreover, dissociable people are often mirthless, rarely laugh, less often fun, have less recreation, and their life is monotonous and boring. This point disturbs their spiritual balance, and causes a sort of uneasiness in them, and if they are afflicted with some complexes, they always live in a sort of anxiety and mental disease because of not having any means for removing them, and this increases their anger and ill-humour.

6- Deprival from sciences and experiences: There are a lot of sciences and knowledge which should be acquired through listening to the great men and their methods and being inspired by their way of thought. It goes without saying that such sciences could only be acquired through association, and it is not possible to acquire expertness and different experiences in seclusion. Rather, the way of achieving them is, living in the heart of society. We also know that life has no fruit save useful and beneficial experiences.

Taking into account above realities and the advantages and disadvantages mentioned for association and seclusion, the preference of theory and logic of advocators of association is clearly obvious.

Exceptional cases in which seclusion is permitted

It is noteworthy that although, the foundation of life of each man should be based on association and communication with people, there are some exceptional cases in which there is no alternative other than seclusion and dissociation or at least minimizing association, and that is when a man is exposed to a very poisonous and vicious environment, and therein the result of association is nothing save deviation and stain. Surely, one shall elude such society and environment as we avoid a society tainted with contagious diseases.

Seclusion and dissociation of Abraham (A.S.) or the People of Cave are instances of such cases.

The speech of Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) to Safian Souri too refers to this reality. When he said:

«فَسَدَ الزّمانُ وَ تَغَيّرَ الإِخْوانُ فَرَأَيْتُ الإِنْفِرادَ اَسْكنَ لِلْفُؤادِ.»

The world is vicious and friends are altered, so I found seclusion more peaceful.6

This is a reply to most arguments of advocators of seclusion.

Also when a man is ill-humoured and is not able to avoid it, his seclusion for securing people from his ill-humour is desirable.

The other point which should be mentioned is that while associating with people, a man should spend some hours of day and night in seclusion and solitude so that he can think and study and have opportunity for a favourite worship and attention to God, free from any doubt and hypocrisy. Most of the great men have had such hours in their daily life schedule, and it is possible that a part of seclusion traditions refers to the same concept.

Thus, the basic principle in man's life is association, while seclusion and dissociation are exceptional cases.

Vigilance and self-examination or studying incentives and consequences

Ethic scholars have emphasized in their books on the necessity of these two principles for acquisition of good moral habits and salvation from vices, and certainly no one can traverse mental and moral perfection stages without these two.

Vigilance is the same full attention to the manner of deeds and actions before performing them, and self-examination is concerned with reviewing the consequences and effects of an action after performing it.

Sometimes, a little ignorance and self-unawareness in each of these two stages involves man in an unlucky destiny, relieving of which is not easily possible.

The situation of man's spirit in this part is just like his body. A man has to observe different hygienic points for preserving his physical health, and pay attention to the affairs, which may cause different diseases before eating any food and living in any environment. Once he has to be vaccinated for prevention from diseases.

Sometimes he has to observe special diets in view of food and such like, and occasionally he should go under precise medical examinations by proficient physicians and after affliction with disease and its treatment, he should strengthen his health for compensating convalescence and removing its bad effects. For challenges with moral deviations and acquiring spiritual health, observing all of these affairs is necessary. In general, the man who is interested in acquisition of good moral habits should consider following aspects:

1- He should always watch his condition and know that, before him, God is always observing and watching him. Holy Qur’an says:

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ

Is He Who is aware of the deserts of every soul (as he who is aware of nothing)? (13:33)

It is inferred from this verse that God is watching and looking man like the one always standing over him.

And also it says:

إِنَّ اللّهَ كانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Lo! Allah hath been a watcher over you. (4:1)

And it is narrated in a tradition from Prophet (S):

«اُعْبُدِ اللهَ كَاَنَّکَ تَراهُ فَاِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَراهُ فَاِنَّهُ يَراکَ.»

Worship God as you see Him, and if you do not see Him, He sees you.7

It is interesting that this tradition is mentioned for the interpretation of the word "goodness" in the verse

إِنَّ اللّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Lo! Allah enjoineth justice and kindness. (16:90)

That is to say the source of all goodness is vigilance.

2- Before starting each speech and action, a man should study precisely its incentive, result and end as it is narrated in the tradition:

«اِنَّهُ يُنْشَرُ لِلْعَبْدِ فِی كُلِّ حَرَكة مِنْ حَرَكاتِهِ وَ اِنْ صَغُرَتْ ثَلاثَةُ دَواوِينَ: اَلاْوَّلُ لِمَ; اَلثّانِی كَيْفَ; اَلثّالِثُ لِمَنْ.»

When performing each action, whatever small it may be, three books are opened for registering its specifications: first book for why, and the second for how, and third for whom.8

In other words, the incentives of action are registered in the first book, and quality of action

in the second, and its purpose and final aim in the third one.

Surely, considering such reality will control man against misdeeds.

3- Everyday, he should precisely examine his deeds after performing the routine work. If he has committed a sin, made a mistake and done a wrong deed, he should wash away its effects from his heart and soul in a bid to prevent it from being rooted and changing into a mental condition through reflecting on the ominous consequences of that deed, and blaming and rebuking himself, and making appropriate decision for more severe vigilance and control in the future, and performing good deeds as much as the bad one for restoring the luminosity and purity of his heart and soul, and he should engage in strengthening his belief, soul and spirituality (repentance is nothing more than these) like the one who has gotten rid of a physical disease.

The issue of "self-examination and compensation of action" is so critical that Prophet (S) says:

«اِنّی لاَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ وَ اَتُوبُ اِلَیْهِ فِی الْیَوْمِ سَبْعِینَ مَرّةً.»

I ask God's forgiveness and I repent to Him seventy times every day.9

It goes without saying that repentance of Prophet (S) is not for sin, rather it is for the manner of worships.

1. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 270/73
2. Narrated from the book, "The World which I know", page 68
3. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 9/4, narrator of tradition is Abou Saeid Khodri, and it is mentioned in the marginalia of Ehyaol Oloum that it is a repeatedly stated tradition.
4. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 110/70
5. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 7/4
6. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 60/47
7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 279/72
8. Ehyaol Oloum, and Mohajjatol Beisae
9. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 315/2

First step in purification of ethic after familiarity with alphabet of this science

Tongue is interpreter of heart and key of personality

Correction of tongue and speech plays a role of major importance in moral discussions because tongue is the interpreter of heart, representative of intellect, key of man's personality, and the most important window to man's soul.

In the other words, what is depicted on the tablet of man's soul (including mental, emotional and sentimental events), first of all emerges on the tongue and within his

speech. If in the past, physicians recognized a major part of moderation and unbalance of temperament through the condition of tongue, nowadays psychoanalysts mostly seek mental problems within the individuals' speech.

On these accounts, ethic scholars consider a special importance for correction of tongue and deem its correction as the sign of spirit's perfection and strengthening of prominent moral virtues and habits.

This reality is also stated in the traditions of the Prophet's House (A.S.) in short and interesting phrases. Two following phrases narrated respectively from Imam Ali (A.S.) and Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) is an evidence for this claim:

1- Man is hidden under his tongue. 1

«اَلْمَرْءُ مَخْبُوءٌ تَحْتَ لِسانِهِ.»

That is to say not only scientific personality, but also moral and social personality and in general his humanistic personality is under his tongue, and as long as he has not spoken, his fault and virtue is concealed.

2- Firmness and straightness of belief is not possible without firmness and straightness of heart, and the latter too will not exist without firmness and straightness of tongue.2

«لا يَسْتَقِيمُ اِيمانُ عَبْد حَتّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهُ، وَ لا يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُهُ حَتّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسانُهُ.»

Thirty great sins, which originate from tongue

The importance of correction of tongue is made clearer when we know that a large part of sins as a large part of good deeds are performed by tongue.

Ghazali has narrated twenty types of vices and sins for tongue as follows:

1- Speaking about the affairs not concerned with man.

2- Rant and babbling

3- Speaking about forbidden affairs like description of meetings of wine, gambling and unchaste women.

4- Dispute and fussing (caviling and objecting others for wrong purposes as humiliating them or one's own pedantry).

5- Enmity and affray and quarrel in utterance

6- Affectation in speech and trouble in rhythm and such like

7- Abuse and insult

8- Cursing

9- Profane singing and unsound sings

10- Indulgence in humour

11- Irony and mockery

12- Disclosing mysteries of others

13- Lie promise

14- Lie in speech and oath

15- Slander

16- Gossip

17- Hypocrisy in speech

18- Inappropriate eulogy

19- Negligence from speech's elegance and tools and mistakes thereof

20- Vulgar questions in respect to complicated issues related to beliefs, which cannot understand them

Surely, pests and vices of tongue are not restricted to what "Ghazali" has numerated. For instance, following affairs are among the vices of tongue, which are not stated by him:

1- Accusation

2- False evidence

3- Self-admiration

4- Spreading fornication and unfounded rumours, although being mentioned as a probability

5- Harshness in utterance

6- Improper insist (like Children of Israel, and etc)

7- Molestation of others with one's speech

8- Blaming one who is not despicable

9- Ungratefulness with tongue

10- False propagation and encourage to sin There is no doubt that correction of tongue should be studied and taught as one of the most critical moral issues.

The importance of this subject is clear when we consider the fact that tongue is the simplest and easiest and cheapest means available for man, and its speedy function is not comparable with anything else, and so we shall be very careful of it, and in this view, we can resemble it to the useful materials having an explosive power and capability. As man takes care of them attentively, he should always be watchful to this sensible organ.

Silence and reticence

Taking into account the above risks caused by leaving the tongue free, ethic scholars have deemed silence, in cases that speaking is not necessary, as one of the ways of preventing those great risks, and a lot of traditions are mentioned about it from Prophet (S) and Prophet's House (A.S.), and this is the reason why a number of great men have started purification of their carnal soul from this matter.

Moreover, silence causes a condition of "reflection" and "spirituality" and "clear-sightedness", which is noteworthy, and perhaps for this reason we read in the biography of Zachariah, God's great prophet, that three days of his silence and dumbness were put as the sign of fulfilment of his supplication concerning his request for a child:

قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلّا تُكَلِّمَ النّاسَ ثَلاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا

He said: Thy token is that thou, with no bodily defect, shalt not speak unto mankind three nights. (19:10)

And Mary was ordered to vow silence fast:

فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

Say: Lo! I have vowed a fast unto the Beneficent, and may not speak this day to any mortal. (19:26)

We read about the states of Islam's Prophet (S) that before revelation, he had been silent and reflected, and meditated about the mysteries of creation in Hara cave for several days.

We can summarize advantages of silence in following affairs:

1- Silence insures man against a lot of sins. Prophet (S) says in his short and meaningful phrase:

«مَنْ صَمَتَ نَجا.»

Whosoever mums is saved.[3]

The reason for this issue is clear, because most of the sins are performed by tongue. As Prophet (S) says:

«اِنّ اَکْثَرَ خَطایَا ابْنِ آدَمَ فِی لِسانِهِ.»

Most of man's mistakes are in his tongue.4

And it is narrated from the Prophet in another tradition:

«اُخْزُنْ لِسانَکَ اِلاّ مِنَ الْخَیْرِ فَاِنّکَ بِذلِکَ تَغْلِبُ الشّیْطانَ.»

Keep your tongue save a good utterance and thereby you will overcome Satan.5

2- Silence invites man to thinking and reflection which are the sources of his spiritual life, and thus a silent person is typically resourceful, a thinker and a man of action. In contrast, talkative people are often frail and show less action.

It is narrated in a tradition from Prophet (S):

«اِذا رَأَیْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَ صَمُوتاً وَقُوراً فَادْنُوا مِنْهُ فَاِنّهُ یُلْقِی الحِکْمَةَ.»

When you find a believer silent and courtly, contact with him that he teaches you wisdom.6

And also it is narrated from Imam Ali (A.S.):

«اِذا تَمّ الْعَقْلُ نَقَصَ الْکلامُ.»

As intelligence increases, speech decreases.7

In addition to the fact that silence is the best means for reviving reflection power, the above phrase may refer to this point that plenty of mental powers are used for speaking. When these energies are saved, they will form massive power through which understanding of great realities will be possible. Furthermore, silence is tranquilizer of soul and moderator of sentiments.

3- Chattiness as the opposite point of silence, makes man improvident, because it increases man's errors, decreases his shame, and breaking the barrier of shame as a result of excess

of errors, it simplifies evil deeds for man as Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«مَنْ كثُرَ كلامُهُ كثُرَ خَطأُهُ، وَ مَنْ كثُرَ خَطأُهُ قَلّ حَياؤُهُ وَ مَنْ قَلّ حَياؤُهُ قَلّ وَرَعُهُ، وَ مَنْ قَلّ وَرَعُهُ ماتَ قَلْبُهُ، وَ مَنْ ماتَ قَلْبُهُ دَخَلَ النّارَ.»

He, who speaks more, commits more errors. He, who commits more errors, becomes shameless. He, who is shameless, would have less fear of Allah. He whose fear of Allah is less, his heart dies. He, whose heart dies, enters Hell.8

And perhaps on this account, silence is considered as one of the important sorbs.

«اَلْعِبادَةُ عَشَرَةُ اَجْزاء تِسْعَةٌ مِنْها فِى الصّمْتِ.»

Worship has ten portions, nine of which exist in silence.9

It should not be mistaken; silence is not like seclusion and dissociation which removes the object of sin. Rather, it is sort of avoiding sin, and in cases that man finds a desire to commit some sins including slander, sin, when he selects continence and silence; he acquires a virtue for his health.

It should also be mentioned that silence when speaking is necessary, is considered as one of the greatest faults, and is the sign of weakness, humbleness, disability, lack of spiritual bravery, and fear of else than God.

It is also noteworthy that as most sins are performed by tongue, a large portion of services and good deeds, like God's remembrance, guiding people, training and education, bid to good, and forbiddance of wrong, warfare with utterance, too are performed by tongue.

Honesty, the most manifest sign of personality

- Miraculous results of truthfulness
- Lie, source of all sins
- Lie is not compatible with belief
- Lie makes man improvident
- The liar does not trust even himself
- Source of lie
- Way of treating lies

• Lie in exceptional cases

• What is equivocation?

• A new interpretation about equivocation

Undoubtedly, two attributes of truthfulness and honesty (truth and trust) are the most manifest signs of personality. Rather, we cannot call a human the one who lacks these two, and both of them originate from a common source, because truthfulness is nothing else than trust in speech, as trust is nothing else than truth in action, and as we will see their social results are similar.

Haply for this respect, "truth in speech" and "trusteeship" are mentioned together in the sayings of Islamic great leaders, and even in ordinary speech, truthfulness and honesty are accompanied.

Value and importance of truthfulness

As it was referred, truthfulness and honesty are the manifest signs of man's personality as well as magnificence of his mind and purity of his soul.

Truthful people are usually brave, frank, sincere, disinterested, and free from wrong prejudices and excessive love and hatred, because truthfulness is not possible without them.

In contrast, liars are usually cowards, hypocrites, greedy, fanatic, stubborn, and or involved in wrong love and hatred.

Truthful people are certainly principled. Rarely are such people guileful, erratic, and hypocrite, because honesty is not in concord with any of these affairs. As it will be described in incentives of lying, this attribute originates from one of the above vices, and on this account, we can consider truthfulness as a key for detecting interior of individuals in different aspects, and so truth in speech is called as a means of evaluation of people in the narrations and traditions of Prophet's House (A.S.):

Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.):

«لا تَنْظُرُوا اِلی طُول رُکُوعِ الرّجُل وَ سُجُودِهِ فَاِنّ ذلِکَ شَیْءٌ قَدِ اعْتادَهُ فَلَوْ تَرَکهُ اسْتَوْحَشَ لِذلِکَ، وَلکِن انْظُرُوا اِلی صِدْق حَدِیثِهِ وَ اداءِ امانَتِهِ.»

Do not regard one's long bowing and prostration, because it may be their habit, and if they leave it, are disturbed. Rather, look at their truthfulness and honesty. 10

Holy Qur’an says:

وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ

And thou shalt know them by the burden of their talk.(47:30)

Miraculous results of truthfulness

In social point of view, the greatest service that truth and trust can offer to men is attracting confidence and reliance. Of course, we know that all scientific, industrial and economic developments are the results of his life system that is social life.

But collaboration and consultation, which are the basis of social life, are only possible when individuals trust and rely on each other. Otherwise, people will have the problems of social life, disturbances, struggles, disputes and sabotages, without enjoying its advantages.

Obviously, the most important and effective means of attracting reliance and confidence is "truth and trust", and its most dangerous enemy is lie.

If economical firms lie only in introduction of one of their goods, people will suspect their best products.

If the rulers lie, people will disregard their promises, invitations, and warnings, and they will lack powerful public support.

If lie becomes popular in scientific environments, scientists and scholars will not trust on the speeches, narrations, and judgments of each other, and thus everybody should personally suffer all required labours for a scientific research, and could not use the results of thousands years of others' life. And this type of lie is the ugliest and dirtiest one.

Lie, source of all sins

In several narrations, it is referred to this reality that trust and truth cause purity of action, and lie is the key of all types of sins.

For better understanding of effect of truthfulness and lie on the man's deeds and actions, first we refer to a number of narrations from Prophet's House (A.S.) in this regard, and then we will analyze it.

Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«الصِّدْقُ يَهْدِى اِلَى الْبِرّ وَ الْبِرُّ يَدْعُو اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ.»

Truthfulness guides people to goodness, and goodness invites to paradise.11

Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) says:

«إِذا صَدَقَ الْعَبْدُ قالَ اللهُ: صَدَقَ و بَرّ، وَ إِذا كذِبَ قالَ اللهُ كذَبَ وَ فَجَرَ.»

When a God's servant says the truth, God says: he said the truth and performed a good deed, and when he lies, He says: he lied and performed an evil deed.12

Imam Askari (A.S.) says:

«جُعِلَتِ الْخَبائِثُ كُلُّها فِی بَیْت وَ جُعِلَ مِفْتاحُها الْكذِبُ.»

All vices are put in a room and its key is lie.13

It is easily inferred from this tradition that lie is the key of all vices and evils.

Now we study the effects of truthfulness and lie in man's deeds:

1- Lie is the source of hypocrisy, because truthfulness refers to harmony of tongue and heart, and lie is disharmony of these two, and hereof difference between men’s interior and outward is started, and the liar gradually proceeds to full hypocrisy.

Holy Qur’an refers to this fact and says:

فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

So He hath made the consequence (to be) hypocrisy in their hearts until the day when they shall meet Him, because they broke their word to Allah that they promised Him, and because they lied. (9:77)

2- Lie is the tool of most sins. Dishonest and guileful, robber and treacherous, short weighing and hoarder, tricky and perjurer individuals cannot continue anymore and reach to a stalemate if they do not lie.

3- An envious person for envying, a proud person for ostentation and frippery, a subservient and flatterer person for achieving his goals, greedy and secularist individuals for attaining their objectives, usually resort to lie. They debase the envied person in public view falsely, and glorify themselves falsely. They say thousands of flatteries falsely, and resort to lie for satiation of their greedy souls.

4- One who is bound to truthfulness has no alternative save restraining himself from most of the sins, because he thinks that if he is asked about that issue, he shall say the truth, and if he says the truth, it will be disgraceful. So, he prefers to forget those deeds on the

whole. Thus, being bounded to this attribute insures man against numerous sins.

5- Most of the lies cause other lies or sins, because it is widely seen that liars say other lies for justifying their untrue subjects, and or perform other evil deeds for preventing disclosure of their lies.

It is clarified from what was mentioned above (considering the explanations mentioned in each part), that if a man is verily bounded to truthfulness and honesty, he has to leave most sins because each of them somehow originates from lie. Rather, lie is the key of achieving them and a truthful man should recede from sin willingly or not.

Lie is not compatible with belief

It is deduced from different traditions that lie is not in concord with belief, and lying is the sign of a sort of disbelief.

These traditions have been inspired by Holy Qur’an where it says:

إِنّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكذِبَ الّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكاذِبُونَ

Only they invent falsehood who believe not Allah's revelations, and (only) they are the liars. (16:105)

"Forge falsehood" may refer to deliberate falsehood.

And now some of the narrations:

«سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ(صلى الله عليه وآله) : يَكُونُ الْمُؤْمِنُ جَباناً؟ قالَ: نَعَمْ. قِيلَ: وَ يَكُونُ بَخِيلا؟ قالَ: نَعَمْ. قِيلَ: وَيَكُونُ كذّاباً؟ قال: لا.»

The Prophet (S) was asked: Is it possible for a believer to be coward? He answered: yes. It was asked: Is it possible for him to be stingy? He answered: yes. It was asked: Is it possible for him to be liar? He answered: no.[14]

«قالَ اَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ(عليه السلام): لا يَجِدُ عَبْدٌ طَعْمَ الاِيمان حَتّى يَتْرُكَ الْكذِبَ هَزْلَهُ وَجِدّهُ.»

Imam Ali (A.S.) said: A man does not taste the taste of belief, unless he refuses lie, either seriously or for humour.15

«عنه (عليه السلام): جانِبُوا الْكذِبَ فَاِنّهُ مُجانِبُ الاِيمان.»

Avoid lie, which is not in concord with belief.16

And it is concluded from these narrations that believers avoid lie, and belief and lie do never accompany each other.

This point refers to the fact that the liars do not easily accept invitation of the prophets based on self-comparison. Since they themselves lie in little affairs of life, they cannot believe prophets to be really truthful in such big affairs.

They may be among the believers, but if we explore in depth of their hearts, we will find that it is not free from doubt and suspicion. Of course, this is true for those whose life is overshadowed by lie, and as interpreted in the tradition are liars.

The contrary is also true. That is to say the truthful people are often credulous, because they themselves are truthful and honest, and accept whatever they hear based on their superior nature, and so called they are "ear" unless they are notified.

Liars have a special pessimism and suspicion on everybody and everything. They assume everything false, untrue, or at least suspicious. How it is possible for such people to believe in all speeches of prophets without any doubt and suspicion. So we see in history that hypocrite, deviated and liars often attribute lying to divine prophets.

The issue of self-comparison is one of the mental conditions in man, which could serve as the key for solving a lot of problems. It is often observed that unusual movements of criminal, thief and treacherous individuals acquaint the others. Since they are aware of their own condition, they suppose the same about the others, and so try to conceal themselves, and such unusual movements attract the attention of others.

Lie makes man improvident

A liar supposes that if he does not perform his different duties, can justify his violation through false excuses. For such person, not being faithful to promise and covenant, not observing time, not performing assigned duties and such like is easy, because he glosses over the issue with a series of false pretexts and saves himself from any rebuke.

But in contrary, one who is bound to observing the principle of "truthfulness and honesty” is obliged to observe such affairs and so cannot be improvident and careless.

The liar does not trust even in himself

The liars not only do not trust in others and assume them as themselves, but also do not trust in themselves, because they are suspicious to the reality of everything, including the degree of their ability and power when faced with the problems and different events of life

as well as their determination and will power in performing the works.

We read in aphorisms of Imam Ali (A.S.):

«اِیّاکَ وَ مُصادَقَةَ الْکذّابِ فَاِنّهُ کالسّرابِ! یُقَرّبُ عَلَیْکَ الْبَعِیدَ وَ یُبَعِّدُ عَلَیْکَ الْقَریبَ.»

You should avoid making friend with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you feel remote things near and near things remote.17

Although the matter of altering the realities is mentioned for the associates of a liar, but it is also formed in the liar as a result of getting accustomed to the lie, and they become suspicious and uncertain to the realities and facts related to themselves and the others, and this is one of the most painful conditions occurring for man in his life.

Source of lie

As it was already referred, lie originates from one of the mental weak points:

Sometimes, a man lies for the fear of poverty, people leaving him alone and losing his position and rank.

Sometimes, he lies for the earnest to wealth, dignity, and other sensual desires, and uses this illegitimate means for achieving his purpose.

Sometimes, passion as well as excessive love and hatred cause a man to say untruth in favor of one who he loves or against one who he hates.

Once he lies in different scientific, historical and such like issues for showing himself more than what he really is and expressing science and knowledge.

But all of these vicious attributes, which are the sources of lie, actually originate from one's low personality and weakness of spirit and belief.

Those who do not believe in their own personality, and have a feeble and humble spirit, resort to lie, falsification, fraud and treachery for gaining their purposes and escaping losses. In contrary, powerful and high personality individuals rely on their own personality and ability, and seek their victory thereon.

Moreover, those having a perfect belief on divine everlasting power, and considering His dominant will as the source of all blessings, victories and successes, have identified His power beyond all powers and His support beyond all supports, do not have any reason for resorting to untruth and lying for gaining a benefit or escaping a loss.

And sometimes this dangerous vice roots in man for inattention to the disadvantages of lie and importance of truthfulness, and unhealthy family, or environment of society and associates.

One of the other important factors in lying is feeling low personality and inferiority complex. Those who are affected by such complexes, try to compensate it with all types of lie, exaggeration and self-glorification.

Way of treating lie

Taking into account the factors effective on formation of this attribute and its rooting, treatment procedure will be relatively clear, and in general for treating this moral deviation, we shall take following actions:

1- First of all, the liars should be informed about the painful consequences as well as spiritual, material, individual and social ill effects of this unfavourable vice, and it should be evaluated through meditation and thinking in Qur’anic verses and traditions of great leaders of religion and aforementioned analyses and speeches of the great men that assumptive benefits of lie never counterweigh with such a lot of disadvantages.

Moreover, the liars should be warned that if in some cases, lie has a personal benefit, it is temporary and very transitory, because no capital for a man in the society, in any condition and any rank,–is higher than the capital of people's trust and confidence in him, and the greatest enemy of this capital is lie.

It is noteworthy that some suppose it is possible for a man to say some lies, never being disclosed and causing people's distrust.

But this is a big mistake because experience has shown that in most cases, the untruthfulness of a liar is made clear, and its point is that any event has different relations with time, place, individuals and other events. One who wants to create an event, not externally existing, with his tongue, creates only one discrete event from among all other relations, and if he is very sharp and smart, he may already think about some other lies around it, and link the main false event with those events.

However, he can never predict all possible relations with all other events, and consider their connections. So, most often after several questions, he fails to justify his speeches.

For example, consider the interesting judgment of Imam Ali (A.S.) about the young man whose father had travelled with a lot of wealth together with some people, and when returning, his companions claimed for his death.

The accused people, who were in fact the murderers of that young man's father, were disgraced very soon after Imam (A.S.) asked them several questions about the details of disease, death, shrouding and burying, as they had colluded for all together saying that he has become sick and died, but they had not colluded for where, what time of day and who has made ablution, and has shrouded, and has performed funeral prayer, and actually they could not collude for all of these matters.

On this account, even the lie of the sharpest liar may be disclosed through a simple inspection.

Specially, the false and artificial relations, which a man creates for his lies, are not kept in his mind properly, because they are untrue, and if the liar is asked in different intervals, he involves in self contradiction and confusion, and this contradiction is one of the other factors for disclosing their lie. If it is commonly said that "a liar does not have a good

memory", it may refer to the fact that whatever his memory may be strong, it is not possible for a liar to memorize everything!

2- Personification - One of the most effective ways of treating lies is developing individuals' personality, because as we know, one of the important mental causes of lie is feeling inferiority and low personality, and in fact lying is a kind of reaction for compensating it.

If the liars feel that they possess powers and talents through developing of which they can increase their own value and personality, they do not find any need for resorting to lie for developing a false personality in them.

Moreover, they should realize that social value of a truthful man, who has succeeded to attract "public confidence" through this moral virtue, is beyond all values, and his great spiritual capital of "social reputation" is the highest capital, with which no material capital can countervail, and he can provide all material facilities for himself using this capital.

Such person is not only is respected by people, but also enjoys a rank among the martyrs and prophets because in Qur’an the rank of truthful people is mentioned besides the rank of prophets and martyrs, where it says:

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللّهَ وَالرّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النّبِيّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

Whoso obeyeth Allah and the messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favour, of the prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they! (4:69)

The famous scholar, "Ragheb", in his book, "Mofradat" has narrated several meanings for "truthful" all proving this fact:

a- One who always says the truth

b- One who never lies

c- One who is truthful in his speech and idea, and his action proves his truthfulness.

3- Endeavour for strengthening foundations of belief in God in the heart of liars and notifying this fact to them that God's power is beyond all powers, and He is able to solve all problems for which weak faith individuals resort to lie.

The reliance point of truthful people when facing different events is God, and liars are alone in such cases.

4- The motives of lie and roots of this moral deviation including avarice, fear, self-conceit, excessive love and hatred and such like should be eradicated so that this dangerous vice cannot find a favourable culture for its development in man.

5- The educational and association environments of liars should be cleaned from other liars so that gradually, according to the principle of "imitation" and impressibility, their own

existence is purified of this vice.

This is so critical that it is narrated from Imam Ali (A.S.) in Islamic educational instructions:

«لا یَصْلُحُ الْکذِبُ جِدٌّ وَ لا هَزْلٌ وَ لا اَنْ یَعِدَ اَحَدُکُمْ صَبِیّهُ ثُمّ لا یَفِی لَهُ.»

Lying is not proper, either for joke or seriously, and also it is not proper that one of you give a promise to his child, and then do not fulfil it.18

It goes without saying that if parents are accustomed to truthfulness (even in giving small promises to their children); their child will never be a liar.

Lie in exceptional cases

The great jurists and ethic scholars following the traditions narrated in this respect, have mentioned some cases as exceptional from lie judgment, and have summarized some of them in two subjects: "exigency" and "reconciliation among people".

It is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S):

«اِحْلِفْ بِاللهِ کاذِباً وَ نَجّ اَخاکَ مِنَ الْقَتْل.»

Swear falsely and save your innocent brother from death.19

Herein, two points are notable:

First, all cases of exception actually return to one subject that lie is only permitted for more important expedients overshadowing its disadvantages, and of course, this is not restricted to "truthfulness" and "falsehood". Rather other forbidden things such as "eating carrion", "eating unclean food", "orphan molestation" and such like are permitted for survival or correction, and the cases mentioned in the traditions are some examples.

For instance, since reconciliation among people and joining scattered hearts and washing out the dust of hatred and enmity from hearts is more important than the lie, which does not harm anyone else, it is permitted. The same is true in exigency cases for preserving life and honour of oneself or others, and or in planning and implementation of war plans, a lie, causing expedition in termination of war and preventing blood shedding and or repressing an unjust and corrupter enemy in this way, and also when two spouses argue about some matters, the continuation of which may result in their divorce or other corruption, but it is possible to solve their problem through one lie. In all of these cases, lie would be permitted for preservation of more important expedient affairs. If we pay attention accurately, in these cases, disadvantages and harms of lie which were already mentioned, are much less and do not overweigh its advantage and benefit.

It is also noteworthy that prescription of "lie" in such cases is just like prescription of eating carrion, which should be contented as much as the necessity, and not so that exceptions cause daring performance of this "capital sin", and saying lie for each little issue with the pretext of lie permits.

In fact, moral mistakes are always around the exceptional cases and notes. These are the same ambiguous matters which are the "risk area" bounded by the "forbidden area":

«مَحارِمُ اللهِ حِمَى اللهِ فَمَنْ يَرْتَعْ حَوْلَ الْحِمى يُوشَكُ اَنْ يَقَعَ فِيها.»

The forbidden degrees are divine forbidden areas; one who leads his animal near the forbidden boundaries, there is the risk of slumping in them.20

Ghazali at the end of a chapter under the title of leaving lie in "Ehyaol Oloum" writes: some people believe that fabrication of traditions in the virtues of actions and intensification of vices is permitted.

Then he adds: this is just a false desire and fancy, because its advantages never overweigh corruption of lie. Moreover, there is not any necessity for this, and there are enough correct verses and traditions in each respect. On the other hand, introducing this custom may result in discomposure and perturbation of religion.21

But we believe such foolish actions and ideas belong to the base, fool and unaware individuals who assume themselves more compassionate than God and Prophet (S) for Islam. This is a pure evil and is thoroughly harm and corruption. The danger of this action and such like fool friends is not less than the danger of enemies for Islam.

What is equivocation?

Equivocation refers to the speech, from the appearance of which something is understood, while the purpose of speaker is something else.

It is well known among our jurists that the cases in which lie is prescribed for an exigency, equivocation should be applied, and as far as equivocation is possible, explicit lie is not advisable.

It is inferred from some phrases of Sunnite scholars that the same is popular among them.

And equivocation is defined to be when a man says something with a meaning in accordance with the reality, but the speech is so that listener understands something else, and this is the purpose of speaker that while willing a correct concept, the listener understands something else.

For instance, one was asked, who the substitute of Prophet S.A is. He said, "One whose daughter was in his house". The listener supposed that he meant the one whose daughter was in Prophet's (S) house, but he meant "one whose Prophet's daughter was in his house".

A new interpretation about equivocation

But herein there is a point which may be the key of solving problems of this discussion, that is, "equivocation" does not refer to any sort of intention against appearance. Rather, equivocation appertains to the cases in which the speech is inherently ambiguous and can bear two meanings, but the mind attracts one of them in speech.

For example, the phrase (اِنّكُمْ لَسارِقُونَ), "You are robbers" which was told to Joseph brothers, its primary meaning is the same "current robbery", but it can also refer to the "previous robbery" (robbing Joseph from his father), which is in contrary with its primary meaning.

Or when it is asked from someone, "has that person presented this clothing to you"? In reply as equivocation, he says: "God may lengthen his life". The listener supposes that the speaker means "yes, God may lengthen his life", while he may not have such purpose.

1. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 148
2. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 262/75, and Mohajjatol Beisae, 193/5
3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 90/77 and Mohajjatol Beisae 192/5
4. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 194/5
5. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, vol. 5, page 195
6. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 195/5
7. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 71
8. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 349
9. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 196/5
10. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 8/71
11. Tabarsi, Mishqat al-Anwar, 300, Heydarieh Publications, Najaf
12. The same document, page 299
13. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 263/72
14. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 262/72
15. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 249/72
16. The same document, volume 78, page 9
17. Nahjul Balaghah, aphorisms, no. 38
18. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, 577/8
19. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, 134/16
20. Sadough, Faghih, vol. 4, page 75
21. Ghazali, Ehyaol Oloum, 139/3

Slander, Dangerous weapon of cowards

One of the greatest and most dangerous and in the meantime most popular corruptions of tongue is slander.

Slander indicates mentioning hidden weak points and faults of the others so that if they hear, they will be disturbed. These points are either concerned with religious, moral, spiritual and social aspects, or with corporeal aspects, including face, body's limbs, corporal powers, and actions and behaviours, or his attachments, such as wife, child, and or his clothing, house, etc.

The most important motives for slander

There are several motives for slander:

1- Malice and revenge: as there is no easier and simpler way than slander and damaging a person's reputation and character for extinguishing flames of spite and revenge, blazing in the heart of some people.

2- Envy: as the envious person always wishes for end of blessings of the envied one, when he cannot achieve his purpose, for compensating it, he tries to damage the envied person's reputation and credit through slander and revealing his weak points, and relieves the fire of his envy in this way.

3- Acquitting oneself from a committed sin: in other words one tries to simplify or justify his action through mentioning the faults of others.

4- Mockery and deride: of course mockery and deriding others has several motives, and after rooting of its factors in man's entity, one of the ways of realization of this goal is slander.

5- Recreation and amusement: there are a lot of people who engage in mentioning weak points and faults of the others only for recreation and amusement or warming circles and meetings, because no other sin is sweeter than slander for people.

It should be also noted that people not only enjoy recreation and amusement, but also enjoy causing others to laugh.

6- Excitation of curiosity instinct: this instinct which is one of the most powerful man's instincts, invites man to urge others for slander and revealing weak points of different individuals, and perhaps the sweetness of slander for some people originates from the false satiation of this instinct. Such people enjoy knowing mysteries and faults of others and are curious about them, and therefore make the others to slander more eagerly and enthusiastically.

Of course, taking into account these factors can be an effective help to us for treatment of slander and identifying its senses.

It should be also notified that in most cases, these factors do not show off themselves simply and naturally in man's existence because his conscience and mental personality does not allow it. So they change its appearance and slander about people in the form of compassion or forbid of wrong and or giving lesson to others, and suppose that they have done a sacred action, while the main motive is one of the above factors, and man's spirit changes its appearance for deceiving conscience and escaping its stress and torment, and on the contrary, it is proved that such slander is more dangerous than its other types and treating it, is more difficult.

Dangers of slander

Now, we mention the importance of this sin in view of Qur’an and traditions of Prophet (S) and Prophet's Household (A.S.), and then will analyze the individual and social vices that it will cause.

Although most people do not respect this vital issue, the original Islamic resources have put an extra emphasis on it. The most vigorous interpretations are seen in the Holy Qur’an and traditions concerning slander, and we have selected following ten cases among them, and perhaps these ten parts are adequate for realizing the importance of this sin in view of

Islam.

1- Slander in view of Holy Qur’an

Holy Qur’an has considered slander as an inhuman action, and has introduced it as eating flesh of a dead brother. Obviously, anthropophagy in such a way is the most repulsive action which may be done by a person, and this interpretation is exclusively mentioned for this sin.

Of course, the reason of this assimilation is clear. Because in Islam's view, a Muslim brother's reputation and prestige is respectable as his blood, as it is mentioned in the Prophetic tradition:

«كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى لْمُسْلِمِ حَرامٌ: دَمُهُ وَ مالُهُ وَ عِرْضُهُ.»

Everything of a Muslim is forbidden for another Muslim: his blood, wealth and reputation.1

And there is no doubt that slander lowers the reputation of a Muslim brother, and damages his honour.

It is noteworthy that in Holy Qur’an suspicion, spying, and slander are respectively forbidden where it says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَحِيمٌ

O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Ye abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty (to Allah). Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful. (49:12)

And this interpretation may indicate that first a man is involved in suspicion, and suspicion leads him to spying, and spying too ends in revealing hidden faults of individuals and this is the source of slander.

2- Slander is not compatible with belief

As it is stipulated in Barae tradition:

خَطَبَنا رَسُولُ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) حَتّى اسْتَمَعَ الْعَوائِقُ

فِی بُیُوتِها فَقالَ: »یا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسانِهِ وَ لَمْ یُؤْمِنْ بِقَلْبِهِ لا تَغْتابُوا الْمُسْلِمِینَ وَ لا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْراتِهِمْ فَاِنَّهُ مَنْ تَتَبَّعَ عَوْرَةَ اَخِیهِ تَتَبَّعَ اللهُ عَوْرَتَهُ وَ مَنْ تَتَبَّعَ اللهُ عَوْرَتَهُ یَفْضَحُهُ وَ لَوْ فِی جَوْفِ بَیْتِهِ.«

Barae says: Prophet (S) spoke for us, and so loudly that even the girls in the houses too heard. He said: O the group who has believed by tongue, but not by heart. Do not slander about a Muslim, and do not spy their secret affairs, the one who is curious for the secret affairs of his religious brothers, God shall reveal his own secret affairs and scandalizes him inside his own house.2

The point of non-compatibility of slander with the spirit of belief may indicate that the first sign of belief is observing the right of a believer, and this is in contradiction with slander.

3- Slander is considered as spreading obscenity

Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) said:

»مَنْ قالَ فِی مُؤْمِن ما رَأَتْهُ عَیْناهُ وَ سَمِعَتْهُ اُذُناهُ فَهُوَ مِنَ الّذِینَ قالَ اللهُ عَزّ وَ جَلّ: (اِنّ الّذِینَ یُحِبُّونَ اَنْ تَشِیعَ الْفاحِشَةُ فِی الّذِینَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذابٌ اَلِیمٌ.«

One who says what he has seen and heard about a believer, is among those that God has told about them: those who like the vices to spread among believers, there shall be a painful chastisement for them.3

The point of this issue is also clear, because considering that in most cases faults are included among religious faults, revealing hidden faults of people may cause the others to take impertinence and insolence for performing sin and disobedience, and consequently spreading obscenity.

4- The corruption of slander is more severe than adultery

In the famous tradition of Jaber and Abou Saeid Khadri, it is narrated from Prophet (S):

»اَلْغِیبَةُ اَشَدُّ مِنَ الزِّنا.«

Slander is worse than adultery.4

The reason mentioned under this tradition for its severity is that an adulterer may be

forgiven by God through repentance (because adultery is the Right of God), but the repentance of slanderer without satisfaction of the other party, will not be accepted (because it is the Right of People).

There may be another point in addition to above aspect as the reason for intensity of slander comparing with adultery, that is slander ruins the basis of unity, compassion, intimacy and good opinion in the society, and damages the society severely in this way,–as will be discussed later, but adultery does not have such influence despite of its significance.

5- Slander hinders acceptance of deeds and prayers

It is mentioned in Moaze tradition that sometimes deeds of servants shine as the sun's rays, and ascend to the heaven, but they are returned and beaten to the face of their owners, and an angel says:

«اَمَرَنِی رَبِّی اَنْ لا اَدَعَ عَمَلَ مَنْ یَغْتابُ النّاسَ یَتَجاوَزُ اِلی رَبِّی.»

My Lord has instructed me to prevent reaching the goods deeds of slanderers towards My Lord.

This point may indicate that as it is inferred from different traditions, in general, deeds of those who are indebted to people will not be accepted by God, and as we know slander is a sort of transgression to people's rights and damaging the capital of their reputation.

6- Slander is not compatible with Islamic brotherhood

It is narrated from Prophet (S):

«لا تَحاسَدُوا وَ لا تَباغَضُوا وَ لا یَغْتَبْ بَعْضُکُمْ بَعْضاً وَ کُونُوا عِبادَ اللهِ اِخْواناً.»

Do not envy and spite each other and do not slander about each other, and O, God's servants be brother with each other.5

It is understood from the last phrase that opposite point of envy, enmity and slander is God's servitude and Islamic brotherhood. It goes without saying that the first sign of brotherhood is kindness and intimacy, which could never be compatible with slander.

And pointing to those two great faults in the tradition may be for being among the causes of slander, because envy usually is the source of enmity and spite, and they too in their turn are the sources of slander.

7- Slander destroys good deeds

This sense is mentioned in different traditions. In a tradition from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) is narrated:

«اَلْغِيبَةُ حَرامٌ عَلى كُلِّ مُسْلِم... وَ الْغِيبَةُ تَأْكُلُ الْحَسَناتِ كما تَأْكُلُ النّارُ الْحَطَبَ.»

Slander is forbidden for each Muslim, and surely slander destroys good deeds as the fire destroys wood.6

And it is narrated in a tradition from Prophet (S):

«مَنْ كانَتْ لِاَخِيهِ عِنْدَهُ مَظْلَمَةٌ فِى عِرْض اَوْ مال فَلْيَسْتَحْلِلْها مِنْهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَأْتِىَ يَوْمٌ لَيْسَ هُنالِکَ دِينارٌ وَ لا دِرْهَمٌ اِنّما يُؤْخَذُ مِنْ حَسَناتِهِ فَاِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ حَسَنَةٌ اُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئاتِ صاحِبِهِ فَزيدَتْ عَلى سَيِّئاتِهِ.»

One, who is indebted to his religious brother in respect to reputation or wealth, should seek his forgiveness, before that day in which there is not any Drachma and Dinar. In that day, it will be deducted from his good deeds, and if he does not have any good deed, the sins of other party will be added to his sins.7

Slander destroys good deeds probably because it destroys one of the greatest spiritual capitals of the one who is slandered about, that is his reputation, honour and social prestige, and since compensation of this "Right of People" is often impossible through material ways, thus Great God compensates it through spiritual affairs: He transfers good deeds of the slanderer to the book of deeds of the slandered, and if he does not have any good deed, God transfers sins of the slandered to the book of deeds of the slanderer, and it is compensated to the same degree that reputation of that person is damaged through transfer of good deeds and sins.

8- Slander devaluates worships and services

It is realized from some traditions that slander is one of the factors invalidating ritual ablution and fasting.

God's Prophet (S) says:

«اَلْجُلُوسُ فِى الْمَسْجِدِ انْتِظاراً لِلصّلاةِ عِبادَةٌ ما لَمْ يُحْدِث;

فَقِيلَ: يا رَسُولَ اللهِ! وَ مَا الْحَدَثُ؟ قالَ: الإِغْتِيابُ»

Waiting in the mosque for prayer is worship, until a ritual impurity is not performed; it was questioned: what is ritual impurity? He said: slander.8

And somewhere else he says:

»وَ مَنِ اغْتابَ مُسْلِماً بَطَلَ صَوْمُهُ وَ نَقَضَ وُضُوءُهُ.«

One, who slanders about a Muslim, his fasting and ritual ablutions are broken.9

Its point may indicate that worship creates a condition of proximity to God and spiritual luminosity in man, and when he stains his tongue to slander after ritual ablution or when fasting, that spirituality is significantly decreased, and that individual falls down from the degree of proximity to God. In the above tradition, this sense is interpreted as "violator" (breaker).

9- Slander excludes man from God's protection and includes him in Satan's protection

As it is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) in the tradition of Mofzal Ebne Omar:

»مَنْ رَوى عَلى مُؤْمِنٍ روايَةً يُريدُ بِها شَيْنَهُ وَ هَدْمَ مُرُوَّتِهِ لِيَسْقُطَ مِنْ اَعْيُنِ النّاسِ اَخْرَجَهُ اللهُ مِنْ ولايَتِهِ اِلى ولايَةِ الشَّيْطانِ فَلا يَقْبَلُهُ الشَّيْطانُ.«

One who narrates with the purpose of backbiting and dishonouring a believer to be reproached before people, God shall evict him from His protection to Satan's protection, and Satan too does not accept him.10

Of course, this tradition is not merely concerned with slander. Rather, slander is one of its senses, because the purpose of slander in all individuals is destroying character of the other party and cavilling at him, even indirectly.

But exclusion from God's protection according to the Qur’anic verses indicates that God, *who leads and supervises believers and guides them from darkness into the light* 11, will not lead such people anymore. Because protector means guide and leader as well as helper and assistant, as we read:

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللّهِ

And they will have no protecting friends to help them instead of Allah. (42:46)

And it is also mentioned in the sense of saviour from humiliation as we read:

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلِيٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ

Who hath no partner in the Sovereignty, nor hath He any protecting friend through dependence. And magnify Him with all magnificence.(17:111)

And it also means forgiver of sins as:

أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ

Thou art our Protecting Friend, therefore forgive us and have mercy on us, Thou, the Best of all who show forgiveness. (7:155)

Therefore, slanderers are deprived from all of these divine graces for being evicted from God's protection and entering Satan's protection.

And the phrase "Satan too does not accept him" may indicate that Satan can not undertake the responsibility of their protection and supervision, and thereby leaves them alone.

10- A part of ill effects of slander remains even after repentance.

It is stated in the traditions of Islamic leaders:

«اَوْحَى اللهُ عَزّ وَ جَلّ اِلى مُوسَى بْنِ عِمْرانَ اَنّ الْمُغتابَ اِذا تابَ فَهُوَ آخِرُ مَنْ يَدْخُلِ الْجَنّةَ وَ اِنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَهُوَ اَوّلُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُ النّارَ.»

God inspired to Moses, son of Emran, that if the slanderer repents, he will be the last one entering paradise, and otherwise, he will be the first one entering the fire.[12]

The point of this tradition may represent that slander has both "Right of God" and "Right of People" aspects, and its "Right of People" aspect is more than other rights of people, because slander destroys the capital of people's reputation, the capital which in contrary with material capitals is often irrecoverable, and this causes the slanderer to be saved posterior than the others. On this account, in some traditions, dishonouring a Muslim is considered as the highest usury as Ense narrates from Prophet (S):

«اِنّ اَرْبَی الرّبا عِرْضُ الرّجُل الْمُسْلِم.»

The most critical usury is dishonouring a Muslim.13

Social and individual vices of slander

Ill- effects of slander in social view:

Slander causes great vices in social view:

1- When slander is spread in the society, it destroys one of the greatest social capitals which is the spirit of brotherhood, unity and intimacy, and ruins the foundations of good opinion and public confidence which is the first requisite of social cooperation.

As outspread of slander causes the people to become aware of hidden weak points of each other, and since most of people are not free from any weak point, knowing them spreads suspicion in the society, and this pessimism and suspicion annihilates the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and the society will be deprived from all of its concerned blessings, and practically individuals are subjected to "social seclusion".

The previously described tradition;

«لا تَحاسَدُوا وَ لا تَباغَضُوا وَ لا یَغْتَب بَعْضُکُمْ بَعْضاً وَ کُونُوا عِبادَ اللهِ اِخْواناً»

may refer to this point.

2- In most cases, slander causes provoking the fire of sedition and spread of enmity and spite among the individuals, because hidden faults of individuals may be correlated with others' rights, and or at least be a pretext for adventurers to revenge and damage reputation of each other, and this results in enmity, or intensifies it.

3- Slander lowers individuals' personality and respect and thereby their fear and avoidance of sin is decreased, because most people do not perform inadmissible deeds for maintaining their honour and prestige, and or otherwise perform them privately. When their faults and sins are revealed through slander, there is no reason any more for caring and fearing of it, and in this way, slander will be an effective factor for decrease of "social considerations" and spread of corruption.

4- Slander will be also accompanied with irrecoverable losses in economical view for the society, because credit of individuals and confidence of people on each other is more effective than social financial capitals in improvement of the society, and lacking them, activity of common capitals will be significantly reduced, and will become stagnant or semi-stagnant.

Ill-effects of slander in individual view

However, in individual aspect, slander is an explicit injustice and transgression to the rights of others, and the same moral and humanistic faults created in an individual due to injustice to another person are realized through slander. Moreover, since slander originates from a series of ill-favoured moral motives, its repetition strengthens and supports those condemned attributes in man.

In this way, slander both lowers the individual in view of humanistic values, and also weakens and destroys social foundations. So the previous traditions and holy verses clearly represent these realities.

Limits and types of slander

1- Types of slander

Although, at the beginning it seems that slander is the same mentioning hidden faults of others by tongue, but considering its main criterion, it is clarified that slander is an extensive and general concept in view of ethics, including expressing this sense by any means, such as saying, writing, referring and or imitation.

As it is narrated in a tradition: A woman came to visit Prophet (S) and when she went away, Ayesheh referred to her height by her hand. The Prophet (S) said: You slandered about her.[14]

And it is mentioned in another tradition that Ayesheh imitated a woman, and the Prophet (S) prohibited her.[15]

It is deduced hereby that when criticizing the thoughts of others in the writings, it should be discussed in such a way to avoid slander. When cavilling and criticizing the speech of someone, there are often interpretations which are clear senses of slander, disapprobation, mockery, insulting and or humiliation, for example when it is told that phrase is "null by necessity" or "funny" or "childish" or "unwisely", unless its owner is not clear and or humiliating and slandering about him is permitted.

On the other hand, sometimes a man says a speech figuratively, but there are some evidences that the other party understands. This too is among the senses of slander. For example, when some one mentions, today I was in a meeting, and someone told something, while the listener is aware about the meeting he has been.

2- Slanders mixed with another sin

Sometimes this indecent deed is mixed with other indecent deeds, and loses completely its shape, and or appears as a righteous deed.

For instance, sometimes for escaping slander, the people say "I fear to explain for being a slander" or even say "Regretfully, Divine Law has closed our tongue", or "Divine Law does not allow, otherwise I would say a lot of things".

Such people not only implicitly commit slander, but also for leaving the matter ambiguously, provoke the addressee's suspicion on everything in respect to the other person, and in fact they show the matter greater and more significant than what it really is.

In addition, they have committed hypocrisy too, and so have mixed dangerously two ill favoured deeds.

Or when they utter as sympathy, "That poor person slipped and committed that sin, God may forgive him".

In this case too, hypocrisy and slander are mixed together.

Or when the one making display of himself says: "Thanks to God, I have not been affected to wine, drugs, like that person. Really, if God does not protect man, it will be very difficult. The trap is hard, unless God helps."

And thereby, he commits slander, hypocrisy and self admiration once and all together.

Or when he says: "I have told these to him too and or will say”.

And in this way, he closes the way of correction, and makes his slander more emphasized and severe with this suppositious argument.

3- Slander has a "Right of People" aspect

If slander is interpreted as we referred at the beginning, its "Right of People" aspect will be obviously clear, because:

First, it lowers respect, personality and reputation of the said person, and surely these are not less valuable than properties in view of intellect and religion.

Second, it is inferred from similitude of slander to eating a faithful brother's flesh in the Chambers Sura that slander is a sense of "injustice".

Third, it is referred to in several traditions like the one already mentioned in respect to "annihilation of good deeds and transfer of evils", and the well known tradition:

«إِنّ صاحِبَ الْغِيبَةِ لا يُغْفَرُ لَهُ حَتّى يَغْفِرَ لَهُ صاحِبُهُ.»

The slanderer is not forgiven unless the slandered person forgives him.16

And the Prophetic tradition:

«كفّارَةُ مَن اغْتَبْتَهُ اَنْ تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهُ.»

The atonement of slander is asking pardon of God for the slandered person.17

And there are traditions, which assume stopping slander as a believer's rights.

Anyway, slander is a clear sense of injustice and without consent of the other party; the slanderer will not be forgiven. And we conclude herein that undoubtedly atonement of

slander is not merely asking pardon of God and repentance.

Indeed, there is no way for asking consent and forgiveness, and or no damage is practically made to the prestige and reputation of slandered person, then asking pardon of God may be sufficient.

Exceptions of slander

The jurists and ethics scholars agree that there are some cases in which slander is permitted, but they have some dissidence in specifying those cases. This dissidence is sometimes in mentioning the examples and senses, without any difference in the basis of matter, but sometimes it has a spiritual and real aspect.

However, it is concluded from different proofs and documents that slander is permitted in two cases:

a- When there is a more important interest, in which slander, while observing the subject – it is permitted and there are various senses for it:

1- In case of consultation, for example when someone wants to transact or participate or marry with the other, and is questioning us. Obviously, it is permitted to reveal hidden faults of the other party as far as they are concerned with the said affair, and relieve the one who seeks consult from the possible risks.

2- In case of forbidding of something wrong

3- In case of averting innovation of an innovator

4- In case of warning a Muslim about the risk and loss which is awaiting him (though without any consultation)

5- Petition and removal of injustice and restoring right

And in general all cases in which the interest of revealing one's hidden fault is more than its vice in view of religion.

The reason for exception of these subjects is clear, because it relies on a clear intellectual reason that is the "principle of important and more important". Moreover, some points are referred to in the verses and traditions in this respect (including petition, removal of injustice, and averting innovation of an innovator).

But the remarkable point in view of ethics is being careful that most often deviations and errors are caused through exceptions and misuse or mistake and negligence in determination of their limits and boundaries. Because no one agrees to violate regulations and commit sins explicitly and clearly, but most people achieve their purposes through pretence to using notes and exceptions, even in most cases, man deceives his conscience in this way, and for getting rid of punishment of conscience, and not hurting his inward and natural character, seeks refuge from these notes and exceptions.

And this is one of the contradictory cases of unaware and aware conscience and conquest of the former over the latter.

So, the advantage of slander should be carefully assessed in these cases while taking into

account all features and aspects, and free from any love and hatred and other spites, and then one can deduce its excellence over vice of explicit slander, and do not stain himself to the dangerous slanders under the pretext of available permit.

b- The cases in which slander is permitted without any special advantage, and it is solely restricted to those notorious for debauchery, but although some have included petition in this part, as it was referred, it is one of the cases of existence of more important legal advantage, that is restoring right and preventing injustice of cruel person and supporting right of the oppressed. In addition to the reason of intellect, there are several traditions narrated by Shiite and Sunnite as the reason for exception of this issue, like:

«عَنْ جَعْفَر عَنْ اَبِيهِ قالَ: ثَلاثَةٌ لَيْسَتْ لَهُمْ حُرْمَةٌ: صاحِبُ هَوىً مُبتَدِعٌ، وَ الْاِمامُ الْجائِرُ، وَ الْفاسِقُ الْمُعْلِنُ الْفِسْقَ.»

There are three persons who do not have any respect: one who has innovatory desires, unjust governor, and one who commits sin publicly.18

And the same is mentioned in some narrations as follows:

«ثَلاثَةٌ لا غِيبَةَ لَهُمْ: صاحِبُ الْهَوى وَ الْفاسِقُ الْمُعْلِنُ بِفِسْقِهِ، وَ الْاِمامُ الْجائِرُ»

2- And also it is narrated from Prophet (S) in a tradition:19

«لَيْسَ لِفاسِق غِيبَةٌ.»

There is no slander for the sinner.20

3- And also it is narrated from Prophet (S) in another tradition:

«مَنْ اَلْقى جِلْبابَ الْحَياءِ عَنْ وَجْهِهِ فَلا غِيْبَةَ لَهُ»

One who lays aside the veil of modesty; there is no slander for him.21

4- There are several traditions in respect to Justice in Vassaelo Shiite. For example, it is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.):

«مَنْ عامَلَ النّاسَ فَلَمْ يَظْلِمْهُمْ وَ حَدّثَهُمْ فَلَمْ يَكْذِبْهُمْ وَ واعَدَهُمْ فَلَمْ يُخْلِفْهُمْ كانَ مِمّنْ حَرُمَتْ غِيْبَتُهُ وَ كَمُلَتْ مُرُوّتُهُ وَ ظَهَرَ عَدْلُهُ وَ وَجَبَتْ اُخُوّتُهُ.»

Whosoever is not unjust in transaction with people, and do not lie them in speech, and do not violate them in promise, is among those whose slander is forbidden, his personality is perfect, and his justice is manifest, and brotherhood with him is obligatory.22

Who is notorious for debauchery, and why slandering about him is permitted?

There are several subjects here, which should be explained:

a- Is exception of a notorious person a topical exclusion (that is one who affects a vice, naturally is not disturbed for mentioning it in his absence. Moreover, it is not a hidden and privacy affair being regarded as slander) or slandering about a notorious person is one of the slander types, and has been excluded as so called "appropriation"?

b- Is permit for slandering about notorious one restricted to the sins which he performs publicly, or it is permitted in all cases?

c- If someone is notorious in one place, and non-notorious and private in somewhere else, is slandering about him permitted in the second place too or not?

d- Is in the permit for slandering about notorious person, existence of conditions for bid to good and forbid of wrong necessary?

The reply to all of these questions depends on understanding the main point and reason for exclusion of this issue from slander's forbiddance.

It is inferred from above traditions that a notorious individual basically does not have any respect (the respect which is the hindrance for slander's permit).

In other words, such people (and cruel and innovator people) are not respectable in view of social personality, and their desecration is not forbidden, and therefore, giving up slander and preserving their reputation is not necessary.

If we deduce so from above traditions, – as the phrase

«لا غِيبَةَ لَهُ و لا حُرْمَةَ لَهُ,»

proves, the reply to above questions is clarified, and it does not need more explanation, because based on rational and traditional proof, slander does not include such persons.

But it should be noted that apparently the notorious is one who has completely laid aside

the veil of modesty, and is rude and fearless against all sins, and it does not include all of those who perform a sin publicly for any reason. Thus, it is possible to slander about such persons only in respect to the case for which they are notorious.

1. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 251/5
2. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 251/5
3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 240/75
4. The same document, page 222
5. Mohaddes Nouri, Mostadrakol Vassael, 118/9
6. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 257/75
7. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 273/5
8. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 255/5
9. The same document, page 254
10. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 168/75
11. «اللهُ وَلِىُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُماتِ اِلى النُّور» ; 2: verse 257
12. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 222/75
13. Feise kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, page 254
14. Ghazali, Ehyaol Oloum, 145/3, Mohajjatol Beisae, 256/5
15. Ghazali, Ehyahol Oloum, 145/3
16. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 251/5
17. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, volume 75, page 242 & Mohajjatol Beisae, volume 5, page 273
18. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 253/75
19. Ghazali, Ehyaol Oloum
20. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 236/75
21. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 233/75
22. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, volume 5, page 393

Suspicion and mistrust

Immunity from mistrust is the requisite of a safe community

For making a safe community, first of all security is required, because without security, freedom is not possible, and in this case, mental, corporeal, material and spiritual capitals are not activated, as capitals always take refuge to secure points and escape unsafe environments.

However, the limits of security are not restricted to life and property, and more important than that is security in view of reputation and protection of individuals' social personality.

On the other hand, another security is needed for completion of above triple securities that unfortunately, material rules are not able to provide it, that is, "mental security" as the most important one in some aspects.

Mental security has two parts:

1- Security of everybody in his own mind setting, and in other words "mental tranquility": that is to say in mental and spiritual view, a man is in a position that disturbing forces do not press upon him from each side, and he is not supposed to rush of various disturbing thoughts and serious mental storms. Rather, he may have a tranquil spirit free from any anxiety, discomfort and confusion.

2- Security in viewpoint of others: that is to say others do not lay rush of their thoughts as well as bad and inappropriate judgments on a man in their own mind's setting, and one's respect and reputation is preserved even in the setting of others' mind. Of course, discussion about each of these securities needs long talks. Herein, we only want to discuss about the latter type that is security in view of judgments of others.

It goes without saying that what is possible to provide in view of rules and materialist governments, with connivance of their other faults, is security in life, financial and somehow social reputation respects (of course as far as it is possible to assess the effects of its damage in view of materialistic and legal rules).

But, mental security in both parts, specially being safe from bad judgments of others is only possible through divine doctrines and heavenly religions, as we know the areas of heart and mind are out of access of such rules and executive forces generally having a material aspect, and lacking the least impression on these parts.

Only religious beliefs and ethical principles, particularly in Islam, containing extensive and considerable instructions for achieving this objective, as one of its great privileges, can penetrate into these areas and make it safe.

Qur’an explicitly instructs the believers:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ

O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a crime. (49:12)

The phrase "most of suspicion" may indicate that a major part or most of the suspicions of people about each other are "evil ones", and thereby Qur’an warns people about the great risk threatening their security in the minds of others, and has introduced it as a "general affection site".

However, the phrase "some suspicion is a sin", considering its previous phrase, may indicate that suspicions of people about each other may be partly based on the reality, but surely a part of them is against reality, as a sin and disobedience. Thus, intellect orders to avoid all types of suspicion for not being affected to this part.

In the Islamic traditions too, it is so emphasized on avoidance from suspicion on the believers that we read in a tradition from Prophet (S):

«إِنَّ اللهَ حَرَّمَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِ دَمَهُ وَ مالَهُ وَ عِرْضَهُ وَ اَنْ يُظَنَّ بِهِ ظَنَّ السَّوءِ.»

God has forbidden blood, wealth, reputation and suspicion about a Muslim.[1]

This tradition is particularly noteworthy since it has placed security in four aspects

(financial, life, reputation, and mental) besides each other, and has forbidden all of them in a single phrase.

Sources of suspicion and pessimism

Suspicion and pessimism in mental view may appear sometimes lightly and sometimes acutely and severely, that is as a mental disease , and anyway it could be the effect of various causes, including:

1- It often happens that source of suspicion is the sense of revenge and malice and envy, and since a man can not take vengeance practically on the other person, and or express it by his tongue, so he retreats to the areas of mind and heart, and causes a sedition there, trumps up him, and judges and rebukes and blames him, and thereby seeks relief of his mind. That is to say whatsoever he could not find outwardly, he seeks in his mind and imaginations, and on this account, and he feels a sort of false enjoyment and tranquility from his action.

This originates from a sort of "subjectivism" and "mental escape from realities" and "resorting to fancy" which is proved today in psychoanalysis. The sense does not appertain to this case. Rather, all cases in which man's desires are not satiated outwardly, and retreat to unconscious inner sense as repressed, man seeks for visionary and fanciful substitutes in order to fill the vacuum created in that respect. Sometimes, he seeks them in the dreamy world (a part of dreams are the effect of this cause).

And sometimes he seeks them in the world of "poetic imaginations" and "dreams in wakefulness", and for this reason, the able poets in whose poems there are affection, enthusiasm, influence and mirth, are those who in addition to poetic talent, have faced disappointments, loss and failures, fiery kindness' and unsuccessful loves, and have sought their lost and beloved one in the world of imaginations among the poetic masterstrokes and literary niceties, and thereby their imagination power has extremely developed.

In brief, "mental escape towards fancy" is the source of a lot of mental events, including suspicion, pessimism and mistrust.

2- Sometimes, the source of suspicion is impurity and taint of man, as too much optimism originates from the purity and serenity of a man. That is to say a man assumes the others good or bad based on the principle of "self comparison". This is particularly apparent in low knowledge and simple persons.

3- Excusing or reducing one's own punishment in the court of conscience is also one of the other causes of suspicion, because in this way he tries to create some partners for his offences, and suspects on the others for justifying his own ill deeds, and showing them less effective and more usual, and saying that I am not the only one being involved in this state.

4- Suspicion may originate from pride and selfishness, because such people intend to show themselves superior to the others in any way, and so try to create some weak points for the others in the environment of their mind, and devaluate them through different probabilities, and elevate their own value.

5- Educational environment and suggestions of parents and teacher are also important causes of pessimism and suspicion.

6- Association with unrighteous individuals too is one of the causes of suspicion, because the criterion for general judgements of man is often a defective induction which he makes about the individuals dealing with them, as judgements of persons about the people of a city or a village or a country is based on the special individuals having contact with them.

If the associates of a man are unrighteous, he will naturally become pessimistic to all people.

It is mentioned in Islamic traditions:

«مُجالَسَةُ الأشْرار تُورثُ سُوءَ الظّنّ بِالأخْيار.»

Association with evildoers causes suspicion in the righteous. 2

7- Sometimes suspicion has a real source that is when corruption dominates on the people of a certain time or place, so that a man becomes suspicious to every thing based on this intellectual principle that "Suspicion connects everything to its popular sample"

«الظّنّ يُلْحِقُ الشَىْءَ بِالأعَمّ الأغْلبِ.»

Social losses of mistrust

Social losses of this moral vice are too much and its undesirable effects are widespread and extensive, such as:

1- Suspicion causes social misunderstanding, as those suffering from this condition, look everything pessimistically, and involve in numerous mistakes in recognizing the situation of individuals, events and incidents, real causes and motives of the activities occurring in the society, and live in an dreamy world against what really exist, and this "misunderstanding of realities" certainly causes retardation, non exploitation of opportunities and valuable individuals and failure before the events.

2- Suspicion and pessimism are the greatest hindrance for social cooperation as well as unity and solidarity of hearts, and lead man to an individual life, solitude, isolation and individualism and the vices caused by these attributes. Suspicion does not let man trust on the other and find the basis of cooperation with him, and solve the problems with his assistance.

3- Suspicion causes man to spy about the others and as we already referred, spying is the source of slander and its related vices. Holy Qur’an too has indicated to this reality in verse 12, Chambers Surah.

4- Mistrust is the source of enmities, and sometimes, it is the main cause of bloody wars and battles. There are a lot of families, which are dissociated by mistrust, and there are a lot of competent and dignified men who are killed for mistrust about them. And sometimes

suspicion has illuminated the flame of great wars. We read in the occasion of revelation of the noble verse:

إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

If an evil-liver bring you tidings, verify it, lest ye smite some folk in ignorance and afterward repent of what ye did. (49:6)

When suspicion and pessimism of "Valid Ebne Aghabeh" was about to cause destruction of a tribe, and Holy Qur’an prevented this great tragedy through instructing for clarification and investigation.3

5- Suspicion extinguishes kindness and friendship, and develops hypocrisy and dissimulation among friends, because such person has to affect friendship with his friends apparently, while his interior is not so, and has a mistrust on them, and this behaviour leads to development of spirit of hypocrisy and dissimulation in him.

Summarizing this, the social vices and losses of suspicion and mistrust are more than what are usually supposed, and what we have mentioned above is actually a part of these vices.

Individual losses of suspicion

In addition to social losses, suspicion and mistrust have a lot of irrecoverable losses. Mentioned below are some of important points:

1- Mistrust is the source of spirit distress and torture of body, as well as anxiety and worry. Pessimistic people are often worried, and suffer for their imaginations about the individuals and events. They escape association with individuals, which is one of the normal and effective means of spiritual mirth, because they assume utterances or actions of people as jests and quips for themselves.

They fear of confabulation, which is a useful means for relieving pains and distresses, because they think that it may cause disclosure of their secrets and or other problems. And on this account, they are often depressed, mirthless and sad, and gradually become a useless and idle being.

If this condition of "mistrust" is intensified in man, it will become so serious that he is afraid of everything and everyone, sees all events harmful, assumes normal deeds of individuals as plans against himself, and supposes everybody determined in destruction or trouble of himself.

Obviously, this condition should be included among the mental diseases and out of ethics.

Basically, all moral vices are related to ethics until they have not passed the normal limits, and only moral trainers should treat them. But when they are abnormal, they are considered as a disease, and out of subject of ethic. Excessive envies, excessive prides, excessive spites, excessive blatancies, and such like are all included in this part.

It is interesting that in the Hypocrites Surah, while mentioning the conditions of hypocrites, the issue of suspicion and mistrust are accounted among their attributes and it says: they are so suffering from suspicion that:

يَحْسَبُونَ كُلّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ...

They deem every shout to be against them. (63:4)

And this is one of their worldly punishments.

Of course, this type of suspicion is normal for evil doers, as based on the principle of "self comparison", they suppose the others are aware of their situation, and are going to punish or take vengeance on them, and consequently they always fear.

2- Mistrust about the "people" sometimes leads to mistrust and suspicion on the Creator, and also is transmitted to the basis of man's religious beliefs. Sometimes, they suspect on "Divine Justice" and sometimes in "Divine Power".

They may also doubt in invitation of divine prophets, and in the depths of their heart, assume their invitation as a sort of histrionics for domination on people and attraction of commons, although they may apparently be faithful to the religious principles.

Non submission of most of evil doers and hypocrites to the invitation of prophets may have been caused thereof.

3- Pessimistic people are often deprived from the inner purity, because they are always slandering about the others in their heart, and thereby some of ethics scholars have called suspicion "slander with heart".

This was a part of individual losses of suspicion and pessimism.

Ways of countering with suspicion

First of all, there is a problem in this discussion which should be solved, that is:

Most often, suspicion is not a freewill affair to be avoided. Rather, in most cases, when observing a vision, or hearing an utterance, or remembering a memory (with special mental backgrounds about the other person), a suspicion appears unwillingly in man's mind. So, how is it possible to avoid it?

The following well-known tradition too proves this sense:

«ثَلاثٌ لا يَسْلَمُ مِنْها اَحَدٌ: اَلطِّيَرَةُ وَ الْحَسَدُ وَ الظّنّ.»

There are three things that no one is secure from them: forebode, envy and suspicion.

The researchers have paced different ways for solving this problem:

1- Some believe that suspicion is not forbidden instinctively, and express the famous prophetic tradition as their proof:

«ثَلاثٌ فِی الْمُؤْمِنِ لا یُسْتَحْسَنّ وَ لَهُ مِنْهُنّ مَخْرَجٌ، فَمَخْرَجُهُ مِنْ سُوءِ الظّنّ اَنْ لا یُحَقِّقَهُ.»

There are three unfavourable things in the believer, and it is possible for him to escape them, and it is possible to escape suspicion through not giving a follow-up to it. 4

2- Some others say avoiding suspicion refers to not giving a follow-up to it heartily and outwardly. In other words, he shall not establish "heart conclusion", which is freewill, in his heart, and not to feel a hate and disgust to the suspected person, and not to change his relations and behaviour with him outwardly. Thus, non-realization of suspicion refers to the same wide sense of word including mind and outward.

There is no doubt that these two are both against the appearance of the verse for avoiding suspicion and the traditions mentioned in this part, because they have forbidden suspicion itself, and there is not any hearty establishment aspect to be evitable.

But the issue of belief and hearty establishment is a freewill affair (because belief and faith is something else than knowledge, as it has been already proved), but hate and disgust are not so.

3- The reality is that although suspicion is not voluntary at the beginning, but its continuation is optional, because it usually originates from a series of unreal factors that cause such a supposition due to precipitancy and hurry in judgement. Hence, one can soon avoid it through thinking and studying about the matter, and subtilizing in different probabilities, and thus it is greatly emphasized in the narrations and traditions that a man should try and do his best for finding correct probabilities in the Muslims affairs, and avoid primary perspectives.

Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

«وَلا تَظُنّنّ بِکلِمَة خَرَجَتْ مِنْ اَخِیکَ سُوءاً وَ اَنْتَ تَجِدُ لَها فِی الْخَیْر مَحْمِلا.»

Do not suspect on the utterance, which you hear from your brother as far as you find a proper way for it.5

Therefore, only sudden hearty perspectives are out of will, but stable and durable suspicion is a freewill affair, and this sense is completely compatible with the appearance of the noble verse, traditions concerning forbiddance of suspicion.

Seemingly, the phrase:

«كذِّبْ سَمْعَکَ وَ بَصَرَکَ عَنْ اَخِیکَ.»

Deny your eye and ear about your brother.6

Which is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) addressing Mohammad Ebne Fosail, may refer to attempt for finding proper senses and avoiding primary perspectives.

Methods of treating suspicion

Now that the meaning of forbiddance of suspicion is made clear, it is the time of referring to the methods of treating it.

As we have repeatedly said, we shall always seek the way of treating mental, physical and moral diseases in the causes of their appearance.

On this account, considering the discussion we made in respect to the sources and factors of suspicion, we conclude that:

1- For removing suspicion, first of all we shall engage in correcting ourselves so that if we compare others with ourselves, it does not cause assuming them vicious and evil doer, and also when we are correcting ourselves, we shall be reminded always that it is not correct to assume the others like ourselves. They may possess mentalities much superior and better than us. We shall pay attention that self-comparison which may be one of the aspects of man's self-love, has no logic and scientific foundation, and should not be considered as the basis of our judgement about the others.

2- We shall purify our environment which may be the source of our suspicion and mistrust, and not associate with the evil doers which may be the source of suspicion on good doers, and note that such poisonous associations, in addition to their other numerous disadvantages, darken the environment of our mind in evaluation of personality of others, and lead us to great mistakes in identification of individuals. These mistakes not only cause moral and spiritual losses, but also deprive us from exploitation of mental and moral resources of competent individuals due to suspicion.

If our educational environment in the childhood has been unhealthy in this respect, we shall wash away the effects of childhood period from our mind through suggestion and studying the conditions of good doers, and association with the pure persons, for compensation of the suggestions causing our present pessimism.

3- We shall regularly envisage the individual and social losses of mistrust and the great dangers threatening us and the society in this way, and repeatedly remember the previous discussions which we had in this respect, and consider this reality that if mistrust is temporarily effective in relieving our "sense of vengeance" or "selfishness", and creates a false transitory peace in us, it has also irrecoverable losses for us which are not comparable with its assumed advantages.

4- If the source of our suspicion and pessimism is moral deviations of others, malice and

selfishness, justification of our evil deeds and escaping the chastisement of conscience, we shall become aware of these sources in our mental analysis, and transfer these factors from the mind's unconscious stage to conscious stage.

Since this point is very important in treating moral deviations that when incentives from mind's unconscious stage influence on the deeds and thoughts of man, we shall transfer them to conscious stage through psychoanalysis. It has a deep impression in improvement of our status, and pay attention that this issue is greatly discussed and concerned in the present psychoanalysis.

Reminder

At the end of this discussion about suspicion, it is noteworthy that suspicion and mistrust is logical only when majority of individuals are deviated and corrupted in an environment. In such case, one cannot have good opinion on the dubious person based on probabilities; because the possibility of corruption about each person is more, but it should be notified that in such environments too, man shall not take into consideration his suspicion save in what is concerned with precautionary aspects.

In other words, while observing necessary precautions, one shall avoid affectation to the deeds with the savour of suspicion and mistrust on the individuals, and this possibility should never be neglected that the suspected person may be one of the righteous minority of the society, and this attitude should be restricted to those vices which have involved majority of society. But, in other cases, good opinion should be completely observed.

The famous tradition narrated from Imam Ali (A.S.) may refer to the same reality, where it says:

«إِذَا اسْتَوْلَى الْفَسادُ عَلَى الزّمانِ فَاَحْسَنَ رَجُلٌ الظّنّ بِرَجُل فَقَدْ غَرَرَ.»

When corruption breaks out at a time, good opinion of individuals to each other causes being deceived. 7

1. Feise Kashani, Mohajjatol Beisae, 268/5
2. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 197/74, narration 31
3. Please study the occasion of revelation under verse 6, Surah 49, in the Example Commentary (Tafsir Nemouneh)
4. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 201/75
5. Kelini, Kafi, 362/2
6. Kelini, Kafi, 147/8
7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 197/75, narration 18

A Healthy Society under the Grace of

Ethics

Without ethic, the plan of a healthy society is defeated

We know that man has a social life, and undoubtedly, "society" is the most important factor in development, improvement and or retardation and degeneration of men.

The sociologists believe that man without society loses everything (sciences and knowledge, mental perfection, affections, and even speaking and similar subjects).

The situation of children being isolated from the human society for any reason, and trained in an inhuman environment, like "forest", besides wild animals, proves this matter. In history, we have repeatedly observed such children. Neither they could speak and comprehend high concepts of human life, nor there was any trace of humanistic affections in them, and their behavior and deed was just like wild animals of forest.

Observing the situation of desert wanderers and nomadic tribes, whose society is very limited and small, and their communication with others is less, is a good proof for showing that if man loses the society, what will be his destiny!

This and a lot of other evidences exactly approve the belief of sociologists that "society is prior to the individual". Of course, an individual as a "living being" may be prior to the society, but as a "human", he will not be prior to the society.

And also for this reason, the more social relations of man develop, the more his civilization, although in special aspects, improves.

Facility of communication tools in the present world, which has caused more proximity and contact of individuals, is one of the main causes of formation of present civilization, and also is considered as a criterion for assessment of degree of civilization in different countries of world.

Privileges of man's social life

Of course, social life is not restricted to man, because we know a group of insects as "social insects", like honey bee and termite, which enjoy a considerably respectable social life, and there is also a group of "social birds" among the birds, like swallows and storks, and there is a class of "social animals" among the wild animals like most of the monkeys.

Social life of such animals may be even more developed than men in some aspects. For example, in the beehive even does not exists an idle and hungry one, while it is not so in the most developed industrial countries of world.

Method of distribution of work and income among them is very interesting and strange, and is peerless in human environments.

However, their social life has two basic differences, totally separating them from man's social life:

a- Social life of animals, whatever superior and more developed it may be, is limited to special parts, and the appearances of their social life are only summarized in some limited subjects, including nest, collecting purveyance, training infant, and such like, while the appearances of social life in man are much more, and approximately infinite, and not restricted to one or more subjects.

b- Social life of animals is completely uniform and without any change and alteration, and in other words, they are always repeating the same so that for example, the present beehives are completely similar to the petrified beehives of several millions years ago which are discovered currently, and this certifies that engineering and in general, form of their life is not changed during these long years.

While even during one century or less, the form of social life of man is so changed in all stages that basically it is not comparable with the past.

These two great differences distinguish man's social life from other animals.

In summary, whatever perfection a man has achieved, either in mental, practical and moral aspects, or in material and industrial sections, or the other sections, he has indebted to the society, and without society, the civilization and humanity and such like will never be meaningful.

Source of formation of society

There are a lot of words among sociologists about why man has exceeded social life, and accepted its relatively difficult rules and regulations, but typically we can mention following opinions:

1- Some believe that sense of solidarity is included in man's nature, and he seeks for the society according to an instinctive inspiration.

2- Some others say fearing dreadful natural factors and wild animals has been the cause of first tendency of man to social life.

3- Some others believe that the "instinct of employment", existing in man, has made him to social life.

4- Some others say present social life is the result of a series of customs and habits, which has gradually led to this form.

5- Some others recognize development of man's requirements and his disability in fulfilling them as the factor of man's social life.

6- Some believe that man's social life is the result of family life and gradual expansion of families.

7- And finally some say that discovering this concept that why man has intended to social life since millions of years ago when man is created, is not possible. Because, lapse of centuries and ages has obscured this and similar issues and we do not have sufficient documents available for judging in this respect.

Although the recent view seems more realistic than the other opinions and judgments about the main cause of man's attention to the society in the past is not an easy task, but

obviously first of all, present continuation of this social life is indebted to "desire in perfection" and "development of man's requirements" and "disability in fulfilling them".

It should be explained that on one hand man sees that his corporeal requirements including cloth, food, house, medicine, and his spiritual requirements, including sciences, knowledge, training, various tastes and initiatives, and feeling spiritual security and attracting others' affections are so extensive and numerous that it is not possible for one to fulfill all of them alone. Rather, supplying each of these requirements, according to the fastidious nature of human, should be performed by the individuals and groups being proficient and skillful in their task.

And on the other hand, man's escape from monotony and uniformity of life and willing to a better and more perfect life,–the features of man's life, which are rarely found in the animals, make him to join social life, because this objective is not possible unless thanks to the accumulation of different thoughts, powers and talents. These two are the most important factors making man to continue his social life.

Social value

Although, all people are the same in all regulations in view of social rights, and the principle of equity before law is one of the most basic foundations of progressive legal rules, but observance of this principle does not account that value of individuals is actually equal in the society.

Rather, it is mostly due to unavailability of any other way for preserving discipline and preventing misuses of the arrogant and influential classes and colonization of man by man. Otherwise, it is undeniable that social value of individuals is very different.

For example, the existence value of a resourceful, gracious and competent scientist is never equal with an illiterate, improvident and vicious person. But if we want to consider privileges in view of social rights, it will result in the corruptions, the harms of which are much more than observance of difference in social values.

In general, social value of individuals depends upon the degree of utilization of the society from them, and the wisely valuable utterance of Prophet (S) in this respect may refer to this reality, where he says:

«خَيْرُ النّاس اَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنّاس.»

The best people are the most beneficial ones.[1]

Islam and social concerns

Undoubtedly, no religion has respected relation of individual and society, and has strengthened the social chains by its decrees and regulations like Islam. Of course, a divine and eternal religion, guaranteeing education of hidden talents of man, and his perfection and progress should certainly be so.

For understanding the importance of society in view of Islam, and special concern of Islam to this subject, studying following instructions is sufficient:

1- If you do not surprise, there is not even one individual instruction among the basic instructions of Islam! The best reason is enactment of Islamic jurisprudence, consisting of sorbs, transactions and policies. There is no need for explaining the sociality of the second and third parts making the major part of jurisprudence. In the first part too, which is based on relation of creature with Creator, the spirit of society patently governs on it.

Daily obligations, which are the most important Islamic sorbs, are so mingled with social concepts that separating them is difficult, and when they are performed individually it seems that they have lost their real sense.

For instance, the introduction of prayer, which is "prayer call and prayer perform" is nothing else than a public invitation and declaration to the society, and performing this obligation in congregation, and in case of solitude, it does not have any sense save preserving a practice and establishing a sort of mental readiness for inclusion in this obligation.

Al- Hamd sura, which is the beginning of the prayer and includes the main invocation and supplication, is uttered in a plural form (**اِهْدِنا). - نَسْتَعينُ - نَعْبُدُ**) And the salutation at the end of prayer is in a plural form, and in case of solitude, it nearly loses its main concept. All of these indicate that the foundation of this great obligation is based on society, and moreover, strange and unique emphases are made in respect to performing this obligation in congregation.

Among Islamic sorbs, pilgrimage is stronger than the others in view of disregard to the material world and its formalities, attachments and privileges, and notice to the realities is observed therein very strikingly, but it is strange that nevertheless in view of "social appearance" and its effects, it is stronger and more rooted than all other sorbs.

2- Importance of social relations in view of Islam is so high that it is considered as one of the signs of God and indications of monotheism, where it says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدّةً وَرَحْمَةً

And of His signs is this: He created for you helpmeets from yourselves that ye might find rest in them, and He ordained between you love and mercy. (30:21)

3- Holy Qur’an reiterates that one of the miraculous deeds of Prophet (S) was creation of more friendship among the hearts, where it says:

هُوَ الّذِي أَيّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ

He it is Who supporteth thee with His help and with the believers,
And (as for the believers) hath attuned their hearts. (8:62, 63)

The above verse makes an interesting reference to this point that material things could not create friendship alone, because they themselves, in contrary with belief and spirituality, are the causes of scattering, disturbance and struggle.

It is remarkable that in this phrase of Qur’an, confirmation of the believers is immediately mentioned after divine confirmation, and this shows the high importance of the subject.

4- Qur’an calls scattering and hypocrisy as one of the divine chastisements:

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيَعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ

Say: He is able to send punishment upon you from above you or from beneath your feet, or to bewilder you with dissension and make you taste the tyranny one of another. (6:65)

And somewhere else Qur’an has placed it besides the burning fire, which swallows and incinerates everything:

وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا

And (how) ye were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it. (3:103

5- Qur’an calls the relation of believers "brotherhood" which is the nearest and more respectful family relations established based on equal and mutual respect.

6- In Islamic instructions, there are a few sins equal with creating enmity and scattering among people, as there are a few good deeds equal with bringing hearts of people together.

It is narrated from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.) in Ehtejaj book:

«اِنَّ مِنْ اَكْبَرِ السِّحْرِ النَّمِيمَةُ يُفَرِّقُ بِها بَيْنَ الْمُتَحابِّيْنَ وَ يُجْلِبُ الْعَداوَةُ عَلَى الْمُتَصافِينَ وَ يُسْفَكُ بِهَا الدِّماءُ وَ يُهْدَمُ بِهَا الدُّورُ وَ

يُكْشَفُ بِهَا السُّتُورُ، وَ النَّمّامُ اَشَرُّ مَنْ وَطِىءَ الاَرْضَ بِقَدَم.»

The most important charm (in view of effect of causing disunity) is gossip, which causes dispersion among the friends and attracts enmity. A lot of bloods are shed as a result of it, and the houses are ruined, and the secrets and mysteries of people will be disclosed. The informer is the worst one stepping on the earth.2

Moreover, it should be considered that in some of Islamic traditions, charm is compared with blasphemy.

7- Islam even does not permit Muslims, save in exceptional cases, to sulk each other so that their amity is weakened and the cordiality of their friendship is decreased.

In the numerous traditions being narrated from Islamic leaders in this respect, it is forbidden in a harsh tone in more than seven traditions, and if inevitable, its permitted limit is determined to be three days.

Prophet (S) says:

»لا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِم اَنْ يَهْجُرَ اَخاهُ فَوقَ ثَلاثَةِ اَيّام.»

It is not permitted for a Muslim to sulk more than three days with his religious brother.3

And in another tradition, he says:

»نُهىَ عَنِ الْهجْران، فَمَنْ كانَ لابُدّ فاعِلا فَلا يَهْجُر اَخاهُ اَكْثَرَ مِنْ ثَلاثَةِ اَيّام، فَمَنْ كانَ هاجِراً لِاَخِيهِ اَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذلِکَ كانَتِ النّارُ اَوْلى بِهِ.»

Sulking is forbidden, and one who performs it of necessity, shall not be in sulks with his brother more than three days. One, who is in sulks more than this, is more worthy of the Fire.4

In these traditions, Islamic leaders have introduced continuation of sulk as exclusion from Islam's reality, and taking the lead in placation as the cause of taking the lead in entry to paradise.

8- In Islam, kindness, friendship, equality, assistance and cooperation are the certain duties of each Muslim, and all are obliged to observe these principles.

We read in a tradition from Imam As-Sadiq (A.S.):

«يَحِقّ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ الاِجْتِهادُ فِى التّواصُلِ، وَ التّعاوُنُ عَلَى التّعاطُفِ، وَ الْمُواساةُ لاِهْلِ الْحاجَةِ، وَ تَعاطُفُ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى بَعْض، حَتّى تَكُونُوا كما اَمَرَكُمُ اللهُ عَزّ وَ جَلّ رُحَماءُ بَيْنَهُمْ.»

It is obligatory for the Muslims to try for bringing their hearts together, and do not neglect cooperation mixed with kindness, observe equity among the needy, and express their affection to each other to become the proof of utterance of God "they are kind with each other".5

9- Islam has not only mentioned the matters of friendship, kindness, social cooperation, and equity as a command and obligation, but also has offered comprehensive plans for bringing forth these commands.

Thus, in one hand Islam has forbidden the factors causing dispersion, hypocrisy and scattering, including slander, gossip, overriding, strictness in adjudication, suspicion, mis-nomination, too much humour, and on the other hand has eulogized the factors resulting in consolidation of kindness, friendship and mutual trust, such as visiting, shaking hands and embracing, good opinion, expressing friendship to each other, defending the reputation of each other in one's absence, reconciliation of difference and disunion, attempt in fulfilling supplications of each other and such like, and thereby Islam has founded a humanistic society in its full sense based on real affections, and has proceeded this issue as far as has called it one of the most essential means of life.

Prophet (S) says:

«اِنّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيَسْكُنُ اِلَى الْمُؤْمِنِ كما يَسْكُنُ الْقَلْبُ الظَمآنُ اِلَى الْماءِ الْباردِ.»

The same tranquility, which the thirsty feel when finding water, the believers feel in solidarity with each other.6

Furthermore, it is inferred from this interpretation that the need of society's individuals to social life is based on a natural and normal need, without which it is not possible for a man to live.

10- It is noteworthy that Islam has never contented to any limit of social relations, and is continuously trying for making these relations more strong and nearer, and proceeds in this part as far as it says: there should be such a spiritual relation among the believers that even their bodies are influenced.

Prophet (S) in a tradition says:

«اَلا وَ اِنّ وُدّ الْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ اَعْظَمِ سَبَبِ الاِيمانِ ... اَلا وَ اِنّ

«الْمُؤْمِنَيْنِ اِذا تَحابّا فِی اللهِ عَزّ وَ جَلّ وَ تَصافَیا فِی اللهِ کانا کالْجَسَدِ الْواحِدِ اِذَا اشْتَکی اَحَدُهُما مِنْ جَسَدِهِ مَوْضِعاً وَجَدَ الْاٰخَرُ اَلمَ ذلِکَ الْمَوْضِعِ.»

Pay attention that friendship with a believer is one of the greatest causes of belief, and two believers who make friends with each other for God, become like a body so that when one of them feels discomfort in one part of his body, the other too feels pain in the same part.7

It is deduced from above tradition that sometimes friendship and relation of two believers becomes so strong and solid that their bodies are unified, and when one of them feels discomfort in one of the organs of his body, the similar organ will become painful in the body of the other without any special cause. That is to say the relation of spirits is so strong that the complications of each body are transferred to the other (as it is narrated about some of Prophet's (S) companions).

This is not unlikely considering two introductions.

First, the relation of spirit with body is so close that mental discomforts leave a deep effect in the body. Nowadays, psychiatrists believe that most of physical diseases do not have any special physical cause, such as organ disorders or microbes, and are merely the effect of mental distresses.

Second, it is currently proved that transmission and exchange between two minds is possible even from remote distances. In other words, two persons can create a mental relation with each other through a particular spiritual agreement and or exercise without any physical means, and transmit their thoughts to each other's brain. This is called telepathy.

So, it is possible for distresses of a person to be transmitted to his friend through mental relation, and then that particular distress will influence on his body, and make the similar organ painful.

11- Joining to great assemblies: Islam instructs people to join greater assemblies.

Imam Ali (A.S.) in a sermon for repressing the thoughts of divisive minority of "Kharijites" (Rebels) says:

«وَ الْزَمُوا السّوادَ الاْعْظَمَ فَاِنّ یَدَ اللهِ مَعَ الْجَماعَةِ وَ اِیّاکُمْ وَ الْفُرْقَةَ فَاِنّ الشّاذّ مِنَ النّاسِ لِلشّیْطانِ کما اَنّ الشّاذّ مِنَ الْغَنَمِ لِلذِّئْبِ... وَ اِنّما حُکِّمَ الْحَکمانِ لِیُحْیِیا ما اَحْیَا الْقُرْآنُ وَ یُمِیتا ما اَماتَ الْقُرْآنُ، وَ اِحْیاؤُهُ الاِجْتِماعُ عَلَیْهِ وَ اِماتَتُهُ الاِفْتِراقُ عَنْهُ.»

Be with the great majority because Allah's hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You

should beware of division because the isolator from the group is (a prey) for Satan just as the isolator from the flock of sheep is (a prey) for the wolf. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what Qur’an revives and to kill what Qur’an kills. Revival of Qur’an means uniting each other and acting accordingly, and killing it refers to scattering and isolation from it.8

Studying in the life of predecessors too indicates that smaller societies have been always more retarded in view of culture and appearances of human civilization, and developed cultures and civilizations have appeared in the great and extensive societies.

Thus, in the above phrases, first it is invited to attend in the great societies, and then it refers that God's hand is over such societies, and in contrast, the single footers are the victim of Satan, and are excluded from divine support, and the similitude mentioned in the next phrase shows that overcoming the social problems and salvation from the paws of wolfs is only possible within the society, and thereby, the more massive and condense society results in the more powerful and victorious society against the events.

And finally, he says in the last phrases that reviving Qur’an means gathering and uniting around it, and killing it means scattering and proceeding in a path alone!

Moreover, we can use two following issues for showing Islam's attempt for the greater societies:

1- In view of Islam, significance of each congregation prayer depends on the number of its participants, and also the reward of mosques, including Bazar mosque, city's great mosque and the mosques belonging to the Muslims, and finally The Sacred Mosque, which is the greatest center of Islamic society, is in proportion with their social situation.

2- Islam has encouraged breeding and increasing population. Prophet (S) says:

«اُطْلُبُوا الْوَلَدَ فَاِنِّی مُکاثِرٌ بِکُمُ الاُمَمَ غَداً.»

Desire child because I will boast in the day of resurrection for plentitude of your population.9

It should be noted that plentitude of population may cause discomforts and problems in some societies in view of insufficient foodstuffs, and such like, but these transitory and exceptional problems can never devaluate human resources for a society. These problems may occasionally occur for those nations for example lacking abundant underground resources or agricultural products and such like.

Social seclusion

Reaction of dissociability and monkery in retardation of individual and society

The sociologists believe that social seclusion, in any form and in any case, have very unfavourable effects in the spirit and body of individual and society.

This is approved both in respect to those living in seclusion, and also the tribes and nations

and in general the groups living separately for social, political and or geographical reasons.

One of the sociologists, Rousse, in his book "Principles of Sociology" has studied the effects of social seclusion on a large number of prisoners being imprisoned in individual cells. He says: Ten percent of them have died or committed suicide or become insane after one year, and the others too have suffered from a sort of mental disease (depression).

Then he adds: among the individual prisoners, the challenge of social spirit of a person against death is really pathetic, because sometimes only offering one flower or one candy to a prisoner may quench his thirst for social contact and save him from death.

He stipulates about the monks and coenobites that seclusion has ill effects in their spirit, and causes depression, despair, delusion and most often a sort of mental disorder.10

The effects of social seclusion in desert travellers and nomadic tribes, who live in a sort of permanent seclusion, are particularly visible, because their retardation is manifest in all mental and social aspects and in proportion with the manner of their tribal seclusion.

In addition, the countries dissociating the others for special political regimes will be involved in retardation in different aspects, if they do not communicate through other means like publications, and such like.

Considering previous discussions and the point that we are indebted all developments to the accumulation of thoughts, experiences and innovations of nations and individuals, the main cause of this issue is completely clear. So, we shall accept that social seclusion is the greatest enemy for perfection of societies and progresses and men's development in all aspects and it is also the source of all types of deviations.

Islam and Monkery

Now, we shall see what the view of Islam in this respect is:

Islam condemns social seclusion and all of its appearances, being commented as monkery. The well-known tradition, "there is not any monkery in Islam" **«لا رَهْبانِيّةَ فِى الإِسْلامِ»**is narrated in most of tradition books. Monkery is commonly applied to those who dissociate and seclude people for worship and fear of God.

Historical origin

This action has been popular among the Indians from old times, and then it became common among Christians. Some believe that its prevalence among Christians or the Jews originated from the repeated defeats, which they suffered from one of the cruel and dictator kings of that time, and then they decided to become scattered and engage in worship in deserts until the promised prophet appears, and delivers them from humbleness and scattering.11

Mental origin

Basically, the mental reaction of various individuals and nations to defeats and failures is different. Some tend to seclusion and subjectivism, and disturb the course of their social thoughts in general, but some others, the number of which is less than the first group,

become more rigorous and harsh, and return from superficial challenge to the rooted and underlying challenges. Monkery is actually the same reaction of defeated individuals and nations of the first group.

Now that we know the historical and mental origin of monkery, and it is made clear that monkery is against man's healthy nature, the following tradition can explain the attitude of Islam towards it:

Osman Ebne Mazoun inclined to monkery as a result of a mental defeat (losing his beloved child) and resorted to worship to relieve his grief. When the Prophet (S) was informed, he forbade him and said:

«اِنّ اللهَ تَبارَکَ وَ تَعالی لَمْ یَکْتُبْ عَلَیْنَا الرُّهْبانِیّةَ.»

The Great God has not assigned monkery for us.

Then he added to it a fundamental phrase:

«اِنّما رُهْبانِیّةُ اُمّتِی الْجِهادُ فِی سَبِیل اللهِ.»

Surely, the monkery of my nation is struggle in the way of God.12

In other words, if monkery means neglecting the pleasures and comforts of life, it should be applied for serving preservation of Islamic principles and magnificence of the society, like warfare.

And it is narrated from Imam Mousabne Ja'far that someone asked him:

«عَنِ الرّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ هَلْ یَصْلُحُ اَنْ یَسِیحَ فِی الاَرْضِ اَوْ یَتَرَهّبَ فِی بَیْت لا یَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ؟ قالَ(علیه السلام): لا.»

Is it permitted for a Muslim to select journey and vagabondage, or monkery, and not going out of house? He said: no.13

Wandering in this tradition may refer to a sort of monkery in the form of tourism without luggage and provision with the purpose of separation from cities and societies and or escaping house and family.

Anyhow, it is deduced from above tradition that monkery and social seclusion, either in the form of sitting at home, closing the door and leaving the world, or in the form of wandering without any means and escaping home, life and society, is condemned in Islam because it is in contradiction with the spirit of Islamic instructions.

Moreover, Holy Qur’an has called monkery, which is common among Christians, a condemned innovation:

وَ رَهْبانِيّةً ابْتَدَعُوها ما كَتَبْناها عَلَيْهِمْ اِلاّ ابْتِغاءَ رِضْوانِ اللهِ فَما رَعَوْها حَقّ رِعايَتِها

And (as for) monkery, they innovated it-- We did not prescribe it to them-- only to seek Allah's pleasure, but they did not observe it with its due observance.[14]

The total of these evidences explains the attitude of Islam towards monkery. And one point remains here unsolved, that is: Has monkery existed in the other religions?

According to the Islamic documents there has been a sort of monkery in Christianity, but very different with the present monkery and program of monks. Because the appearance of above phrase indicates that God has prescribed a sort of monkery for them, with the purpose of seeking God's pleasure, but they did not observe its limits, and invented another one instead of it that Qur’an has called it an innovation.

Now, we shall see what this legitimate monkery meant.

Certainly, in the original Christianity, as per historical and religious documents (even the gospels) there have not been giving up marriage absolutely, social seclusion and separation from society, and habitance in the convents and cloisters, which are among the today's monkery ceremonies.

As per definite documents, a number of apostles and Disciples of Christ married and associated with people.

Therefore, the legitimate monkery may signify the same lexical meaning and fear of God mingled with a sort of asceticism, and being heedless to worldly splendour, and simplicity while living within the society, as Christ (A.S.) and his disciples were.

But the phrase "but they observed it not as it should be observed", has two senses.

First, they did not observe the limits of legitimate monkery, and violated its regulations, and innovated therein, and altered it into monasticism and leaving normal life in the world and giving up marriage absolutely.

Second, they did not observe the same false and innovative monkery, and as it will be later referred, some of them committed unlawful deeds in the covenants instead of righteousness, chastity and being heedless of the world, and proceeded in the way of worldliness, and provided the facilities for revelry, pleasure, and carouse in some of those centres, being established with the name of monkery.

Monkery among Christians

The existing histories of Christianity indicate that monkery, in present form, did not exist in the first centuries of Christianity, and its appearance dates back to third Christian century,

when the Roman Emperor, called Dissious, conflicted vigorously with the Christians, and after being defeated by this Emperor, they escaped and resorted to the mountains and deserts.15

It is noteworthy that the same is narrated in the traditions of Prophet (S), when he said to Ebne Masoud: Do you know whereof monkery originates?

He said: God and His Prophet are more informed.

He said: Some of the unjust rulers appeared after Christ (A.S.), and the believers fought them three times, and when they were defeated, escaped to the deserts and mountains and waited for appearance of the Promised Prophet of Christ (Mohammad (S)), and engaged in worship therein.16

Will Durant, the famous Christian historian wrote a detailed discussion in respect to monks in the volume 31 of his history. He believes that joining of nuns to the monks was started from fourth century A.C., and monkery developed increasingly so that it was in its utmost degree of progress in the tenth Christian century.

Then he narrates a detailed explanation about the situation of convents, and the custom of giving up marriage and attempt of monks for inhabiting the arid lands and agriculture, hand crafts, embroidery and other amusements of nuns.

One of the most basic requisites of monkery was giving up marriage absolutely.

Farid Vajdi narrates in the encyclopaedia that some of the monks assumed attention to the female so satanic that they even did not accept to take a female animal into the house, for the fear of their spirituality to be damaged by its satanic spirit.

However, the history remembers a lot of calamities and tragedies so that Pop "third Inossan" described one of the convents as "lupanar".17

And some of them were a centre for gathering of epicures and secularists and sensual people and the best wines were prepared there.

1. Nahjol Fessahe, page 315
2. Tabarsi, Ehtejaj, 340/2
3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 189/75
4. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, 586/8, narration 8
5. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, 552/8, narration 2
6. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 280/74
7. The same document
8. Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 127
9. Hurr al-Amili, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, 3/14, narration 2
10. Sociology, Samuel King, page 428
11. Refer to the history of "Viel Dorant"
12. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 170/8, narration 112
13. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 119/70, narration 10
14. 57: verse 27
15. Refer to the encyclopedia of twentieth century, article monk
16. Refer to Majmaol Bayan commentary, under verse 27 of Suratul Hadid, and Bihar al-Anwar, volume 70, subject "forbiddance of mockery"
17. Will Durant, history of civilization, 443/13

Social units

The most critical issue in the social life is that how we can form a great and powerful unit from the small units.

Man's society has been in the form of various small and great units from the beginning days.

Following affairs have caused this variety and scattering.

1- Race

First of all, development of family and branching of different families from one family has been the origin of formation of a race, tribe and consequently a social unit, and in fact the first social colour of man is the same colour of race and tribe, and at present too, in the retarded societies, the issue of tribe and race forms the foundation of society, and in some cases, it is so strict that mixing of bloods of two tribes is strictly forbidden.

2- Geographical area

Different tribes, which were separated by race and blood, were gradually mingled, and formed the greater social units, being separated by various geographical areas.

At the beginning, geographical borders had a natural aspect, for example, a valley or big river and or high mountains were sufficient for separating two nations. However, it found an arbitrary aspect, and the natural borders were somehow invalidated by different contracts.

Although, still in most parts of world, natural borders form the geographical borders, for instance, the separation of Britain from France, and China from Japan, and such like are all caused by natural borders, but surely, the border of all countries are not determined by natural borders.

3- Ideology

Finally, formation of social units was based on belief, mentality, and ideology in the more perfect societies. Man understood soon that the issue of race and tribe could not separate the individuals. It is true that consanguine individuals have more common features in the physical and spiritual aspects, but this is never so critical to avoid their coexistence.

And it is easily perceived that difference of geographical areas, either natural or arbitrary, cannot cause separation, especially when the issue of geographical distance was totally solved through the facility of communication and transportation means, and all parts became close to each other.

So, little by little the social units changed into belief and ideological units, and mental borders replaced previous ones.

Division of world's countries into two communist and capitalist blocks is one of the manifest

samples of this sort of classification.

Although, at the beginning it was supposed this classification is an eternal and everlasting one, and the non-possibility of reconciliation between these two doctrines was introduced definite and inevitable, but it was gradually found that the artificial aspect of this division and separation is much more than its real aspect, because there are thousands of common aspects among different classes as compared with aspects of mental and belief disagreement, the source of which is man's unity and unity of structure of his spirit and body resulting in sharing of different objectives.

So, different regimes and ideologies supported the murmur of coexistence among social units, and step by step, it was changed from speech to action.

Although, the friction between the profits of nations and insufficient intellectual development for coordinating these interests still prevents these scattered units to be mingled and united, and form a great unit based on unity of mankind, however, it is proved that none of the previous disunity and scattering factors is a real and inevitable one. This perception makes the way more clear and paves it for the future.

And thus, it is proved that all of human societies can be combined in one unit.

The most powerful social relation

Formation of a great social unit, particularly in the global and international scale, primarily requires following affairs:

1- Facility of communication means

This issue is considerably solved today, and surely it will become better and superior in the future through development in different equipment.

2- Unity of ideology

Although, as we told, it is possible to create a unique society without mental unity based on the "unity of vital interests" and "human common aspects", but there is no doubt that collaboration among different classes and wings of such society will be weak, cold, unstable and mixed with fear, terror and hesitance. And in such conditions, naturally cooperation is limited and precautionary, and such collaboration cannot create a fully organized, alive and happy society.

However, if a rooted mental unity relates the society's individuals to each other, and joins their hearts through strong connections, a very united society along with an extensive and overall cooperation, with full and everlasting understanding and collaboration will be formed.

3- Perfect mental and moral development

For establishment of such society, a sufficient mental development is required for understanding the interests of merger of all human societies in such a great unit in a wide insight, and also sufficient moral development is required for tolerance and digestion of inevitable disagreement points for agreement in common points, and adapting oneself with it.

Of course, the former, that is, believing that cooperation of all men is profitable for all is not so difficult, but the latter that is digestion of disagreement points is not very easy and facile.

It should be explained that understanding that if all human units are gathered in the society, their problems will be less and their solution are easier, is not difficult.

In case of scattering and dispersion, a major part of their most active human and economical powers is wasted. It often happens that the amount of wasted powers is even more than half of the total of their powers and facilities.

For example, the present world in which there is an intensive competition among the East and the West, perhaps more than half of their active human powers are consumed as follows:

Army members, reserve members, informative and intelligence services and their affiliated systems, margraves, customs, challenge with smuggle, scientists and workers who work in the war industries and their affiliated branches. Evidently, if there is not an exigency, such consumption is vain and has no positive social efficiency.

Nowadays, half of budgets are spent for such defensive, war and intelligence costs and other competitions.

Yet, this is when a war does not occur in the world. Otherwise, the costs spent for compensation of destructive actions in small scales (local wars) and great scales (world wars) are really amazing.

All of these are the human and economical powers, which are completely wasted, and there is no reason save separation of human societies from each other. It is just like two commercial institutions spending fifty percent of their capital and time for retreating and repressing each other. It goes without saying that it will have no result save loss and damage for both of them.

Therefore, if a perfect unity is formed among all human societies, the "efficiency" of their activities in all aspects of life will be increased twice.

Everybody can understand this issue well, and can find the results of unity.

But, in respect to moral issues, there is no doubt that individuals are different with each other: difference in taste, tact, way of thinking, being advocate of calmness or severity or moderateness, difference in being sentimental or conceptual, difference in subjectivism or objectivism, in being affective or non affective, in regarding formalities and appearance or disregarding them, in degree of tendency to different scientific, economical and affairs.

It is true that we can make changes and modifications in the belief, affections, thoughts, and desires of different individuals, but anyway these differences are neither deniable, nor completely removable.

The people, who want to have a life full of peace and close cooperation in a great global society, should reach that level of "moral development" that after understanding the realities in respect to difference in mental, spiritual, and moral structure can tolerate and digest the difference points of others.

They should be able to respect desires of others in case of disagreement in marginal issues, as their own desires, and never expect the others to follow them in all cases, and neither impose their desires on them, nor change the marginal issues to the basic ones. Pay attention.

Forgiveness and connivance, heart tolerance, broad-mindedness, tolerance, subtlety, and patience are all the affairs necessary for digestion of these differences in moral view.

Even two persons cannot cooperate closely with each other, save they have perceived this reality and are ready for welcoming it.

Certainly, this moral readiness for digestion of disagreement points is not attainable through negotiation. Rather, it is the affair, which is only possible through purification and education causing sufficient development in moral aspects.

Islam and global unique society

Islam has paved the way for formation of a global unique society in different aspects, because:

First,–Islam appeared in a racist society, where the issue of tribe and gens constituted its infrastructure and the issue of race dominated all of its aspects. Even its cities were not a city in a real sense, because the tribes and gens were completely separate from each other.

However, Islam excluded totally the issue of race from the social issues, and devaluated it in general.

Sometimes, it fought with them with the same logic that their racial society originated from it (unity in blood, unity of original forebear of tribe), and made them understood that if you think in a higher level, the human society are all created from two spouses.

So, all should form one unit:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female. (49:13)

And thereby "human brotherhood" replaced "tribal brotherhood" and "mankind's blood" replaced "tribe's blood".

And sometimes Islam represented them that although the issue of preserving parentage, relation and connection of individuals to tribe as well as gens and forefathers is necessary, but it is not for boasting to the descents. Rather it is for knowing each other through this special social classification.

It is certain that preserving rights of individuals in the societies necessitates that individuals shall be distinguished and recognized from each other, and there is no more natural and correct way than relation to the forefathers, ancestors, nations and tribes, but it should be only a means of knowing, not boasting:

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

And have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. (49:13)

And once Islam notified that "dignity" and "value" of individuals is for their spiritual virtues and carnal habits (virtue and piety), and this is never attainable through heritage, and in other words, if presumably heretical attributes are "beautiful", they are involuntarily beautiful, and cannot be a criterion for personality and dignity.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. (49:13)

And in this manner, Islam has inflicted its final strike on the foundations of racism and the schisms caused by it.

Second, Islam has invalidated the cause of disunion through disregarding geographical borders, either natural or arbitrary, as well as including and expanding its invitation to all countries of world.

We can find this logic of Islam within the numerous phrases in the Holy Qur’an:

a- Qur’anic addresses, save what are specialized to believers, are so generalized that include all nations of world, like the addresses of "O people", "O My Servants", "O Children of Adam" and "O man", which are mentioned in different verses of Qur’an.[1]
In these addresses, all of the world, from any tribe, nation, and country, are included and there is not any trace of different nations in them.

b- Qur’an assumed all of the earth as God's vast territory, as it says:

يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

O my bondmen who believe! Lo! My earth is spacious. Therefore serve Me only. (29:56)

And do not surrender to enemies' pressures.

And somewhere else it instructs to roam all around the earth for observing the remains of annihilated civilizations of the ancestors and taking lesson from their life associated with sin and injustice.

فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

Do but travel in the land and see the nature of the consequence for the deniers! (16:36)

And also it invites people to correction on the earth, and avoiding corruption on it:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof). (7:56)

And someone else it calls the earth the inheritance of righteous and good doers, who finally will govern on it:

أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

My righteous slaves will inherit the earth: (21:105)

c- Holy Qur’an explicitly instructs Muslims not to bind themselves to staying in a particular point in implementation of their divine obligations, and if they cannot implement them in a point, they shall immigrate to the other parts of earth, and it blames and rebukes refraining emigration:

قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا

(The angels) will say: Was not Allah's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein? (4:97)

d- Qur’an has never emphasized on the social units being separated as different territories in such a lot of verses related to the commands, sorts of knowledge and moralities, and this is a clear reason for advocating and defending of Islam from global unique society, and so called "internationalism".

Basically, an ideology based on humanistic principles and human rights should be so.

In other words, there is no geographical classification and border within the Islamic domain and only outside the domain of Islam too, mental and belief borders separate it from the others.[2]

Third, Islam has made an extensive attempt for establishment of a mental unity point and so called "ideological unity" among mankind through its disciplines and ordinances.

It should be noted the mental and belief unity that Islam is its founder, in contrary with the mental and ideological relations of political parties and such like being formed in recent centuries in the world, is not specialized to a particular class, population and nation. Rather,

it is concerned with human society.

And this is assumed as a great privilege for Islamic ideology, which has no regional and classic colour.

But most of political parties and groups in the world and their affiliated philosophical doctrines, although have founded the basis of their activity on mental and procedural unity, but all of them are common in this great "defect" that either they have not had a public and global aspect from the beginning or have lost it later.

We are not going to discuss about the correctness or inaccuracy of such doctrines and parties. We only want to explain that all of them have a great common weak point as not being able to create a mental unity among all men from all races and nations.

But the mental and belief unity, which Islam has founded, does not have a private aspect, and even is not restricted to followers of Islam; rather the followers of other religions too can share it.

And so a comprehensive plan is considered in Islam for protecting the rights of religious minorities living in the Islamic territories, as well as defending their interests, which will be clarified through sufficient study in Islamic resources.

How to create a mental unity

Now, we engage in studying a part of Islamic sciences and instructions, which can help us in achieving this great objective (creation of mental unity among men):

The principle of monotheism, which forms the basis of all Islamic sciences: Islam has completely washed out the "scattered lords" as the sign of diversity of thoughts and ideas and also an effective factor for social discords, and even instructs to its followers that there is no disunity and variety in God's essence and attributes. His essence is extensive and His attributes are all exactly the same.

We know that one of the factors of disunity among people in old ages has been belief in several lords, and each tribe, nation, race and sometimes city had their own "lord" or "lords", and after their conquest over the other nations, that lord too triumphed and was recognized, and at the time of defeat, it was forgotten.

As Albermaleh writes in the chapter related to religious beliefs of Chaldaeans:

At first, in Chaldea too, like Egypt, each city had its own lord. After formation of great states, worshipping the lords of different territories was generalized, and the lord of capital city became "the Lord of Lords"! And thus, at the time of Hamourabi [3], since Babylon was the capital of Chaldea, the lord of this city which was named "Mardouk", was considered as "the Lord of Lords" through Chaldea, and since at the beginning, capital of Assyria's government was Assyria, the lord of this city, which was also called "Assyria" became "the Lord of Lords" of Assyrian people.[4] And he writes about religion of Egyptians:

"... It was not so that all Egyptians worship several common lords. Rather, each city had a separate lord, but once worship of some lords (of course, only in Egypt) was circulated throughout Egypt.

Whenever a city became more important and creditable, dignity of its lords was increased.[5]

The sample of this dispersion of lords appeared in the origin of Islam, that is Hejaz, and especially Mecca, and it was the source and sign of all types of mental and social dispersion and disunity, and since it is evident, there is no need to any proof. Islam terminated this situation with its brilliant instructions and sciences, and the motto of all Muslims became monopoly of deity in the unique God, "There is no God, except Allah", and attention to "Allah", the unique God.

Qur’an says: not only deity on the earth is God; rather He is the only rightful deity throughout the world of creation, where it says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَٰهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَٰهٌ

And He it is Who in the heaven is Allah, and in the earth Allah. (43:84)

And somewhere else it says:

إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَٰنِ عَبْدًا

There is none in the heavens and the earth but cometh unto the Beneficent as a slave. (19:93)

Islam has also expanded the reality of monotheism to the world of creation in its instructions, and introduces the entire world as a unit, originating from a unique source:

مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِنْ فُطُورٍ

Thou (Muhammad) canst see no fault in the Beneficent One's creation; then look again: Canst thou see any rifts? (67:3)

And also Qur’an introduces all living creatures from one single source:

مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

We made every living thing of water? (21:30)

And thereby Islam rejects one of the other basic foundations of polytheism and belief in the lords of species. Because this belief mostly originates from the point that they assumed each of the world's creatures as an independent and separate unit, and considered an independent creator for each of them.

According to Islamic instructions, the creator and lord of this world is not separate from this world, that is, while it is not the same as them, it is not separate from them too.

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

And We are nearer unto him than ye are, but ye see not – (56-85)

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (50:16)

«مَعَ كُلّ شَىْء لا بِمُقارَنَة وَ غَيْرُ كُلّ شَىء لا بِمُزايَلَة.»

He is with everything but not in physical nearness. He is different from everything but not in physical separation.6

Spirit of unity in Islamic instructions

The spirit of unity in the Islamic instructions is not restricted to the principle of "Unity of God" as the basis of all Islamic beliefs. Rather, even in the invitation of prophets and messengers and divine books, Islam considers all of them identical in view of principles, which only have some differences in perfection stages.

Of course, this spirit is also visible in the Islamic scientific ordinances, rules and regulations, because the subject of Islamic ordinances and regulations is only man (man on the condition of maturity and intellect), and there is no other condition.

All Islamic sorbs are common in this sense that they are warner and cause reflection:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

So serve Me and establish worship for My remembrance. (20:14)

And they have a disciplinary effect and lead to simplism and control of rebellious sensual

desires, and educating man. This is the unique spirit of all Islamic sorbs.

Islamic sorbs are all performed in one language, and this is the sign of unity, not for being in Arabic language belonging to a particular nation, rather for being the language of inspiration (and in addition to other reasons, the selection of this language may be for its simplicity, extent of words, derivations, compounds and its special tone).

The spirit of unity is apparent in the Islamic sorbs, especially in congregational sorbs, and in particular in pilgrimage which shows the highest manifestation of spirit of unity, and forms a unit in view of mentality, place and slogans which are expressed by different nations far from each other thousands of parasangs in view of body and soul. This situation has a particular splendour like that of unique system of the world of creation. Basically, the colour of Islam is the colour of creation, and consequently it is in coordination with it.

The arrays of Islamic congregational prayers for a supposed observer, watching the earth from outside, resemble the concentric circles gathering around a centre, and this indicates a perfect unity.

Islamic scales have been adopted based on natural scales as far as possible, which are identical for all, and there is no colour of a special nationality and for determination of some subjects, for instance, pace, palm and such like are used.

Islamic month and year are focused on the circulation of moon and sun (or more correctly circulation of earth around the sun), and they are identical for everybody, and there is no need to technical specialty for understanding them, and there is no difference in them save in view of difference in horizon, which is the natural property of different parts of the earth.

1- Moral development

The forgotten principles without which the world will not experience peace and tranquility.

As we already told, for formation of a real society, especially in a great global scale including all people of world, moral development is required in addition to ideological unity and mental development.

Without a moral development, the people living in a society can never tolerate each other, and solve the opposite sides of different mentalities and dissidences properly.

Like training of other moral aspects, the need of this part to the instructions of prophets and messengers is clearer than any other part, because as we said before, morality without the executive guarantee of belief and the religion of prophets will not have a strong support, and does not exceed a series of inessential perfections and dispensable advices.

Now, we return to the plans prepared in Islam for training and development of social morality in men and preparing them for a social life. Of course, it should be noted that what we refer to hereunder are a part of these widespread instructions, and stating all of them is beyond the capacity of this concise discussion.

Notifying the variation of people in view of creation of body, soul, mentalities and sentiments as it is narrated in the well known tradition:

«لَوْ عَلِمَ النّاسُ كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللهُ هذا الْخَلْقَ لَمْ يَلُمْ اَحَدٌ اَحَداً.»

If people knew how God has created people, no one blamed the other.7

And also a reference is briefly made to the variation in creation as it is narrated from Prophet (S):

«اَلنّاسُ مَعادِنٌ كَمَعادِنِ الذّهَبِ وَ الْفِضّةِ.»

The people are the mines like the mines of gold and silver.8

Taking into account that structure of spirit and sentiments, training and level of knowledge and mental backgrounds of individuals are very different, solves a great deal of association problems, and social conflicts.

For example, we have often seen that parents are very disturbed for an improper deed of a child (such as breaking a vessel or making dirty his cloths), and sometimes they make severe punishments for this little deed and blame the child many times. While if we study the matter correctly, we will see that there is not any reason for angriness, or such blame and reproach.

Surely, neither the knowledge of child about the breakable and non-breakable vessels and the manner of keeping them for minimizing the possibility of falling down and being broken, and decreasing their slip and load on the fingers is sufficient, and nor, even if he knows all of these subjects, he has adequate scientific experience on that matter, and supposing that both his science and experience are sufficient, his physical power is little.

Therefore, if at present we are more skillful in keeping these vessels, it is just for the several experiences and examinations of our childhood, because childhood is the period of trial and acquiring knowledge about the environment with which man has no familiarity.

And if we put ourselves instead of that child, with the same little knowledge and skill, most of his deeds being considered as a great sin and offence by us, are neither a sin, nor an offence!

The same is true about the adults. Some habitudes of my friend may be unfavourable in my view, and I may decide on discontinuing my friendship, but when I consider the educational environment of my friend, and attach his spiritual structure to it, and take into account his mental history, I find that I would do the same if I was instead of him.

My neighbour speaks loudly and disturbs me. When I consider the basis of his sciences and structure of his larynx, nerves, and degree of sensibility of his eardrums, I see that although he is blameful, but his fault is not so great that I felt.

It should not be mistaken. We are not going to introduce people faultless in all of their deeds in this way as the predestinarians believe, and consider spiritual, physical and outward factors as the cause of everything.

On the other hand, hereby we are not going to deny necessity of training, and leave the people as they are so that they do whatsoever they want. Rather, if we take into account these realities, we will have more readiness for solving disputes and removing objections, and will easily tolerate each other. If we excommunicate each other for a little dissidence, it is due to not paying attention to these variations.

2- Forgiveness and pardon

There are a few people being infallible and immune from any mistake and sometimes intentional in violation of others' rights, and if it is to act according to the principle of "vengeance", social conflicts will proceed in a sequential series, and are increasingly intensified, because vindictive attacks are not controllable in view of quality and quantity, and often become more violent.

And supposing that they are controllable and measurable, determination of the degree of first offence is never similar and equal in view of the "wrongdoer" and "one who has suffered offence". Thus, even if the other party is going to observe equality in quantity and quality during his vindictive attack, still he feels that justice is not observed, and so decides on a new revenge, and so the quarrel is resumed.

The reason why the fire of sedition, war, and quarrel is never extinguished in a lot of tribes and nations in the past and present is that each of them replies the crime of the other with a more vigorous crime, and the battle is progressively continued.

The only thing, which can disconnect this sequential series and extinguish the fire of sedition, is the spirit of forgiveness, pardon and connivance.

It should be mentioned herein that those who cut the series of struggle and conflict through forgiveness and connivance, do not merely serve the other party, but also relieve themselves from the certain losses which they will suffer in the future for continuation of struggle, in addition to understanding a great moral virtue.

Moreover, if we study and note properly, we will see that vengeance has no rational profit for the revenge, save a transitory relief and sometimes an unreal superiority, and he is always waiting for the vengeance of other party, while the soothing effect of "forgiveness" is much deeper and the spiritual and social excellence caused by it, is a real one.

In the Islamic resources, it is referred to this matter with interesting and delicate phrases, and it is encouraged, and called as one of the most critical Islamic obligations.

Following samples prove this claim:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ

Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that Allah may forgive you? (24:22)

Above verse indicates this reality that anyway each of you has committed a sin, and as you like God to forgive your sin, you too should forebear your rights in encounters with your

brothers.

Obviously, one who forebears usual vengeance, but remarks the sin of other party through tongue or sulking, has not actually forgiven him. Rather, complete forgiveness is the same forgetting and ignoring completely.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ

And they ask thee what they ought to spend. Say: that which is superfluous. (2:219)

There is an interesting point that expending is not merely concerned with wealth as you ask so much about it. Rather, forgiving one's own rights is more important than financial expending and granting wealth. Certainly, since this forgiveness is against the spirit of seeking vengeance in most people, it is more difficult, while its effect is much more in view of creating discipline and social justice.

This sort of turning from the reply to a question towards another reply is repeatedly observed in Qur’an, and this is one of the attractive points in Qur’an that uncommonly it is not bound to the requested question in its replies. Rather, it considers the real requirement of the other party and answers accordingly.

As when it is questioned about the reason for transformation of falcate, instead of replying to it, Qur’an mentions its advantages and results:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

They ask thee, (O Muhammad), of new moons, say: They are fixed seasons for mankind and for the pilgrimage. (2:189)

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) «ثَلاثٌ وَ الَّذِى نَفْسِى بِيَدِهِ لَوْ كُنْتُ حَلّافاً لَحَلَفْتُ عَلَيْهِنّ: ما نَقَصَ مالٌ مِنْ صَدَقَة فَتَصَدّقُوا; وَ لا عَفا رَجُلٌ مَظْلَمَةً يَبْتَغِى بِها وَجْهَ اللهِ اِلاّ زادَهُ اللهُ بِها عِزّاً يَوْمَ الْقِيامَةِ; وَ لا فَتَحَ رَجُلٌ عَلى نَفْسِهِ بابَ مَسْأَلَةٍ اِلاّ فَتَحَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ بابَ فَقْر.»

Islam's Prophet (S) said: By God, Who my soul is on His hand, there are three things that if I was a swearer, I swore by them: no wealth is decreased for alms, so pay alms, no man forgives an injustice for God's satisfaction, unless God increases his dignity at the day of

resurrection, and no one opens the door of demand to himself, unless God opens a door of poverty to him.9

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) » :عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْعَفْوِ فَإِنّ الْعَفْوَ لا يَزِيدُ الْعَبْدَ إِلاّ عِزّاً فَتَعافَوْا يُعِزّكُمُ اللهُ.«

Do not forget forgiveness, because forgiveness increases man's honour. So forgive each other; God shall honor you.10

عَنْ الْباقِرِ (عليه السلام) » :النّدامَةُ عَلَى الْعَفْوِ اَفْضَلُ وَ اَيْسَرُ مِنَ النّدامَةِ عَلَى الْعُقُوبَةِ.«

Regretting for forgiveness is better and easier than regretting for punishment.11

عَنْ اَبِى الْحَسَنِ (الرّضا) (عليه السلام) » :مَا الْتَقَتْ فِئَتانِ قَطُّ إِلاّ نُصِرَ اَعْظَمُهُما عَفْواً.«

Imam Reza (A.S.) said: When two groups confront each other, one who pardons more, will be helped.12

As it is observed, victory is introduced as one of the direct effects of forgiveness in these traditions.

Its point may signify that vengeance at the time of having power is usually caused by an animal incentive, and so its exact form is observed in the animals too. But forgiveness and pardon is a sign of personality and a sort of self control, majesty and magnificence of spirit which can outshine the burning flame of anger and vindictive, and therefore the more pardon and forgiveness of individuals indicates their higher value and prestige, and so they will be honoured.

Furthermore, vengeance has never succeeded to attract people's respect and or affections towards the avengers, while forgiveness and pardon has a deep effect in attraction of public opinions and provoking affections and feelings in the favour of the pardoner, and this is considered as one of the effective factors in victory.

3- Replying vice with goodness

In Islamic resources, including Qur’an and traditions, it is referred to a more significant and higher stage of pardon and forgiveness, that is, replying vice with goodness!

Undoubtedly, this deed is the highest manifestation of humanistic spirit and requires moral education and special spiritual elegance, and has a miraculous effect in humanizing the hearts filled with enmity.

And also it is the best "lesson" which one can give to the aggressors and wrongdoers. On the other hand, it is the only "punishment" which does not cause any undesirable reaction in the wrong doers, and does not invite them to a new aggression.

All of these aspects have resulted in rendering it as one of the most effective ways in ending the enmities and hostilities.

We read in Qur’an:

ادْفَعْ بِالّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

وَمَا يُلَقّاهَا إِلّا الّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقّاهَا إِلّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

Repel the evil deed with one which is better, then lo! he, between whom and thee there was enmity (will become) as though he was a bosom friend.
But none is granted it save those who are steadfast, and none is granted it save the owner of great happiness. (41:34 & 35)

The first verse points to the miraculous effect of "repel with that which is best" (replying vice with goodness), thanks to which one can change the greatest enemies to the intimate friends.

Then, in the next sentence, it is emphasized that only those are worthy for attainment to this rank who have a plenty share of belief, piety, and moral virtues, as well as a great share of patience and resistance against sensual desires, and these two are undeniable realities.

In fact, wonderful effect of "repel with that which is best" in termination of hostilities originates from this point that aggressors are always waiting for vengeance of the other party, and even they may conscientiously deem themselves deserving for such vengeance, but when, in contrary to this "expectation" and "merit", they see their evil deed is replied fairly, the latent power of their conscience is provoked and embattles them inwardly. Their conscience accounts this for innocence and purity of other party and their own sinfulness and impurity, and superinduces them for upturning. This pressure is so vigorous that a few people can ignore it, and continue their old hostile manner, and on this account, most enemies change their course in this way and become flexible.

In the attractive and subtle comments narrated in the traditions of Prophet (S) and Islamic leaders about this prominent attribute, it is introduced as one of the greatest and highest humanitarian attributes:

قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله) فِی خُطْبَتِهِ: »اَلا اُخْبِرُکُمْ بِخَیْرِ خَلائِقِ الدُّنْیا وَ الْاٰخِرَةِ؟ اَلْعَفْوُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَکَ، وَ تَصِلُ مَنْ قَطَعَکَ، وَ الْاِحْسانُ اِلی مَنْ اَساءَ اِلَیْکَ، وَ اِعْطاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَکَ.«

The Prophet (S) told in one of his lectures: Would you like me to inform you about one of the best moralities of the world and hereafter? Forgiving one who has been unjust with you, and relations with those who have broken their relation with you, and goodness with one who has been unjust with you, and bounty to one who has deprived you.13

According to this tradition which Prophet (S) has expressed it as a public lesson in an assembly of some Muslims (the lecture indicates this sense), the best ethic of this and the other world is "forgiveness" and "repelling vice with goodness". Three out of four phrases mentioned above are concerned with repelling vice with goodness and only one phrase is concerned with forgiveness and pardon.

عَنْ اَبِی جَعْفَر (الْباقِر) (علیه السلام) » :ثَلاثٌ لا یَزیدُ اللهُ بِهِنَّ الْمَرْءَ الْمُسْلِمَ اِلاّ عِزّاً: الصَّفْحُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَهُ، وَ اِعْطاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَهُ، وَ الصِّلَةُ لِمَنْ قَطَعَهُ.«

Imam Al-Baqir (A.S.) told: There are three things which do not result in anything for a Muslim, save honour: forgiving one who has been unjust with him, bounty to one who has deprived him, and relation with one who has broken his relation with him.14

In the above tradition too, three deeds are called the means of honour and power, two of which are concerned with repelling vice with goodness, and one is concerned with forgiveness and pardon.

It should not be mistaken; forgiveness and pardon shall never be confused with submission to an unjust enemy. Rather, submission is the sign of disability and lack of personality and humbleness, but forgiveness is the sign of magnanimity and personality.

Forgiveness and pardon are always in personal concerns towards one that a man is able to take revenge on him, not in social concerns and rights of the society. Even if forgiveness in personal affairs and individual rights results in daring of the other party, it is not a proper and correct action.

4- Stopping violence

Resorting to violence in solving social problems, particularly global and international problems, is one of the most important causes of conflicts and hard struggles as well as dangerous and unpleasant events.

Resorting to violence excites the sense of malice in the hearts and lightens the fire of vengeance.

Resorting to violence not only does not have any effect in relieving crises and problems, but also it often intensifies the crises and increases the problems and a lot of problems of present world originate from it.

Resorting to violence is never advisable, and man shall always spend a high cost for it, and those who commit it, should pay a heavy indemnity for it.

However, this deed, despite of all of its ominous defects, risks and consequences is the first solution which sounds to everybody for solving the problems, because resorting to peaceful solutions and stopping violence has an intellectual aspect and applying violence has an emotional aspect, and we know that man's intellectual growth and development is the latest stage of his growth, while emotion's evolution period is earlier. Most people live in emotional stage and are affected by it.

Childhood is the period of training emotions, and it is clarified through a precise study in situation of present men and societies that people mostly live in childhood ages in intellectual and moral aspect, and for this reason, they often advocate violence and exertion.

Anyway, although in view of common studies, this way is the first one, which attracts the attention, but it is in the last stage in view of value, and resorting to it, is only advised when all other ways are closed.

A brave individual or nation less often resorts to this way for solving his social problems, because most of problems could be solved in peaceful ways and through the power of thinking and ethic.

Islam has put a strenuous emphasis on this critical issue and numerous traditions are narrated from Islamic great leaders about the role of "tolerance"15 in man's life. Citing following traditions may be adequate for realizing Islam's logic in this respect.

عَنِ النّبِیّ(صلی الله علیه وآله): »اِنّ فِی الرّفْقِ الزّیادَةَ وَ الْبَرَکةَ وَ مَنْ یُحْرَمُ الرّفْقَ یُحْرَمُ الْخَیْرَ.«

There is bounty and blessing in tolerance and forbearance, and one who is deprived from forbearance and amenity, will be deprived from goodness.16

In this tradition it is explicitly said that any goodness and blessing exists in tolerance and stopping violence, and those who resort to violence, are deprived from any goodness and blessing, and this logic clarifies the significance of the matter in men's life.

عَنِ النّبِیّ(صلی الله علیه وآله): »لَوْ کانَ الرّفْقُ خَلْقاً یُری ما کانَ مِمّا خَلَقَ اللهُ عَزّوَجَلّ شَیْء اَحْسَنَ مِنْهُ.«

If tolerance was depicted, there was no creature better than it.17

In this tradition, stopping violence is called the most beautiful moral visages, and it means that violence is the ugliest visage that human's spirit may have.

قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ(صلى الله عليه وآله): «مَا اصْطَحَبَ اثْنانِ اِلاّ كانَ اَعْظَمُهُما اَجْراً وَ اَحَبُّهُما اِلَى اللهِ اَرْفَقَهُما بِصاحِبِهِ.»

From two persons, one whose friendship and tolerance is more than the other, will have more reward and is more favourite before God.18

In this tradition, the greatest rewards and most favourite ranks before God belong to those who advocate tolerance and peacefulness and flexibility in life.

عَنْ اَبِى جَعْفَر الْباقِر(عليه السلام): «مَنْ قُسِمَ لَهُ الرِّفْقُ قُسِمَ لَهُ الاِْيمانُ.»

One who is granted flexibility, belief is granted to him.19

The late Feise Kashani, in "Vafi" book, in one of the traditions of this chapter, interprets the relation of "tolerance" with "belief" as follows:

Resorting to violence makes man's authority and nervous system out of control, and such person may perform any mistake and even say blasphemous words.

We can also interpret this relation in another way, that is, violence is often the source of suspicion and mistrust on God's people, and thereby the Creator, and none of these are compatible with belief. In other words, harsh individuals will always have fewer friends, and they will be gradually led to social seclusion, and social seclusion is the source of suspicion on the creature and Creator, and this is not compatible with belief.

عَنْ اَبِى جَعْفَر(عليه السلام): قالَ: قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ(صلى الله عليه وآله): «اِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَمْ يُضَعْ عَلى شَىْء اِلاّ زانَهُ وَ لا نُزِعَ مِنْ شَىْء اِلاّ شانَهُ.»

Tolerance and flexibility embellish whatever they accompany with, and disfigure whatever they separate from.20

According to this wise utterance, tolerance and peacefulness adorns everything, and

violence disfigures everything and any deed and person.

عَنْ اَبِی جَعْفَر(علیه السلام): »اِنّ اللهَ عَزّ وَ جَلّ رَفِیقٌ یُحِبُّ الرِّفْقَ وَ یُعْطِی عَلَی الرِّفْقِ ما لا یُعْطِی عَلَی الْعُنْفِ.«

God has tolerance, and likes tolerance, and whatever He bestows for tolerance, does not bestow for violence and harshness.21

In this tradition, tolerance and peacefulness are called as divine attributes.

The important point which should be surely remarked herein is that most of Islam's enemies try to give a hostile appearance to Islam, and seek Islamic battles as a pretext, while only studying the procedure of Prophet (S) in the same battles and his behaviour with the enemies who were thirsty to his blood, and had established a dangerous barrier to his invitation, as well as his conduct with the prisoners of war and the defeated nations and the people injured in the battle field, are all of the most brilliant chapters in Islam's history as well as the most alive proofs for peace favouritism in Islam and stopping resort to violence.

And more important, some try to attribute violence to Islamic clergymen just like the Christian clergymen in the Middle Ages, and haply the immethodical deeds and severity of some of unknowable people whose social wisdom has not developed in parallel with their scientific wisdom have served as many pretexts for them.

These two aspects necessitate that we, in observance of such a lot of instructions about not resorting to violence, should be exactly careful for our actions in the society, and display the real face of Islam in this respect through our peaceful conduct and our flexibility, and wash out the deposits of poisonous propaganda of the enemies from the brains with our action. We shall explain the philosophy of Islamic battles and wars so that their "defensive aspects" and or in some cases "their liberation challenge aspect" are fully clarified.

Again, it should not be mistaken. Flexibility, mildness and not resorting to violence do not mean submission to injustices and violence of evil doers and the stubborn and bloody enemies and the imperialists. Rather, as Qur’an has explicitly specified in verse 29 of Sura 48:

أَشِدّاءُ عَلَی الْکُفّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَیْنَهُمْ

Hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves (48:29)

We shall adopt a severe method against cruel enemies and be mild with the friends. Moreover, there should be mildness before the enemies who after victory over them, new strokes on their side is unlikely.

1. « يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا »,“O mankind! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah to you all”, :7 verse ,158 « يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ ,16 يَا عِبَادِ فَاتَّقُون », "My servants who believe, fear your Lord", :39 verse

“Children of Adam! Let not Satan tempt you!", :7 verse ,27 « يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا», " O man! surely you must strive (to attain) to your Lord, a hard striving ", 84: verse 6
2. Refer to the book ``Javaherol Kalam'', vol. 21, beginning of ``Warfare'' book
3. Hamourabi is a well-known conqueror king who is reputable for the interesting rules, which are left by him as memorial.
4. Albermaleh, History of Eastern Nations, 81/1
5. The same document, page 41
6. Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 1
7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 164/69, tradition 3
8. Kulayini, Kafi, 177/8
9. Ghazali, Ehyaol Oloum, 182/3
10. Kulayini, Kafi 108/2, some narrators of Six Reliable Tradition Collections have mentioned it.
11. The same document
12. The same document
13. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 399/71
14. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, volume 71, page 403
15. Tolerance is the opposite of violence and harshness.
16. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 60/75
17. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 63/75
18. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 268/76
19. Kulayini, Kafi, 118/2, narration 1
20. Kulayini, Kafi, 119/2, tradition 6
21. The same document, tradition 5

Way of influencing on the hearts

What we shall do for our advices to be influential on the heart of others?

One of the branches of social morality is the section that its objective or at least result is influencing on the others and attracting their confidence. This branch of social morality, which is actually very extensive and full of mental elegance, is particularly necessary for the "intellectual leaders" and "missioners". Otherwise they can never achieve their ideal educational objectives through their special reformative endeavours, and they may be defeated in their attempts.

It is frequently observed that virtuous and learned people have spent their life in seclusion for unfamiliarity with this part of social morality, and neither people have succeeded to enjoy their thoughts and sciences, nor they have achieved success in the society worthily.

In contrast, there are some people with low knowledge who have found positions higher than their real competence in the society as a result of familiarity with and observing these principles.

Not paying attention to these realities causes that sometimes they impute failure in the social attempts and endeavours to delusive factors such as chance and accidents, and in fact if we interpret chance as "familiarity with these principles", it will be closer to the reality.

Anyhow, some points are noteworthy herein:

1- Since man has an inseparable relation with the society, he should be aware of the correct

principles for influencing on the others so that he can draw their attention for cooperation with himself as the final aim of social life.

Most people are the same in this part and even superior individuals of the society are not needless of it, and will face with great problems in case of not caring and observing such principles. But those who have undertaken the leadership of a small or great society in any way, feel need to this part more sensibly, and spiritual leaders and religious missioners who should penetrate into the angles and depth of spirit and soul of people, are more needy to it than the others.

Thus, we conclude that this part of social morality has completely a public aspect, not a classical one or special to a certain group.

2- The important issue, which is remarkable herein, is that if we suppose that the way of influencing on the thoughts of others is only through familiarity with strong and undeniable arguments in any subject and or analyzing advantages and disadvantages of the said affairs, we are strictly wrong. Because whatever the argument may be strong, it only deals with "conscious" part of man's spirit, while the major part of spirit is "unconscious" or "semiconscious" stage that influencing on them is not possible only through argument. [1]

Even the argumentative methods will be often effective adequately if they are induced considering these principles. On the other hand, the required intimacy between a leader and individuals is never achieved through satiation of their intellect and thought. Rather, the leaders should mobilize their affections towards their own objectives to obtain necessary relation for leadership.

3- Using discussions for employing the others for our own personal interests and plundering their powers through penetration into their thought is certainly condemned as a clear sample of exploitation. But if it is performed for coordinating powers in the way of a high social objective and or reforming and educating an individual, it is appreciated as one of the primary conditions of a proper leadership.

4- First of all, for influencing the others, awareness and familiarity with the principles of psychology, psychoanalysis and entry to the angles of man's spirit in general, and the spirit of the person in question in particular are essential. Some people having particular talents are inherently familiar more or less with these principles, and some others have gradually become familiar with it due to need and experience. But a lot of people have to learn and apply these principles as a lesson.

5- It should not be misunderstood. Only familiarity with the ways of influencing and penetrating in the others is not sufficient. There are a lot of people who have sufficient awareness in this respect scientifically, but cannot employ them properly and appropriately. Employing these principles needs adequate exercise and readiness. That is to say they should be turned into a "moral habit" for having a satisfactory outcome.

6- It is well induced from studying biography of great divine prophets, specially Islam's Prophet (S) and the Imams of right guidance that they applied most of these principles for realization of their missionary and educative objectives, and they were good exemplars for this part of excellent social ethics.

Their attitude with people was so good that attracted them rapidly towards themselves and their high instructions. Some desire to assume a miraculous aspect for all of these affairs,

while it is not correct. If we too follow their practice and procedure in encountering with the others, we can quickly influence on them and penetrate into the depth of their spirit.

Qur’an says about Islam's Prophet (S):

وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ قُلْ أُذُنُ خَيْرٍ لَكُمْ

Say: He is only a hearer. Say: A hearer of good for you… (9:61)

And somewhere else it says:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَلانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

It was by the mercy of Allah that thou wast lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if thou hadst been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about thee.(3:159)

And again it says:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

There hath come unto you a messenger, (one) of yourselves, unto whom aught that ye are overburdened is grievous, full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, merciful. (9:128)

If God will, we will later see that being "ear" (credulous), that is respecting the speeches of others and not expressing mistrust on them unduly, and also showing mildness, amenity, kindness and sympathy to the others, and assuming their problems as one's own problems, has a profound effect in influencing on the thoughts of others.

As we read in the biography of Prophet (S): "He always preceded in saying Salam (hello), and if someone detained him for a work, he waited until he was given up, and when someone shook hands with him, he did not leave him until the other party took action for

disporting, he called even the children with their nicknames (the best names with Arabs), and he never sat among his companions so that he would have an excellence over the others ..."[2]

The effect of each of these moral affairs in impressing upon the others will be clarified in the next discussions.

7- It goes without saying that in this discussion, like all social and objective discussions, one shall never utilize improper means and ways for achieving to the goal that is influencing on the others. Therefore, only the way which is correct by itself, and also utilized for achievement to a correct purpose should be presented.

Shall we be fact seeking or aggressive?

Why we do not succeed in our discussions:

We have frequently found following affairs when discussing with the others:

1- We have seen many times that after hours of talks, we have failed to achieve any success in the progress of negotiations, while we believe that the matter is completely clear and acceptable, but the other party refrains to accept it.

2- It is often seen that the other party has become more firm and bigoted in his belief after long discussions.

3- It is mostly seen that after a long discussion, we do not feel any more the previous sincerity and purity in our heart towards the other party and feel an unreasonable hatred and spite towards him!

4- The history of religious discussions, quarrels and political doctrines shows that abundant powers used for proving a belief or a doctrine as well as the numerous books prepared with a plenty of difficulties and costs have not been so useful.

5- It is often observed that scientific negotiations which are started in an earnest setting, have been led to quarrels and sometimes grappling and or mayhem of individuals, while apparently there is no relation between "mayhem" and "scientific discussion" and never one of them could be proved by the other.

6- We have repeatedly seen that the other party has no reply against our strong logic and has become silent. However, he has not accepted the matter and does not submit to it and or hate it!

These are the realities that most of those who are engaged in scientific, social, political and such like discussions, have more or less experienced in the experiments and events of life and are very noteworthy.

Why it is so? Since these discussions are not made with the purpose of seeking facts. Rather, they have been made for dominance and victory over the adversary, and there is a big difference between them, although they are apparently the same.

The purpose of investigation and fact seeking is granting to someone what he lacks, without excluding him from anything, that is to say teaching him, without ruining his personality. But, the purpose of seemingly logical disputes and quarrels is depriving the

other party from honour, pride and personality and hurting his affections against training what in his view or actually may not be so important and interesting.

Therefore, it is not surprising if he resists against it and hates it. So the psychologists say:

1- It is possible to suppress someone through dispute and quarrel, but we will never acquire his sincere approval.

2- It is impossible to convince an ignorant with the power of logic and quarrel.

3- The best means for victory in discussion is avoiding it. Basically, the discussions, which are changed into struggle, offence or defence and in other words, "controversy", less happen to leave a considerable effect in attracting inward approval of individuals, and resistance of the other party indicates that he assumes his dignity and status in danger. Otherwise, negative resistance for teaching a matter to someone is senseless.

The discussions which agitate the other party and cause him to resist, may have been performed in one of the following ways:

1- The discussions mixed with humiliation of the other party or his beliefs, for instance when it is said your opinion is not logical at all; it is not wisely; no one agrees with it; this utterance is not expected or is strange to be expressed by you!

2- The discussions which are made in presence of a third person, the other party does not like to be defeated in his presence (most people are so).

3- When the discussion is made in a teaching mode, while the other party is not considered as his student, and or at least he does not accept this status for himself.

4- The discussion in which victory is the sign of excellence and priority of the speaker and ruins the "excellence seeking" spirit of the other party.

5- The discussion, the purpose of which is proscription of some deeds of the other party or one of his relatives and friends and or his beloved persons in the past or present.

6- The discussion which has become the substructure of his thoughts as a result of suggestion of surroundings or parents and such like.

In all of above cases, ordinary controversial methods should not be used for influencing on the mind and spirit of the other party. Rather, the applied methods should be absolutely apart from dispute.

1. The psychologists have assumed three stages for man's mind: 1- Conscious stage: referring to a stage in mind which deals with logical and intellectual arguments and deductions as well as the result of observations and experiences, and the relations of matters therein are exactly clear for man, and in other words, consciousness is the dominion of intellect. 2- Semiconscious: it is the same area of ambiguous and irregular thoughts and information which originates from instincts, affections and complexes, and in other words, semiconscious is the scene of emotions, tendencies and thoughts appearing from the instincts like self love and such like, and ambiguity is one of the its properties. 3- Unconscious: This is the same dark and forgotten area of mind that in normal conditions man is unaware of its contents. All the tendencies, which are not fulfilled for any reason, and are rejected from conscious stage, are focused in this part. Moreover, the forgotten memories, which may sometimes be remembered and or never be remembered due to their negative relation with one of the tendencies, are all concentrated in this part.
2. Extracted from Ehyaol Oloum, 365/2 to 367

Factors effective in influencing on the hearts

Seeking excellence in discussion or dispute and fussing

In the Islamic instructions, it is highly emphasized on the manner of discussion with people, especially with ignorant and low knowledge people, and the discussions which do not have any "fact seeking aspect" are prohibited under the title of "dispute and fussing". Even in some cases, discussion is absolutely forbidden.

Holy Qur’an says:

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better. (29:46)

And somewhere else it says:

وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

And reason with them in the better way (16:125)

In the above two verses, the discussions lacking "fairer manner" and "better way" are prohibited. They are the same discussions having a sympathetic aspect and accompanied with kindness, courtesy, compassion, and do not leave any ill or negative effect on the other party.

Even in some cases, God officially instructs His Prophet (S) to choose silence against the aggression of opponents, and absolutely avoid the discussions, the end of which is dispute and obstinacy.

وَإِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

And if they wrangle with thee, say: Allah is Best Aware of what ye do. (22:68)

In the several traditions, discussion is prohibited through different subtle interpretations

disclosing a series of mental points:

قالَ النّبِیٌّ(صلی الله علیه وآله): »ذَرُوا الْمِراءَ فَاِنّهُ لا تُفْهَمُ حِکْمَتُهُ وَلا تُؤْمَنُ فِتْنَتُهُ.«

The Prophet (S) said: Avoid dispute because its wisdom is not understood and there is no security against its sedition.1

وَ قالَ(صلی الله علیه وآله): »لا یَسْتَکْمِلُ عَبْدٌ حَقِیقَةَ الْاِیمانِ حَتّی یَدَعَ الْمِراءَ وَ اِنْ کانَ مُحِقّاً.«

And he said: No one fulfills the reality of belief, unless he leaves dispute, although he is right.2

قالَ سُلَیْمانُ بْنُ داوُدَ لِاِبْنِهِ: »یا بُنَیّ اِیّاکَ وَ الْمِراءَ فَاِنّهُ لَیْسَتْ فِیهِ مَنْفَعَةٌ وَ هُوَ یُهَیّجُ بَیْنَ الْاِخْوانِ الْعَداوَةَ.«

Solomon, son of David, told to his son: My son! Avoid dispute because it has no profit and provokes the fire of enmity among the brothers.3

عَنِ النّبِیّ(صلی الله علیه وآله): »ما ضَلّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هُدیً کانُوا عَلَیْهِ اِلاّ اُوتُوا الْجَدَلَ.«

Prophet (S) said: no nation strays after guidance, save it engages in dispute.4

عَنْ اَمِیرِ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ(علیه السلام): »یا کُمَیْلُ! اِیّاکَ وَ الْمِراءَ فَاِنّکَ تُغْری بِنَفْسِکَ السُّفَهاءَ اِذا فَعَلْتَ وَ تُفْسِدُ الْاِخاءَ.«

Commander of the Believers (Imam Ali) (A.S.) said: O Komeil! Avoid fussing because in this way you impassion the ignorant against yourself, and destroy brotherhood.5

The ill effects of discussions mixed with dispute and aggression are precisely studied in the

above traditions and it is inferred from them that:

1- Dispute in discussion is useless, and it has no result (because hurting affections of the other party causes him to resist).

2- Dispute is not compatible with belief (because it is the sign of arrogance and seeking excellence, and arrogance is never compatible with belief, the sense of which is submission and surrender to the truth).

3- Dispute results in sedition and attracting enmity and hostility (because everyone is sensitive and strict for ruining of his personality).

4- Dispute causes misguide (because it excites the sense of obstinacy, selfishness, and prejudice and thereby covers the visage of truth).

5- If dispute is made with the ignorant, it encourages them to violate the reverence of one's personality and makes them insolent to him (because when they find their reputation in risk, they will ignore the reverence, which they observed before the learned in normal conditions).

For salvation from such great dangers, Islam instructs to avoid discussions and talks having an aggressive, hostile and eristic aspect, and even do not apply this way for proving the truth.

Stopping selfishness

One, who wants to influence on the spirit and thoughts of others, should never insist them to accept the realities as "an idea belonging to him". Rather, in contrary, he shall try to express the realities absolutely and even as the idea of the other party. Pay attention!

As we know everybody loves his ideas like his physical children, and the reason for love and interest in both cases is the same. His ideas are considered as a part of him just like his children, and loving them forms a beam of self-love, which is the most rooted man's instinct. And in contrast, the thoughts of others are strange to man like the others' children, and naturally fail to attract his interest, and even sometimes they provoke his competition sense.

Therefore, accepting the realities the way of attainment to which is through the man's own mind, is much easier and favourable for him. Because in such cases "intellect" and "affection" are situated in one direction and in contrary, if they are entered to his soul as a strange thing, a contradiction and struggle occurs between his "intellect" and "affection", the result of which in the most individuals is victory of affection. Intellect tends to accept it as it is true, but affection finds it strange and belonging to someone else, and refrains accepting it.

It is noteworthy that if our real purpose is fact seeking and not personal victory in the discussion, it is better to pretend that the idea or its completion belongs to the other party not to us. If our aim is acceptance of an idea, why shall we insist on it being accepted as "our own idea"?

Several trials being performed on the individuals have exactly proved that applying this method for penetration into the thoughts of others has been successful. Basically, for

achievement to this goal following principles should be observed:

1- It should be tried to say a part of the matter, and the other party shall perceive the rest of it with guidance of the speaker. In fact, the speaker should play the role of a mental leader for manifestation of innate talents of the other party, not the role of an independent being.

2- It should be tried to propound the matters as discussions under study through mentioning questions and queries, and the other party should make the final reply as the final decision.

3- It should be strictly avoided to attribute matters to oneself, particularly with the phrases like "no one has mentioned this before me", and such like.

4- If there are clarifications or references in the utterances of the other party in respect to the matter in question, it should be explicitly remarked and mentioned as a proof. Even if it exists in the utterance of those being respected and loved by the other party, like his father, master, family, or intimate friend, it should be remarked.

Holy Qur’an, which is a superior symbol of influential and effective speech and its influence on people's thought, has been so wonderful that some have called it as a "magic", often applies this method in its arguments before the adversaries and self deluded persons in the phrases like:

أَإِلَٰهٌ مَعَ اللّٰهِ

Is there any Allah beside Allah? (27:61)

مَنْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ

Who is the god besides Allah? (28:72)

هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ

There is no Allah save Him. (35:3)

And also the phrases such as:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا

Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear? (22:46)

It stipulates different issues and leaves final judgment on the burden of the hearers and seeks help from their own conscience in solving the issues.

Provoking positive affections

As it was also referred to in the previous discussion, one shall always try to avoid confliction of intellect and affections in two opposite parts. Rather, he shall attempt to orient the affections in the same direction of intellect for supporting intellect's attraction power just like the power of moon in low and high tide, which is sometimes supported by sun's gravitation for being in the same direction, and for attainment to this purpose, following methods should be applied in a bid to provoke affections.

1- Name of everybody is the most favourable word and most harmonic song for him. So one shall call him respectfully with his name for provoking his affections, and if he has several names, the most interested and respectful name should be selected. We have read in the traditions a man should be called with his "nickname"[6]. (Nickname is the most respectful name with Arabs).

It is also narrated in respect to tempers of Prophet (S) that he called everybody with his best name and even selected an appropriate nickname for those lacking any nickname.

2- First, an opportunity should be granted to the others for saying their utterances, and one shall carefully listen to what they say. This shows that one is really seeking for the fact, and moreover, he is also sympathetic and assumes respect and reputation for the other party. Each of these aspects has an effective share in provoking one's positive affections.

On other hand, naturally everyone focuses all of his power in expression of his idea and arguments, and only intends to divulge what is in his mind, and surely in this condition, he does not have any readiness for acceptance of others. So, expressing our own matters and arguments before his complete evacuation is just like seeding in a thorny and brushy land.

It often happens that individuals have some complexes, which are opened, through expressing them, and then they are changed to normal individuals for hearing the truth. We read about Prophet (S) and leaders of right guidance (A.S.) that they granted an opportunity to the other parties for speaking.

3- Expressing desire to what the other party likes, and speaking about those who have a significant share in provoking the individual's affections. We read about Prophet (S) that sometimes when he was alone with some of his companions, he asked them about their family concerns and wife and children and whatever they liked.

4- The admirable or acceptable parts of utterance of the other party should be remarked so that his soul will become ready for accepting weak points and mistakes of the others.

5- Practical sympathy, in its real sense, is one of the most critical factors in provoking affections of others and making their mental condition ready for acceptance of fundamental matters. If they observe a real sympathy from the speaker, they may accept his arguments even if they are not completely acceptable for them, and make themselves understood that his comments are correct and any of his proposals is beneficial for them.

One of the reasons for wonderful welcome from the speeches of Prophet (S) was this point that everybody recognized him as his real sympathetic one so that non acceptance of the right way by some people appeared in the Prophet (S) as fatal complexes:

فَلَعَلّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

Yet it may be, if they believe not in this statement, that thou (Muhammad) wilt torment thy soul with grief over their footsteps. (18:6)

And we read in respect to the biography of Prophet (S):

«وَلا يَأْتِيهِ اَحَدٌ حُرٌّ اَوْ عَبْدٌ اَوْ اَمَةٌ اِلاّ قامَ مَعَهُ فِى حاجَتِهِ.»

Whoever came to him, either a freeman or slave and bondmaid, he accompanied him (her) and helped him in his work.7

6- The way of reminding mistakes should be so that if the affections of the other party are not provoked in the favour of speaker, at least they should not be hurt, and thereby the mistakes should be minded indirectly as far as possible.

The phrases like "Don't you think that this is better?", "Isn't it better to do so?", "I sometimes do so", and such like are all phrases which could be used for reminding the mistakes indirectly.

7- We shall never provoke obstinacy sense of someone unduly, and if he insists on a matter which is not the main issue of discussion or criticizes it, we shall coordinate ourselves with him correctly in the criticism or supporting and defending it instead of opposition. This makes the other party disarmed and invites him to more reflection.

For instance, if we what to invite someone to Islam, and find that he has a negative idea about the Muslims and their situation and insists on it, we shall not defend the situation of Muslims so much. Rather, we too shall coordinate ourselves with him and mention some basic criticisms (of course, without exaggeration and indulgence) and then follow our main issue. Certainly, we will be more successful.

Belief in one's own speech

The well-known phrase, "The utterance coming from the heart, will be accepted heartily" indicates a precise and subtle mental reality, which could be used in the ways of influencing on the others as a vital principle.

As we know tongue and speech is the interpreter of mind and idea and also the scale of speaker's own belief determines evaluation of speeches.

It is not surprising that degree of belief of a hearer to an utterance has a close relation with the degree of belief of the speaker. One may say something apparently very excellent and good, but when his tone shows that he does not believe in it so much, it causes the hearer to doubt in the correctness of that issue. In contrary, if a subject is not very acceptable, but there are the evidences of his decisive belief in it, this provokes the curiosity and precision towards it, and makes them optimistic to that speech.

This too is noteworthy that not believing in a matter could not be totally hidden with mannered utterances, especially in speech that against most deeds, is full of delicacies through which spirit of emotions and mind of speaker will be manifested willingly or not.

Observing one's own speech is one of the important factors for its influence because it is possible that the utterance does not indicate the belief, but one's action is mostly the sign of belief.

Effect of virtue of the speaker

It is said:

«لا تَنْظُرْ اِلی مَنْ قالَ، بَل انْظُرْ اِلی ما قالَ.»

Do not consider the speaker; rather consider his (her) utterance.

But its full observance is not possible for anybody, because everybody assumes the speech as the product of speaker's being. In view of material tools, speech is the same transformation in man's energies. Chemical energy is transformed into mechanical energy in the cells and mechanical energy to acoustic energy.

And in view of spiritual contents and materials, it is the product of thoughts, education, environment, knowledge, attributes, and spiritual states.

Thus, any speech has the same colour of its speaker, and carries the speaker's attributes, either his spirituality or his ugly and bad attributes, and on this account, when an utterance is issued by a virtuous individual, all windows of human spirit are opened to it, and all existence of man receives it.

And in contrast, a speech uttered by an impure and evil person faces with the unconscious negative reaction of the hearer, and the windows of his spirit are closed to it.

1. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 138/2
2. The same document, narration 53
3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 134/14
4. Ebne Majeh, Sonan Ebne Majeh, 19/1, published in Beirut
5. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 270/77, narration 1
6. HorreAmeli, Wasa’il ash-Shi’a, volume 8, chapter 5
7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 226/16

Relation of ethics and education

The most important issue that a man is faced with is education. Rather, if we consider education in its broad sense, we shall say that the purpose of creation of beings of the world is education.

All attempts of divine prophets, scientists and great men of history have been devoted to this purpose, and for creating a human, fertile, secure and safe and finally prosperous and happy society, there is no alternative save "correct education" and mobilization of all powers and facilities in this way.

In the moral discussions too, after description and explanation of all good and bad moral habits, the reasons for their formation and development, and way of achieving good morality, and challenge with the vices, the final aim is education.

What is education?

Some psychologists define education as "readiness for achievement of the truth and undertaking responsibility in the future life".

Others have introduced education as "manifestation of talents and realization of internal powers".

Some others, like John Dioei, the famous psychologist, have assumed education as "revision in the experiences of the past and their re-formation for making the experiences more meaningful, and making the individual ready for guidance in the future experiences".[1]

We believe that the above triple definitions may refer to one reality, and in fact the third definition is the principle of that reality, and the first is its introduction and the second is its result.

Furthermore, for clarification of the third definition, it should be explained that a man performs two types of actions:

1- Educational actions

2- Regular, aimless and non-educational actions In the second type, one either do not know the quality of cause and effect relations at all, or does not know its limits, just as one does not know how to turn on a lamp or a factory, and puts his finger on the key without information and previous experience. But after perceiving this cause and effect relation, and revising in his previous experiences, and reforming them, this action will be educational for finding a broader sense and meaning and making him ready for the future, and consequently he refers to the key for turning on a lamp without being wandered.

Qur’an and education

The phrases like "purification" and "exit from darkness to light" are applied instead of education in Qur’an. One of the following two verses refers to "genetic education" and the other to "legislative education":

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

He it is Who blesseth you, and His angels (bless you), that He may bring you forth from darkness unto light; and He is ever Merciful to the believers. (33:43)

We know that God's bless to His servants is his mercy and favours, and angels' bless seems to be the same mercy and blessings which are bestowed to the servants by angels, both having a genetic aspect and anyway their aim is leading from darkness of aberration towards the light of guidance.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

He it is Who sendeth down clear revelations unto His slave, that He may bring you forth from darkness unto light. (57:9)

In the above verse too, which refers to legislative education, leading from darkness to the light is considered as the purpose.

It is induced from this interpretation that a non-educated man resembles one being in absolute darkness. Such person possesses several potencies and talents but does not have any power for leading them, and orienting towards a goal. He can neither adopt a clear way, nor attain to the destination.

But when he is educated and trained, it is alike to going from darkness into the light. Light is the means of training and development and appearance of talents, and the means of leadership and orientation and targeting, and so all concepts and meanings of education are included in this interpretation.

Personality and character

The term "personality" is not only used in the scientific, psychological and moral discussion environments, but also people always emphasize on it in their daily utterances and almost everybody knows its meaning.

However, the precise, clear and detailed definition of the term "personality" is very difficult, and for this reason, today psychologists have introduced very different definitions for it, and it is interesting that according to one of the psychologists, hundreds definitions are presented by scientists for this term that each of them has studied this complicated concept from a particular point of view.

From among the suggested definitions, followings could be taken into account:

1- "Personality is the total of all effects of an individual in the society” and in other words, "personality of each individual is his social effect".2

The problem of this definition and such like is not merely for the point that it denies existence of personality in the individuals not having a social effect (like dissociable and seclusive or disabled persons). Rather, it is for this reason that personality in this definition has only a "practical" aspect, not "descriptive". While usually personality is considered as one of the mental qualities.

2- "Personality is the general quality of an individual's behaviour which is manifested in his specific habits, thought and interpretation, desires, procedure of action and philosophy of life".

Although this definition, which is narrated from "Marcois", the famous psychologist, is free from the problem of denial of personality in the dissociable individuals, but it shares with that definition in view of giving an active or passive aspect as well as external effect and impression to personality.

3- The other definition being presented by some of psychologists is that "personality is the internal discipline of motives, reactions, perceptions and remembrances which determines man's manner in the behaviour".

Since this definition pays attention to internal and descriptive aspect of personality is free from the previous problems, but if we say: personality is the total of attributes, conditions and mentalities having a humanistic value which could be the source of valuable individual and social external effects, it will be closer to its real sense.

Character: Most of psychologists have applied "personality" and "character" in the same meaning, and assume both of them as indicating the same reality, but some of recent psychologists have considered a difference between these two terms, and have selected "character" for the moral aspects and virtuous habits and vices. In other words, character is for evaluation of personality with the moral scales that is goodness and vice, while they consider personality as indicator of all mental, moral, intellectual, emotional and even physical qualities.

Relation of education and personality

Whatever we define "personality" as, it has a very close relation with "education" in any sense.

In fact, there are two types of education: either as a means of blossoming of innate personality of individuals (and thereby considering personality as a talent and potential for everybody), or as a means of developing it (if we consider all or a part of man's personality as developmental), and in both cases, it has a close relation with education.

Studying about personality of those who have been far from human society due to some events and have grown among the animals from childhood, and their surprising condition and their weakness in perceptions is one of the most manifest reasons for relation of personality and education.

And also obvious difference of nations being in equal conditions and levels almost in all aspects, which one of them has rapidly preceded the other, and has progressed towards

perfection for having a competent leader, is another proof for the role of education in the situation of individual and society.

Obvious distinction between similar individuals being grown in different environments, and or one individual being exposed to two different environments and such like are all good evidences for strong relation of personality and education, and remind man the utterance of the scholar who says: Leave some children to me and tell me to nurture them with any mentality you may desire: brave, coward, generous, stingy.

Factors comprising personality

There are numerous factors effective in man's personality, and numerating them is not so easy, but the most important of them are:

1- Creation (physical and mental structure)

2- Heritage

3- Secretion of glands

4- Nutrition

5- Family environment

6- Situation of social life (occupation, situation of city and country, propagation systems, government, economic situation)

7- Education

8- Companions and friends (neighbours, partners, schoolmates)

9- Suggestions (by oneself and others)

10- Studies and mental foods

11- Unpredicted events

12- Will and intent of man and his attempts

It goes without saying that since there is a close relation between personality and education, we may call all above factors educative in one respect.

Studying above twelve issues forms an independent science which could be studied separately under the title of "man and educative concerns". We hope to have this opportunity in the future.

«وَ آخِرُ دَعْوانا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعالَمِينَ»

1. Ali Shariatmadari, Principles of Education, summarized
2. Developmental personality, page 453

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