# Life under

# the

# Grace of Ethics

**By  
His Holiness Ayatullah al-Uzma Nasir Makarem Shirazi**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Title | : | Life under the Grace of Ethics |
| Author | : | His Holiness Ayatullah al-Uzma Nasir Makarem Shirazi |
| Propagated By | : | Ja’fari Propagation Centre  94, Asma Manzil, Room No. 10, Bazar Road, Opp. Khoja Masjid, Bandra (W), Mumbai – 400050.  Tel.: 2642 5777, E-mail: [jpcbandra@yahoo.com](mailto:jpcbandra@yahoo.com) |

# Contents

[Preface 7](#_Toc256418042)

[What we are looking for in this book? 7](#_Toc256418043)

[Translator’s Preface 9](#_Toc256418044)

[1. Ethics and Training 11](#_Toc256418045)

[Is it Possible to Alter Individual’s Morality and Mentality through Training? 11](#_Toc256418046)

[Ill Humor is a Sort of Disease 12](#_Toc256418047)

[Purification of Carnal Soul or the Greater Warfare 14](#_Toc256418048)

[Prosperity and Happiness 15](#_Toc256418049)

[Individual and Social Morality 18](#_Toc256418050)

[A Big Mistake 19](#_Toc256418051)

[Methods of Treating Moral Deviations 20](#_Toc256418052)

[Hygiene of Morality 21](#_Toc256418053)

[2. Principles of Ethics 27](#_Toc256418054)

[Critical examination of the old quadruple classification 29](#_Toc256418055)

[Scale for Evaluation of Good and Bad Morality 30](#_Toc256418056)

[Effect of Seclusion and Dissociability 32](#_Toc256418057)

[Arguments of Advocates of Seclusion 32](#_Toc256418058)

[Disadvantages of Seclusion and Dissociation 34](#_Toc256418059)

[Exceptional Cases in which Seclusion is permitted 37](#_Toc256418060)

[Vigilance and Self-Examination 38](#_Toc256418061)

[3. First Step in Purification of Ethics 42](#_Toc256418062)

[Tongue is The Interpreter of Heart 42](#_Toc256418063)

[Thirty great sins which originate from tongue 43](#_Toc256418064)

[Silence and Reticence 44](#_Toc256418065)

[4. Honesty, the Most Manifest Sign of Personality 48](#_Toc256418066)

[Value and Importance of Truthfulness 48](#_Toc256418067)

[Miraculous Results of Truthfulness 49](#_Toc256418068)

[Lie - The Source of All Sins 50](#_Toc256418069)

[Lie is not compatible with Belief 52](#_Toc256418070)

[Lie Makes Man Improvident 53](#_Toc256418071)

[The Liar Does Not Trust Even In Himself! 54](#_Toc256418072)

[Sources of Lies 54](#_Toc256418073)

[Way of Treating Lies 55](#_Toc256418074)

[Lie In Exceptional Cases 58](#_Toc256418075)

[What Is Equivocation? 60](#_Toc256418076)

[A New Interpretation about Equivocation 60](#_Toc256418077)

[5. Slander 61](#_Toc256418078)

[Dangerous Weapon of Cowards 61](#_Toc256418079)

[The Most Important Motives for Slander 61](#_Toc256418080)

[Dangers of Slander 62](#_Toc256418081)

[Social and Individual Consequences of Slander 70](#_Toc256418082)

[Limits and Types of Slander 71](#_Toc256418083)

[Exceptions of Slander 74](#_Toc256418084)

[Who Is Notorious For Debauchery And Why Slandering Him Is Permitted? 76](#_Toc256418085)

[6. Suspicion and Mistrust 78](#_Toc256418086)

[Immunity from Mistrust Is the Requisite of a Safe Community 78](#_Toc256418087)

[Sources of Suspicion and Pessimism 80](#_Toc256418088)

[Social Losses of Mistrust 81](#_Toc256418089)

[Individual Losses of Suspicion 83](#_Toc256418090)

[Ways of Countering Suspicion 84](#_Toc256418091)

[Methods of Treating Suspicion 86](#_Toc256418092)

[7. A Healthy Society under the Grace of Ethics 89](#_Toc256418093)

[Without Ethics, the Plan of a Healthy Society is Defeated 89](#_Toc256418094)

[Privileges of Man’s Social Life 90](#_Toc256418095)

[Source of Formation of Society 91](#_Toc256418096)

[Social Values 92](#_Toc256418097)

[Islam and Social Concerns 92](#_Toc256418098)

[Social Seclusion 100](#_Toc256418099)

[Islam and Monkery 101](#_Toc256418100)

[Historical Origin 101](#_Toc256418101)

[Mental Origin 101](#_Toc256418102)

[Monkery among Christians 104](#_Toc256418103)

[8. Social Units 106](#_Toc256418104)

[The most critical issue in social life is how to form a great and powerful unit from the small units 106](#_Toc256418105)

[The Most Powerful Social Relation 108](#_Toc256418106)

[Islam and Global Society 110](#_Toc256418107)

[How to Create a Mental Unity 113](#_Toc256418108)

[Spirit of Unity in Islamic Instructions 116](#_Toc256418109)

[The forgotten principles without which the world will not experience peace and tranquility 117](#_Toc256418110)

[9. Ways of Influencing the Hearts 129](#_Toc256418111)

[What we should do for our advice to be influential on the heart of others? 129](#_Toc256418112)

[Should we be Fact Seeking or Aggressive? 133](#_Toc256418113)

[Factors Effective in Influencing the Hearts 134](#_Toc256418114)

[10. Relation of Ethics and Education 143](#_Toc256418115)

[What Is Education? 143](#_Toc256418116)

[Holy Quran and Education 144](#_Toc256418117)

[Personality and Character 145](#_Toc256418118)

[Relation of Education and Personality 146](#_Toc256418119)

[Factors Comprising Personality 147](#_Toc256418120)

# Preface

## What we are looking for in this book?

Global stalemates, groans of victims of aggressions, wars, crimes and ever-increasing breakdowns of family relations provide us with a very strong evidence of one reality: that current rules and ways of the world, despite all attempts apparently made for their reform, improvement and enforcement, have not been effective at all in enabling man to live an ideal life. Worse still, there is no trace of any light at the end of this dark tunnel.... all one can see is a future of hopelessness.

We do not know how long the world will keep trying these failed, worn-out principles. Even their proponents themselves have not been helped by them, what to say of others! These rules are like deep wells which lead to massive underground stones. The more we try to pierce through these stones in our efforts to reach the water, the more we exhaust ourselves, but water is nowhere to be found. So let’s see where the root of the problem lies and, having understood the root cause, we shall look for 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 in penetrating into the depth of human conscience, which is the inspirer of his endeavors and actions, nor in mobilizing his powers with which to eradicate the roots of the pain.

For example, we know of rich persons who have bequeathed their wealth to their cats and provided for establishing a village for millionaire cats. Which of the current systems can help to revive the human intellect and affection of such persons so that they would support millions of starving humans in Africa? Which law can restore the sense of philanthropy in those who wear precious diamond pieces and keep stamp albums worth millions as one of the many decorations of their drawing rooms, and invite them to save the life of millions dying from leprosy, cancer and tuberculosis?

Which law can manage obstinate and destructive instincts, bring subtlety into man’s feelings and utilize his vast potential and power to produce prosperity and development in all 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 such laws are not to be found in our existing rules of living.

It now becomes clear that it is absolutely essential to introduce and inculcate the principle of “ethics” - a principle which can surmount any obstacle just like the powerful waves of gravity and even pass through vacuum to reach the inner core of man’s soul, alter him, and create a new person with excellent heavenly and humanistic attributes:

 The man who has sympathy for grief and distress of others.

 The man who considers his own and others’ interests as the same.

 The man who never seeks his relief in discomfort of others.

 And finally, a man whose wide horizon of thought causes him to be unaffected by disturbances, offences, intolerance and vindictiveness, and who cherishes real unity with his fellowmen, in which there is mutual welfare and blessings.

Yes, these principles, called “ethics”, should be revived. The present book is written for this purpose and is based on the rich and powerful resources provided by Islam.

Qom, Theological Center

Nasir Makarem Shirazi

November 1973

# Translator’s Preface

Thanks to the Almighty Allah who gave me success to accomplish translation of this book.

May Allah send blessings on our Prophet Mohammad (s.a.w.a.), who guided us to His Straight Path, and illuminated our hearts with His Guidance.

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

Monir Shafiei

Tehran, Iran

10.10.2002

# 

# 1. Ethics and Training

## Is it Possible to Alter Individual’s Morality and Mentality through Training?

If we contend that morality and mentality of individuals is entirely dependent on their genes then the emphasis on inculcating ethics seems pointless. But if we accept that one’s ethical makeup is changeable then this science acquires great significance.

Some scientists subscribe to the former view and believe that just as some trees bear bitter fruits and a gardener cannot change their nature, training cannot change the mentality of those who have been born with impure hearts. And even if it is changed, it will be very transitory and superficial, and will soon revert to its origins! They suggest that the structure of the body and soul has a close relation with morality and for this reason morality is not changeable. They cite as a proof traditions like:

اَلنّاسُ مَعادِنٌ كَمَعادِنِ الذَّهَبِ وَ الْفِضَّةِ

The people are like the mines of gold and silver.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In contrast to this attitude, majority of scientists believe that morality and mentality of individuals is completely alterable through training. Vast experience exists to prove beyond doubt that a lot of wicked and vicious individuals are transformed completely by healthy environment and company of the good and by effective training. If this was not the case then what is the relevance of all of the divine instructions of prophets and religious leaders because all of them are concerned with training men’s souls. And where does that leave all the corrective punishments commonly applied among all nations of the world!

We see that even fierce and wild animals are domesticated through training, and are used for purposes contrary to their original disposition. How can we believe that ill-humor in men is more strongly entrenched than ferocity of wild animals!

We believe that the best way for proving this claim is studying the process of formation of an “immoral 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 itself. 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 tendency to perform that action is increased by being rooted in custom and habit. This reality is proved by experience.

Therefore, if immoral 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”.

Other factors such as good counsel, reflection, right training and a healthy environment are also very effective in predisposing soul for acceptance and formation of a good morality.

## Ill Humor is a Sort of Disease

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

Struggle between these powers exists in all men and relative dominance of one of these factors causes men to be in completely different levels in terms of humanistic values, and determines the distance of man’s “ascending” and “descending” curve. It can elevate a person so that he becomes superior to angels, and at the other extreme it lowers him so that he is inferior to the most dangerous predatory animals!

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

اِنَّ اللهَ خَصَّ الْمَلَكَ بِالْعَقْلِ دُونَ الشَّهْوَةِ وَ الْغَضَبِ، وَ خَصَّ الْحَيواناتِ بِهِما دُونَهٗ وَ شَرَّفَ الاِْنسَانَ بِاِعْطَاءِ الْجَمِيْعِ فَاِنِ انْقادَتْ شَهْوَتُهٗ وَ غَضَبُهٗ لِعَقْلِهٖ، صَارَ اَفْضَلَ مِنَ الْمَلائِكَةِ لِوُصُوْلِهٖ اِلٰى هٰذِهِ الرُّتْبَةِ مَعَ وُجُودِ الْمُنازِعِ

Allah granted to the Angel only intellect, without lust and wrath, and gave to the animals only lust and wrath, without intellect, but ennobled man by granting all of these. So if his lust and wrath are controlled by his intellect, he will be superior to the angels, because he has achieved such a station despite the existence of an opposing power.[[2]](#footnote-2)

But it should be noted that instincts and dispositions and lusts in their natural and balanced form are not harmful. Infact, these are essential for continuation of life. In other words, just as one’s body does not have any limb which is useless or superfluous, there are no instincts and tendencies which are not vital in the structure of his spirit and soul, and only in case of deviation from norm and disturbance of the balance will they assume dangerous and destructive forms.

For instance, who can deny the role of anger in man’s life? When the rights of a person are transgressed anger acts as a driving force to enable him to defend his rights ... it wakes him up, mobilizes him by releasing the adrenal needed to act. Yet when this anger is allowed to deviate from its main path so that it becomes rage whereby a person loses control over his intellect, it changes man into a fierce beast who does not recognize any boundaries. Similarly desire for wealth, honour etc in moderation is essential to prosperity and progress whereas excessive ambition and materialism can cause all sorts of problems in society.

Thus, just as disturbance in the body’s balance is always accompanied with undesirable results called “disease”, disturbance in the balance of spiritual powers and instincts and desires too is a sort of mental disease, and ethics scholars call it “heart-sickness”.

This concept has been propounded by the Holy Quran which refers to the hypocrisy of a hypocrite as a disease, where it says:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

In their heart there is a sickness and Allah has increased their sickness (due to their evil deeds).[[3]](#footnote-3)

## Purification of Carnal Soul or the Greater Warfare

Calling purification of carnal soul as “the greater warfare” speaks volumes for its importance, and this comes from the famous tradition in which Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to his companions after returning from one of the battles:

مَرْحَباً بِقَوْم قَضَوُا الْجِهادَ الاَصْغَرَ وَ بَقِيَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهادُ الْاَكْبَرُ. فَقِيلَ: يا رَسُولَ اللهِ مَا الْجِهادُ الْاَكْبَرُ؟ قالَ: جِهادُ النَّفْسِ.

Bravo to the fighters who performed lesser warfare and the greater warfare is still left undone. They asked: what is the greater warfare? He answered: warfare and striving against the rebellious sensual desires.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Another tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) states:

اِنَّ اَفْضَلَ الْجِهادِ مَنْ جاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْهٖ

The highest warfare is warfare with rebellious desires which are inside man’s chest.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The following points summarise Islam’s position on this critical issue:

1. There are always antagonistic powers in man like in a battlefield, and destiny of man depends on which of these dominates.
2. This warfare is called “the greater warfare” since it continues throughout one’s life and an internal battle is always more dangerous than an external one. More importantly, defeat in this warfare has no result save misery and misfortune, while defeat in common warfare may result in acquiring the honor of “Martyrdom”.
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. This is the reason why man does not become experienced and trained unless he is involved in challenging events and struggles. 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.
4. Warfare with an external enemy may occasionally be performed for material purposes (collecting booties or achieving fame and such like), but inner warfare is always for gaining perfection and achieving virtue. So the success therein requires a strong belief and will power as well as ambition and greatness of man’s personality.

## Prosperity and Happiness

Ethics scholars have mentioned prosperity and happiness as the end result of ethics.

### What is Prosperity?

We can define prosperity in one short phrase, gaining every possible perfection that man is capable of, In other words, and achieving full potential through proper utilization of different material and spiritual powers available to man.

But it is not always easy to understand the true meaning of “Perfection” and “Utilization”. Many tend to make mistakes in this respect. For example, a rich egoist who has ruined his health and peace of mind to amass wealth may consider himself prosperous, while his spoilt child, after the death of father, may think that prosperity lies in spending away this wealth for satisfaction of his lusts. Yet they would both be wrong. Below we discuss the issues in more detail.

### 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 the corporeal and material condition, it does not have the least effect on man’s prosperity, and therefore considered acquiring moral perfection and virtues as the only way to prosperity. They believed that absolute prosperity is not possible in this world and as long as the spirit is tied to this material body and tainted with corporeal impurities, it is deprived of real prosperity. For this reason they spurned and neglected all material affairs.

The conditions of Dewjanse, the famous physician of Cynics and his life in a jar instead of a house, and his contentment with one drinking cup out of all the facilities is well-known. It is even related that once he saw someone drinking water from a water course with his hands, and he threw away that cup as well!

Existentialists on the other hand take the opposite view and believe that prosperity and happiness comes only from unconditional utilization of material pleasures and condemns any obstacle in the way! So they pursue the worldly pleasures vigorously and almost to the threshold of insanity breaching all limits of morality and responsible social behaviour. It is obvious that we cannot call this ideology, which unfortunately is spreading nowadays in many countries, a doctrine. Rather, it is a sort of delusion and a mental disease..... perhaps an over-reaction to the extremist doctrines like Cynics who have totally shunned the corporeal aspects.

Moderate course: since man is not merely a body or a soul, and the reality of his essence is composed of two parts, he should also seek prosperity in both parts. Any program focusing on only one part of his essence shall not guarantee his prosperity because it is not in conformity with his reality as a whole.

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

فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهٗ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّا رِأُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا ۚ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

Now some men there are who say: Our Lord, give us in this world (good), but they have no part in the world to come, and others say: Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the world to come, and guard us against the chastisement of the Fire! Those, they shall have a portion from what they have earned, and Allah is swift at reckoning.[[6]](#footnote-6)

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 moral and mental deviations are often caused by abuse and wrong ways of satisfying one’s material instincts and desires.

Repressed desires and instincts always result in mental problems. Such problems cannot always be corrected through training in ethics alone. Rather, the treatment should address the cause and focus on enabling physical instincts to be satiated in a correct manner.

There are a lot of people suffering from suspicion, fear, jealousy, pride and hatred and other such vices, and its cause is deprivation and repression in the satisfaction of their physical needs and instincts. Thus, to be successful, it is necessary for the ethics scholars and psychotherapists to consider both physical and mental conditions for treating moral diseases.

Islam states the position succinctly:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهٖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ۚ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

Say: Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He hath produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He hath provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who understand.[[7]](#footnote-7)

And we read in the sayings of Imam Ali (a.s.):

لِلْمُؤْمِنِ ثَلاثُ ساعات: فَساعَةٌ يُناجِي فِيها رَبَّهٗ وَ ساعَةٌ يَرُمُّ مَعاشَهٗ وَ ساعَةٌ يُخَلِّي بَيْنَ نَفْسِهٖ وَ بَيْنَ لَذَّتِها فِيما يَحِلُّ وَ يَجْمُلُ

The believer’s time is divided into three parts: one part is for worship and communion with Allah, one part for earning his livelihood, and one for his leisure and things he enjoys which are lawful.[[8]](#footnote-8)

And in some cases this phrase is also included in this tradition:

وَ ذلِكَ 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 are relevant only in the context of man’s social relations with others so that if there was no society and a man lived completely separately from others and unaware of existence of others, “ethics” was basically meaningless. Envy and jealousy, modesty and pride, justice and injustice, chastity, generosity and stinginess, and such like are all meaningful only within the society and contact of man with others. Thus man minus society equals man minus ethics.

While most of moral virtues and vices are indeed concerned with social life, we believe that there do exist numerous cases which have only an individual aspect. For instance, patience or impatience when faced with afflictions, bravery or fear, endeavor or laziness in achievement of one’s objective, ignorance or awareness of the creator of the world, thanksgiving or ingratitude for His endless favors are relevant even for one living completely isolated from the society.

This explains the division of morality into “individual morality” and “social morality”. However, it is obvious that social morality is more important in ethics, although individual morality too has a considerable part to play in respect to oneself.

## A Big Mistake

It should be mentioned here that those who isolate themselves from the society for purification of morals and training their souls hoping to excel at this achievement are mistaken. They actually destroy the subject of social morality, and although they avoid some vices in this way, this is not really considered a virtue. It’s like having one’s sexual organs removed to stay away from adultery and lewdness. Although he avoids those acts, 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 mistaken view about divine predestination which will be explained in detail in a separate discussion. Islam encourages us towards social life and large communities and recommends observance of moral principles while living in the heart of society.

## Methods of Treating Moral Deviations

Before we study in detail about “Moral Virtues” and how to treat “Moral Vices”, we need to note two points:

Firstly, we should always treat those involved in moral deviations as patients because such deviations are in fact mental diseases, which sometimes also result in physical diseases and at times are the result of physical ailments. Thus, we can use the same principles which apply to the treatment of physical sickness.

Secondly, we should always consider three principles in the treatment of diseases:

1. Diagnosis of Disease

2. Finding causes of Disease

3. Method of treatment of Disease

We usually look at symptoms and consequences of disease for its diagnosis. This is often a relatively simple task in case of most physical diseases, especially with modern facilities and equipment. But moral illness can be more complicated to diagnose because moral deviations often have similar manifestations and symptoms, and there are some manifestations which are caused by a mixture of several moral diseases. Thus the ethics scholar and physician of the soul should study this science patiently and carefully for treating himself or the others.

To get to the root cause of a moral disease one should include a study of the biography of the deviated person, specially the background of his childhood period, which constitutes the foundation of man’s personality, as well as his family and social environment, his occupation and geographical surroundings. Even heritage should not be ignored, because ill-humor (like some physical diseases) is sometimes inherited.

And for treating moral vices, it should be noted that if they have become chronic, they should be treated patiently and carefully and realizing that cure could take a long time. However, if they are superficial and have not become intrinsic, the treatment would be possible in a shorter time. For this reason, correction of moral vices of youth and children is much easier than in case of the adults. The former get tainted quickly but can also be treated quickly.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عَلَيْكَ بِالْاَحْداثِ فَاِنَّهُمْ اَسْرَعُ اِلى كُلِّ خَيْرٍ

Pay attention to the youth as they are ready for quick acceptance of any goodness.[[9]](#footnote-9)

## Hygiene of Morality

It is also noteworthy that modern medicine is divided into two parts: “therapeutic medicine” and “hygienic medicine”. What is meant by therapeutic medicine is clear while hygienic medicine refers to preventing occurrence of diseases and destroying their causes. And since preventing a disease is much easier than curing it, hygiene plays an important role in the life of individuals and the well-being of the societies. On this account, large budgets are allocated for it.

These two parts also exist in moral and mental diseases. So, we should invest heavily in prevention of moral deviations and encourage the practice of hygiene of morality for ourselves and others by complying with wise counsel.

### 1. Avoiding Poisonous and Suspicious Associations

Surely, a lot of moral deviations are caused by keeping wrong company. One gets infected just like contact with contagious diseases and epidemics. This is particularly true for the gullible persons who readily accept the morality of others, on account of their young age or lack of knowledge or weak belief. For them, association with immoral individuals is a highly dangerous poison. One can find so many cases where the entire course of a person’s life takes a drastic turn through his choice of who he associates with. So much so that it is said that to know a person one should look at the company he keeps. Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

مَنِ اشْتَبَهَ عَلَيْكُمْ اَمْرُهٗ وَ لَمْ تَعْرِفُوا دِينَهٗ فَانْظُرُوا اِلى خُلَطائِهٖ

When you are uncertain about someone and do not know his Religion, look at his friends.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اَلْمَرْءُ عَلى دِينِ خَلِيلِهٖ وَ قَرِينِهٖ

A man has the same Religion as his friends and companions.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Association with evil doers darkens the soul, weakens moral resolve and creates indifference so that ugly deeds do not look so ugly. Traditions refer to this as the death of the heart. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اَرْبَعٌ يُمِتْنَ الْقُلُوبَ... وَ مُجالَسَةُ الْمَوْتى، فَقِيلَ لَهٗ: يا رَسُولَ اللهِ! وَ مَا الْمَوْتى؟ قالَ: كُلُّ غَنِيٍّ مُتْرَف.

Four things deaden the heart ..., including association with the dead. They asked: O Allah’s messenger! Who are the dead? He said: Lavish rich men.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

مُجالَسَةُ الْاَشْرارِ تُورِثُ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ بِالْاَخْيارِ.

Association with evil doers causes suspicion on good doers.[[13]](#footnote-13)

In brief, the issue of association is so critical that in the Holy Quran Allah (s.w.t.) premonishes His Messenger from association with evil doers. Conversely, associating with the good is one of the most important means of training, purification and developing moral virtues and reviving the heart.

Islam emphasizes greatly on association with good, righteous persons. Holy Quran says:

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

And restrain thyself with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and evening, desiring His countenance, and let not thine eyes turn away from them, desiring the adornment of the present life; and obey not him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance so that he follows his own lust, and his affair has exceeded all bounds.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اَسْعَدُ النّاسِ مَنْ خالَطَ كِرامَ النّاسِ

The most prosperous people are those who associate with good and honorable people.[[15]](#footnote-15)

### 2. Correcting Environment

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

Basically, one of the best ways of avoiding sin is awareness of its magnitude and how hated a thing it is. Display of moral vices and sins decreases its importance in view of people and lessens its hatred and prepares the soul for accepting it. And for this reason, in order to influence public opinion about the gravity of sin, it is instructed in Islam to punish evil doers publicly for some crimes.

وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And let a party of the Believers witness their (adulterer and adulteress) chastisement.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Thereby, the significance of the sin is emphasized to the people and the limits that were transgressed are brought into focus. Islam takes a very serious view of committing sins openly and regards immodesty and open debauchery as causes of a person’s defamation. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

اِذا جاهَرَ الْفاسِقُ بِفِسْقِهٖ فَلا حُرْمَةَ لَهٗ

Whenever an evil doer debauches openly, he is defamed.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Imam Baqir (a.s.) says:

ثَلاثَةٌ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ حُرْمَةٌ: صاحِبُ هَوىً مُبْتَدعٌ وَ الاِْمامُ الْجائِرُ و الْفاسِقُ الْمُعْلِنُ بِالْفِسْقِ.

There shall be no respect for three persons: deviant innovator, unjust leader, and evil doer debauching openly.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Even narrating stories about vices like adultery which taints minds and prepares the environment for their acceptance is forbidden in Islam. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

مَنْ سَمِعَ فاحِشَةً فَاَفْشاها كانَ كَمَنْ اَتاها، وَمَنْ سَمِعَ خَيْراً فَاَفْشاهُ كانَ كَمَنْ عَمِلَهٗ

One who hears about an evil deed and divulges it, is like the one who has performed it, and the one who hears about a good deed and divulges it is like the one who has performed it.[[19]](#footnote-19)

When fighting physical diseases, one first attacks the places infested with germs and viruses and works towards a clean living environment free of contamination of air, water, food etc. Similarly, it is necessary to have a clean and pure social environment as a pre-requisite for minimizing immoral conduct in society.

### 3. Emigration and Escaping From Tainted Environments

We should do our best for correction of tainted and corrupted environments. 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, then the best alternative is to emigrate. This is no different from moving away from a contaminated area to avoid becoming a victim of a contagious disease.

Emigration enjoys a special status in the context of the founding of the great Religion of Islam. Emigration of Islam’s Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) from Mecca to Medina was undertaken for escaping from a tainted and unfavorable environment to a more favorable one for spreading belief and virtue. Those who thus migrated at the beginning of the Islamic era have been granted much prominence in Islam’s history, and several verses are found in Holy Quran concerning them. Several traditions are also found which emphasize the importance of emigration from places of sin and polytheism to healthy places.

Says Holy Quran:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاغَمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً

And whoever flies in Allah’s way, he will find in the earth many a place of refuge and abundant resources...[[20]](#footnote-20)

And it is narrated from Islam’s Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

مَنْ فَرَّ بِدِينِهٖ مِنْ اَرْض اِلى اَرْض وَ اِنْ كانَ شِبْراً مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اسْتَوْجَبَ الْجَنَّةَ وَ كانَ رَفِيقَ اِبْراهِيمَ وَ مُحَمَّد

Whoever emigrates for his Religion from one territory to another although it may be as much as one palm of land deserves paradise and will be a companion of Abraham and Mohammad (two great emigrant prophets).[[21]](#footnote-21)

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 mentioned presumably because they too had to migrate. Abraham (a.s.) emigrated from Babylon, the center of idolaters and Nimrod, to Syria and Palestine, and Islam’s Prophet from Mecca to Medina.

In Ali Ibne Abraham’s interpretation of the verse

يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

O My servants who believe, surely My earth is wide; therefore Me do you serve![[22]](#footnote-22)

it is narrated from Imam Baqir (a.s.):

لا تُطِيعُوا اَهْلَ الْفِسْقِ مِنَ الْمُلُوكِ فَاِنْ خِفْتُمُوهُمْ اَنْ يَفْتِنُوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ فَاِنَّ اَرْضِي واسِعَة.

Do not follow sinful rulers and if you fear that you may deviate from your pure Religion (do emigrate) because My earth is wide.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Not participating in gatherings where sins or vices are committed and keeping away from undesirable individuals are all considered as a sort of short term emigration from high risk areas in order to prevent getting infected with moral vices and sins.

# 

# 2. Principles of Ethics

 Critical examination of the old quadruple classification

 Scale for evaluation of good and bad morality

 Effect of seclusion and dissociability in morality

 Arguments of advocates of seclusion and association

 Exceptional cases in which seclusion is permitted

 Vigilance and self-examination or studying incentives and consequences

We shall now review the principles of ethics propounded by the pioneers of this technique. Ethics scholars have summarized the principles of moral virtues under the following four heads:

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 be, 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 center 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 Nasiruddin 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.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Now, we shall see how these quadruple principles have originated?

Ethics scholars say: man’s soul has three powers:

1. Power of perception and distinction

2. Power of acquiring benefit or “attraction” or “desire” (in its general sense)

3. Power of loss repulsion or “repulsion” or “anger”

Moderation in each of these powers forms one of the moral virtues, i.e. wisdom, chastity and bravery respectively.

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

In other words, balance in each of the above triple powers is considered as a virtue and their combination with each other, i.e. Desire and anger powers being controlled by perception power, gives rise to another virtue. It often happens that a man is brave and not afraid unduly in the battle field, but this bravery may be utilized in a wrong way, like fighting for small 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.

## Critical examination of the old quadruple classification

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 which are difficult to place in one of the above quadruple principles. For instance, philanthropy and self sacrifice and self devotion, could be hardly included in “chastity”, because it is possible that an individual’s desires are moderate, yet he lacks self sacrifice and devotion and philanthropy. That is to say he neither encroaches on the rights of others, nor desires their loss, but at the same time does not possess a spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion.

Perhaps the idea of this quadruple division results from the ideology of the ancients who assumed most of world’s issues to be 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 basis of physical diseases, and assumed one of four temperaments for all medicines. Today one finds that none of these quadruple divisions are tenable. The same is true for division of principles of ethics into four.

2. Including wisdom among principles of moral virtues, and its opposite point among the vices is not very appropriate, because moral habits 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 questionable, 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 fear 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.

To conclude, one can say that the moderation theory for good moral habits is true in cases like bravery and chastity, but one cannot support its generalization since it is untrue in cases of justice and wisdom.

It is also inferred from above discussions that dividing principles of ethics into four has no clear rationale and can be erroneous in some aspects. Therefore, it is better not to restrict the principles of moral virtues to four. Rather, one can have as many good and bad moral attributes as there are instincts, desires and affections in man, and training and balancing each of these instincts and desires for individual’s and society’s perfection is a virtue, and deviation of each of them causing degeneration of individual or society is considered as a vice.

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 Usul-e-Kafi, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in respect of “hosts of intellect and ignorance”, that their number is 75. Majority of these relate to moral virtues or vices.

## Scale for Evaluation of Good and Bad Morality

Not all of the 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 opposites (cowardice, stinginess and selfishness) are obviously among the vices. But some others are not so black and white and many a debate and controversy arises as to whether they count among virtues or vices. Thus, we need a clear evaluation scale.

For instance, nowadays some of the materialistic scientists like “Bertrand Russell” suggest that 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 something which Religion or custom regards as obscene or forbidden without giving any reason. Under this view the only thing that matters is the advantages and disadvantages of an action as we understand them.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Following from this, he supports many obscene actions considering them as not harming others (including adultery and homosexuality if both parties agree).

Some others such as the communists believe that most of the moral principles are a product of capitalism and so should be discarded alongwith capitalism and only those morals should prevail which help the cause of the proletariat!

If we were to discuss this subject from a religious viewpoint, the position is fairly clear. Having recognized that Islam is a Religion that follows the truth, we shall refer to the clear criterion and definitions in the Holy Quran and practices of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for evaluation of principles of moral virtues and vices.

From an intellectual viewpoint, one can go by the principle that any moral factor supporting man’s perfection is a virtue, and any factor that causes degeneration is a vice.

However, it is important that a man should be studied not only in terms of material aspects and basic requirements of this life but also the spiritual and intangible aspects as these are often the defining and critical characteristics of his morality. An evil and undesirable action may not cause any difficulty for the others and yet may result in degeneration of the doer in human and spiritual aspects. Certainly, such action will be a vice.

Those who consider only material aspects are looking at only half of man’s existence (the less important half); while the need is to study the ethics holistically that includes body, mind and the soul. The approach adopted by the communists is even worse as besides ignoring the spiritual aspects it also limits its focus of material aspects mainly on those related to economics. It is obvious that these narrow and limited doctrines cannot give us effective tools for corrective actions and are likely to lead to serious mistakes due to their inherent limitations in defining the principles of ethics and distinguishing moral virtues from vices.

To sum up, we can say that based on logic and intellect the best approach in studying moral principles is to use the criterion of man’s perfection in all aspects. All the virtues and vices will then be defined based on how they affect man’s overall perfection.

## Effect of Seclusion and Dissociability

Is purification of carnal soul and acquiring moral virtues easier to achieve as an active member of the society or in seclusion and dissociability? This is the question that a lot of people ask themselves.

Some believe that more the seclusion, healthier is the morality because a lot of deviations and vices surface in the context of dealing with others. Envy, pride, lie, slander, calumny, hypocrisy, grudge and such like are all caused in the course of interaction with others. The one who does not associate with others neither slanders nor hears it, neither envies nor is envied and so on.

## Arguments of Advocates of Seclusion

Advocates of seclusion also include some ethics scholars and famous pious men who have put forth a number of additional justifications for seclusion and its effects on improvement of morality.

They say: one who adopts seclusion is able to improve the quality of his worship and prayers can improve his meditation and reflection on the mysteries of creation and different fields of science and grasp better the underlying realities. He is not distracted by extraneous matters such as love, hatred, debates and disputes which can hinder comprehension of facts and realities, and therefore one finds that great thinkers generally live in seclusion.

Moreover, when associating and communicating with people, a man is often faced with situations which create burdensome obligations which he cannot fulfill and is therefore guilty of non-compliance of religious duties. For example, living in the society, we often encounter people engaged in unlawful things and sins and breach of duties which makes it incumbent on us to oppose the bad and invite them to good - since such responsibilities are not always easy to discharge, why not escape them by opting for seclusion!

In addition, there are some verses and traditions encouraging seclusion and dissociation. For example:

1.

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهٗ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا

When he had turned away from them and from those whom they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and each one of them We made a prophet.[[26]](#footnote-26)

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

2.

وَ اِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ وَ ما يَعْبُدُونَ اِلاَّ اللهَ فَأْوُوا اِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهٖ

And when you forsake them and what they worship save Allah, betake yourselves for refuge to the cave; your Lord will extend to you largely of His mercy and provide for you a profitable course in your affair.[[27]](#footnote-27)

This verse shows that divine favours were provided to those who adopted seclusion and dissociation in certain circumstances.

3.

قِيلَ لِرَسُولِ اللهِ (ﷺ):اَيُّ النّاسِ اَفْضَلُ؟ قالَ: مُؤْمِنٌ مُجاهِدٌ بِنَفْسِهٖ وَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ تَعالى. قِيلَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: رَجُلٌ مُعْتَزِلٌ فِي شِعْب مِنَ الشِّعابِ يَعْبُدُ رَبَّهٗ وَ يَدَعُ النّاسَ فِي شَرِّهٖ

They asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): who is the most superior among people? He said: the believer who struggles in the way of Allah. It was asked: Then who is even superior to him? He said: one, in a valley, who has dissociated from people, worships Allah and people are secure from his evil![[28]](#footnote-28)

This tradition too has commended seclusion and dissociation.

4. In Mesbahul Sharia, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

صاحِبُ الْعُزْلَةِ مُتَحَصِّنٌ بِحِصْنِ اللهِ وَ مُحْتَرِسٌ بِحَراسَتِهٖ فَياطُوبى لِمَنْ تَفَرَّدَ بِهٖ سِرّاً وَ عَلانِيَةً

Those in isolation are in the divine castle and under Allah’s protection; good for those who are with Allah publicly and in privacy.[[29]](#footnote-29)

## Disadvantages of Seclusion and Dissociation

Notwithstanding the above mentioned merits, seclusion and dissociation also suffer from a number of disadvantages and given the numerous advantages of association, a case can be made that it is association that excels and is the preferable course.

1. A very important advantage of association is that most virtues and good habits are acquired in the society and not in solitude, because most of them are concerned with inter-personal relations, courtesy, modesty, kindness, devotion, forgiveness, remission, bravery, patience, suppression of anger, affection and pity come into play when one interacts with others in the society.

Avoiding moral vices like envy, pride, lie, slander, through seclusion is not really a virtue and honor, rather it is a kind of shying away from the issue which may have other undesirable effects e.g. a person who deprives himself from fulfilling a basic need when he shuns sexuality altogether in order to rule out all possibilities of adultery. Although he is protected from this stain, such chastity is not a virtue. The virtue is when a man lives in the society and is not afraid of facing difficult situations and preserves his control over his desires in critical moments as Prophet Joseph did. In other words, strength of character is achieved through living with and standing up to challenges which are so common in today’s world which is brimming with temptations and seduction at every step. The wood of forest trees has high resistance and strength because it has grown in the rough and tumble of the jungle facing pests, thunderstorms, draughts etc whereas that from trees grown in a protective environment is weaker with a reduced capacity to face pest attacks. Similarly, those adopting secluded life styles tend to gradually lose their spiritual and moral powers. The following tradition is a reply to the first argument of advocates of seclusion:

At the time of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) one of the Moslems went to the mountain for seclusion and worship. He was brought to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) The Holy Prophet said him:

لا تَفْعَلْ اَنْتَ وَ لا اَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ، لَصَبْرُ اَحَدِكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ مَواطِنِ الاِْسْلامِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عِبادَةِ اَحَدِكُمْ اَرْبَعِينَ عاماً

Neither you nor any other Moslem should do this, because patience and resistance living in an Islamic environment is better than forty years of worship.[[30]](#footnote-30)

2. Solitude and seclusion can cause mental illnesses and distortions; A man may be brainy and virtuous and yet have some weaknesses which can only come to light on interactions with others. In association one’s mistakes surface quite soon, but in seclusion they could remain hidden and uncorrected. One could continue travelling on one wrong path after another until he finds himself lost and far away from home. Those who contend that meditation is facilitated by seclusion should note the dangers of deviation that seclusion can bring.

3. Another major risk of a secluded lifestyle is that it can lead to vanity and selfishness. Man is usually very interested in himself and his works, and coupled with his instinct of “self-love” which acts as a magnifier, his thoughts and actions appear to him as greater than they actually are. On the other hand, his faults appear smaller than they are. These two aspects combine to provide a very fertile environment for the growth of “vanity and selfishness”.

But a man who interacts with others gets to know himself much better. Reactions and feedback from others gives him a less biased view of his real strengths and weaknesses and also provides a comparative perspective as he notices the virtues and works of others. He may then come across individuals who are much more gifted, pious, and productive than himself - a humbling experience that strikes at the root of any vain thoughts and may well teach him a thing or two in areas where he needs improvement. And for this reason one observes that it is usually the people who live solitary lives who make big and sometimes odd, hollow, claims which emanate from their deep vanity and self-admiration.

As indicated, socializing is also a means of discovering one’s own faults. Our adversaries are particularly useful as they are quite generous with their criticism and act as a mirror for us to look into to see our faults. Without this mirror a lot of our blemishes could remain hidden and our mental appearance will come to resemble the disheveled look of those who never look at the mirror!

4. Suspicion of others: one of the other disadvantages of seclusion and dissociation is that it produces suspicion. It’s an outgrowth of vanity whereby the loners (who tend to consider themselves very highly) are dismayed at not getting the respect and accolades that they think they deserve. They begin to suspect people of ill-will, prejudice, bad judgment, ungratefulness, and lacking in virtues. They may go on to believe that people are vicious, astray and deviated and it is best to keep away from them. And in this way, seclusion itself is a factor for greater seclusion.

5. Peevishness and anger: Loners also tend to be peevish and angry, and do not like any kind of confrontation with people. They tend to overreact to even a minor criticism or harshness; often they are short-tempered and can become quite offensive and aggrieved at the slightest provocation.

In contrast, sociable people are often gentle and good tempered and become angry less often. The reason is obvious. Patience and tolerance is usually acquired through coping with unpleasant events and letting the self get accustomed to them, and since social life presents many challenges and disturbing encounters, it provides opportunities to gradually acquire the art of being patient.

Unsociable people are often mirthless, rarely laugh, do not participate much in recreational activities and their life is monotonous and boring. This disturbs their spiritual balance and causes a sort of uneasiness in them, and when they are faced with a difficult situation, they become prone to anxiety and mental imbalances as they do not possess a means for dealing appropriately with the challenges. This increases their anger and ill humor.

6. Being deprived of sciences and experiences: A person acquires knowledge in scientific and other fields by listening to the great men and their methods and being inspired by their way of thinking. It goes without saying that such sciences and experiences cannot be acquired by adopting a life of seclusion. Rather, it is through interaction and pro-active living in the heart of society that one achieves the fruitful life of useful and beneficial experiences.

Taking into account these advantages and disadvantages it is patently clear that the preferred course is the one put forth by those who advocate a lifestyle based on association as opposed to seclusion.

## 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, yet there are some exceptional cases which call for adopting seclusion or at least minimizing association. This is the case when one is exposed to a very poisonous and vicious environment wherein the result of association will be nothing but deviation and wrongdoing. Surely, we should avoid such a society just as we would avoid a place full of contagious diseases.

Seclusion and dissociation of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) or the People of Cave are instances of such cases.

The speech of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) to Safian Souri too refers to this reality. When he said:

فَسَدَ الزَّمانُ وَ تَغَيَّرَ الاِْخْوانُ فَرَأَيْتُ الاِْنْفِرادَ اَسْكَنَ لِلْفُؤادِ

The world is vicious and friends have changed, so I found seclusion more peaceful.[[31]](#footnote-31)

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

The other point which should be mentioned is that a man should also spend some hours of day and night in seclusion and solitude so that he can think and study, pray with complete concentration, seek closeness to Almighty Allah, free from any doubt and hypocrisy. Great personalities are often found to include this feature of solitary time in their daily life schedule, and it is possible that some of the seclusion traditions are linked to this concept.

To sum up, the basic principle in man’s life should be to adopt association, while seclusion and dissociation are used in exceptional cases.

## Vigilance and Self-Examination

Scholars of ethics have emphasized in their books on the necessity of these two principles for acquiring good moral habits and keeping away from vices. Vigilance involves close attention to one’s 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 lapse in these two stages creates immense problems which are then very difficult to redress. The situation is similar to the care needed for one’s body. A man has to comply with various practices related to hygiene for preserving his physical health, and takes steps to avoid food and environment which may cause diseases. At times he has to be vaccinated for prevention from diseases. Some need to be on special diets, others need precise medical examinations by proficient physicians, and after recovery they need rehabilitation to regain strength and deal with side effects.

To counter moral deviations and acquire spiritual health one needs similar efforts. In general, one should consider the following aspects:

1. He should always watch his condition and know that Almighty Allah is always observing and watching him. Holy Quran says:

أَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ

What, He who stands over every soul for what he has earned?[[32]](#footnote-32)

It is inferred from this verse that Almighty Allah is watching man like the one who is always standing over him.

And it says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

Surely Allah ever watches over you.[[33]](#footnote-33)

And it is narrated in a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اُعْبُدِ اللهَ كَاَنَّكَ تَراهُ فَاِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَراهُ فَاِنَّهٗ يَراكَ

Worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, He sees you.[[34]](#footnote-34)

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

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

Allah bids to justice and good deeds.[[35]](#footnote-35)

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

2. Before starting each utterance and action, a man should study precisely its reason, the likely effects and consequences. As narrated in one tradition:

اِنَّهٗ يُنْشَرُ لِلْعَبْدِ فِي كُلِّ حَرَكَة مِنْ حَرَكاتِهٖ وَ اِنْ صَغُرَتْ ثَلاثَةُ دَواوِينَ: اَلْاَوَّلُ لِمَ، اَلثّانِي كَيْفَ، اَلثّالِثُ لِمَنْ

When performing each action, however 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.[[36]](#footnote-36)

In other words, the intention of action is registered in the first book, the quality of action in the second, and its purpose and final aim in the third one.

Surely, such focus will help in prevention of misdeeds.

3- Everyday, he should closely examine his deeds of the day. If he has committed a sin, mistake or a wrong deed, he should take steps to protect his heart and soul from its adverse effects and prevent them from taking root and becoming intrinsic part of him. He should reflect on the ominous consequences of that deed, rebuke himself, and resolve to be more vigilant in the future, and perform good deeds that match the bad ones in their intensity in order to restore the luminosity and purity of his heart and soul. He should also take steps to strengthen his belief and spirituality.

The issue of self-examination and compensation of action is so critical that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اِنِّي لاََسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ وَ اَتُوبُ اِلَيْهِ فِي الْيَوْمِ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً

I ask Allah’s forgiveness and I repent to Him seventy times everyday.[[37]](#footnote-37)

It goes without saying that repentance of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is not for sin; rather it is a way of showing true humbleness in worship and the importance of repentance as such.

# 

# 3. First Step in Purification of Ethics

 Correction of Speech

 Tongue is the interpreter of heart

 Thirty great sins which originate from tongue.

 Silence and reticence

## Tongue is The Interpreter of Heart

Correction of tongue and speech has assumed a 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 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 in his speech. Physicians have for long ascertained the patient’s temperament through the condition of his tongue and nowadays psychoanalysts too look closely at one’s speech to treat mental problems.

Ethics scholars attach much importance to the tongue and deem its correction as a sign of the strengthening of one’s spirituality and moral virtues and habits.

This reality is also captured succinctly in the traditions of the Holy Prophet’s House as illustrated by the following sayings narrated respectively from Imam Ali (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

1.

اَلْمَرْءُ مَخْبُوءٌ تَحْتَ لِسانِهٖ

Man is hidden under his tongue.[[38]](#footnote-38)

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.

لا يَسْتَقِيمُ اِيمانُ عَبْد حَتّى يَسْتَقِيمَ قَلْبُهٗ، وَ لا يَسْتَقِيمُ قَلْبُهٗ حَتّى يَسْتَقِيمَ لِسانُهٗ

Firmness and purity of belief is not possible without firmness and purity of heart, and the latter is not possible without firmness and purity of tongue.[[39]](#footnote-39)

## Thirty great sins which originate from tongue

The importance of correction of tongue becomes clearer when we realize that many sins as well as good deeds originate from the tongue.

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

1. Speaking about the affairs which do not concern one.

2. Ranting and babbling

3. Speaking about forbidden things like wine, gambling and unchaste women.

4. Disputing and raising objections with ulterior motives

5. Quarrelsome utterances

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

7. Abuse and insult

8. Cursing

9. Profane singing

10. Indulgence in humor

11. Sarcasm and mockery

12. Disclosing secrets of others

13. False promises

14. Telling lies, false oaths

15. Slander

16. Gossip

17. Hypocrisy in speech

18. Inappropriate eulogy

19. Inelegant and erroneous talk

20. Vulgar questions in respect of serious matters such as religious beliefs

It is obvious that one can further expand this list of Ghazali. For example:

1. Accusation

2. False evidence

3. Self-admiration

4. Unfounded rumors about fornication etc

5. Harshness in utterance

6. Improper insistence

7. Verbal molestation

8. Blaming

9. Expressing ungratefulness

10. Propagating lies and promoting sin

There is no doubt that proper verbal communication should be taught as one of the most critical subjects on morality. This becomes clearer when we consider the fact that the tongue is always readily available to a person for immediate, fast, cheap communication and words once spoken cannot be retracted. Just as one handles explosives and missiles with great care, one needs to be ever so watchful in the use of one’s tongue.

## Silence and Reticence

Taking into account the above risks of wayward speech, ethics scholars have advocated silence as a preventive measure in cases where speaking is not necessary. Numerous traditions on this are mentioned from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Prophet’s House (a.s.), and a number of great men have adopted this as a starting point in their journey of purification of their soul.

Moreover, silence facilitates reflection, spirituality and clear-sightedness. Perhaps this is why Prophet Zachariah’s three days of silence was seen as the sign of fulfillment of his supplication for a child:

قَالَ آيَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا

He said: My Lord! Give me a sign. He said: Your sign is that you will not be able to speak to the people three nights while in sound health.[[40]](#footnote-40)

And Mary was ordered to vow a silence fast:

فَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْنًا ۖ فَإِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

Say: I have vowed to the All-Merciful a fast, and today I will not speak to any man.[[41]](#footnote-41)

We are told that before the revelation of prophethood, our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had spent several days in the cave of Hira in silence and reflection, meditating about the mysteries of creation.

We can summarize the advantages of silence as follows:

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

مَنْ صَمَتَ نَجا

Whosoever is silent is saved.[[42]](#footnote-42)

The reason for this is clear. Most sins are performed by tongue. As Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اِنَّ اَكْثَرَ خَطايَا ابْنِ آدَمَ فِي لِسانِهٖ

Most of man’s mistakes are in his tongue.[[43]](#footnote-43)

And it is narrated from the Prophet in another tradition:

اُخْزُنْ لِسانَكَ اِلاّ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ فَاِنَّكَ بِذلِكَ تَغْلِبُ الشَّيْطانَ

Hold your tongue except for a good utterance and thereby you will overcome Satan.[[44]](#footnote-44)

2. Silence invites man to thinking and reflection which are central to his spiritual life. Thus we find that silent people are typically thinkers, resourceful, and pro-active. In contrast, talkative people are often long on words and short on action.

It is narrated in a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اِذا رَأَيْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَ صَمُوتاً وَقُوراً فَادْنُوا مِنْهُ فَاِنَّهٗ يُلْقِي الحِكْمَةَ

When you find a believer silent and courtly, make contact with him so that he teaches you wisdom.[[45]](#footnote-45)

And it is narrated from Imam Ali (a.s.):

اِذا تَمَّ الْعَقْلُ نَقَصَ الْكَلامُ

As intelligence increases, speech decreases.[[46]](#footnote-46)

In addition to the fact that silence is the best means for sharpening one’s powers of reflection, the above phrase could also suggest that speaking consumes much mental energy which a silent person can save and use instead in unraveling complex realities. Furthermore, silence is a tranquilizer of soul and moderator of sentiments.

3. Excessive talk produces a chain of adverse effects as described in the following tradition from Imam Ali (a.s.):

مَنْ كَثُرَ كَلامُهٗ كَثُرَ خَطَأُهٗ، وَ مَنْ كَثُرَ خَطَأُهٗ قَلَّ حَياؤُهٗ وَ مَنْ قَلَّ حَياؤُهٗ قَلَّ وَرَعُهٗ، وَ مَنْ قَلَّ وَرَعُهٗ ماتَ قَلْبُهٗ، وَ مَنْ ماتَ قَلْبُهٗ 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. When his fear of Allah lessens, his heart dies. He whose heart dies, enters Hell.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Another saying that emphasizes the importance of silence:

اَلْعِبادَةُ عَشَرَةُ اَجْزاء تِسْعَةٌ مِنْها فِي الصَّمْتِ

Worship has ten portions, nine of which exist in silence.[[48]](#footnote-48)

But it would be a mistake to liken silence to going into seclusion to get away from sinful temptations. Rather, it is like avoiding a sin by choosing silence when tempted to sins like slandering.

It should also be mentioned that when speaking is necessary, remaining silent is considered as a major fault, and a sign of weakness, lack of spiritual courage and fearing mortals instead of Almighty Allah.

It is also noteworthy that just as most sins are performed by tongue, a large portion of good deeds, like Almighty Allah’s remembrance, guiding people, training and education, enjoining good, and forbidding evil are also performed by tongue.

# 

# 4. Honesty, the Most Manifest Sign of Personality

 Miraculous results of truthfulness

 Lie - the source of all sins

 Lie is not compatible with belief

 Lie makes man improvident

 The liar does not trust even in himself

 Source of lie

 How to rectify the habit lying

 Lie in exceptional cases

 What is equivocation?

 A new interpretation about equivocation

Undoubtedly, truthfulness and honesty (truth and trust) are the most manifest signs of personality. One who lacks these does not deserve to be called a human. Both are interrelated and go hand in hand as seen in various Islamic traditions. After all truthfulness is nothing but trust in speech, and trust is nothing but truth in action, and as we will see their social effects are similar.

## Value and Importance of Truthfulness

Truthfulness and honesty adorn one’s personality and reflect the magnificence of his mind and purity of his soul. Truthful people are usually brave, frank, sincere, and free from prejudices and excessive love and hatred. In contrast, liars are usually cowardly, hypocritical, greedy, fanatic, stubborn, and given to excessive love and hatred.

Truthful people are certainly principled. Their frank and candid communication sets them apart from the guile and hypocrisy of the liars. We can consider truthfulness as a key for detecting the reality of an individual’s inner self. Truth in speech is said to be a means of evaluation of people in various narrations and traditions of Prophet’s House (a.s.):

Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

لا تَنْظُرُوا اِلى طُولِ رُكُوعِ الرَّجُلِ وَ سُجُودِهٖ فَاِنَّ ذلِكَ شَيْءٌ قَدِ اعْتادَهٗ فَلَوْ تَرَكَهُ اسْتَوْحَشَ لِذلِكَ، وَلكِنِ انْظُرُوا اِلى صِدْقِ حَدِيثِهٖ وَ اَداءِ اَمانَتِهٖ

Do not look at one’s long bowing and prostrations in prayer. It may just be their habit, and it disturbs them if they do not do it. Rather, look at their truthfulness and honesty.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Holy Quran says:

وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ

And thou shalt certainly know them in the twisting of their speech.[[50]](#footnote-50)

## Miraculous Results of Truthfulness

From a social point of view, the greatest advantage that truth and trust can offer is attracting confidence and reliance. This facilitates all scientific, industrial and economic developments which in turn emanate from the social interactions in a society. Effective collaboration and consultation, which are the foundations of social life, are only possible when individuals trust and rely on each other. Otherwise, people will get bogged down with unproductive disputes and disturbances, struggles and sabotages.

Society’s best friend is truth and trust, and its most dangerous enemy is lie. If companies make false claims about one of their products, people will suspect even their best products. If the rulers lie, people will disregard their promises, invitations, and warnings, and they will lose powerful public support.

If lie becomes rampant in the scientific arena, scientists and scholars will not trust the statements and judgments of each other leading to unnecessary and enormously costly duplication of work as each of them will want to do his own research on every subject ( reinvent the wheel ) as he cannot rely on work of others.

## Lie - The Source of All Sins

Several narrations refer to the reality that trust and truth bestow purity of action, whereas lie is the key of all types of sins. For a better understanding, let’s look at some of the narrations from Prophet’s House (a.s.) and carry out an analysis.

Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

الصِّدْقُ يَهْدِي اِلَى الْبِرِّ وَ الْبِرُّ يَدْعُو اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ

Truthfulness guides people to goodness, and goodness leads them to paradise.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

اِذا صَدَقَ الْعَبْدُ قالَ اللهُ: صَدَقَ و بَرَّ، وَ اِذا كَذِبَ قالَ اللهُ كَذَبَ وَ فَجَرَ

When a Allah’s servant speaks the truth, Allah says: he said the truth and performed a good deed, and when he lies, He says: he lied and performed an evil deed![[52]](#footnote-52)

Imam Askari (a.s.) says:

جُعِلَتِ الْخَبائِثُ كُلُّها فِي بَيْت وَ جُعِلَ مِفْتاحُها اَلْكَذِبُ

All vices are locked in a room and its key is lie.[[53]](#footnote-53)

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 the context of man’s deeds:

1. Lie is the source of hypocrisy, because truthfulness refers to harmony of tongue and heart, and lie is disharmony between these two. This is the starting point of the divergence of man’s inner self from his outward expression, and the liar gradually proceeds to full hypocrisy.

Holy Quran refers to this fact and says:

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

So, as a result, He puts hypocrisy into their hearts, until the day they meet Him, for that they failed Allah in what they promised Him and they were liars.[[54]](#footnote-54)

2. Lie is the tool of most sins. Those committing theft or treachery, hoarding or short-weighing or engaging in any other form of dishonesty and deception will come to a standstill if they stop lying. Lie is thus the tool, the enabler, with which they carry out these vices.

3. An envious person resorts to lies to hurt his victims with false accusations, as does a proud person in his boasting and false ostentations. Flatterers and greedy persons too make use of lies and half-truths for achieving their dubious goals.

4. One who holds fast to truthfulness has no alternative but to restrain himself from most of the sins, because he knows that if he is asked about the issue, he will say the truth, and if he says the truth, it will be disgraceful or cause other adverse repercussions. So, there is a strong motivation to avoid those bad deeds in the first place. Thus, one who is wedded to this blessed attribute of truth is indeed saved from many a sin.

5. A lie most often leads to more lies and sins, because liars tend to need to tell additional lies or carry out evil acts to support or cover up the first lie. This compounding effect can sometimes result in a relatively mild falsification ending up in a major web of lies and vile acts.

It is clear from the above discussion that an honest person with a firm determination to say nothing but the truth achieves freedom from most of his sins because their root cause i.e. lies is removed from the scene.

## Lie is not compatible with Belief

It can be deduced from different traditions that lie and belief cannot go hand in hand. In other words lying is a sign that a person is lacking in, or has a defective, belief.

These traditions have been inspired by Holy Quran where it says:

إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ

They only forge falsehood, who believes not in the signs of Allah, and those -–they are liars.[[55]](#footnote-55)

“Forge falsehood” may refer to deliberate falsehood.

And now some of the narrations:

سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (ﷺ):يَكُونُ الْمُؤْمِنُ جَباناً؟ قالَ: نَعَمْ. قِيلَ: وَ يَكُونُ بَخِيلا؟ قالَ: نَعَمْ. قِيلَ: وَيَكُونُ كَذّاباً؟ قال: لا

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was asked: Is it possible for a believer to be a coward? He answered: yes. He was asked: Is it possible for him to be stingy? He answered: yes. He was asked: Is it possible for him to be a liar? He answered: no.[[56]](#footnote-56)

قالَ اَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (): لا يَجِدُ عَبْدٌ طَعْمَ الاِْيمانِ حَتّى يَتْرُكَ الْكَذِبَ هَزْلَهٗ وَجِدَّهٗ

Imam Ali (a.s.) said: A man does not taste the deliciousness of belief, unless he refuses lie, whether a serious one or in jest.[[57]](#footnote-57)

عنه ():جانِبُوا الْكَذِبَ فَاِنَّهٗ مُجانِبُ الاِْيمانِ

Avoid lie, it is not compatible with belief.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Thus we conclude from these narrations that Believers avoid lies, and belief and lie can never be bedfellows. It is a fact that liars do not easily accept invitation of the prophets. Since they themselves lie in small matters, they cannot believe that prophets can really be truthful on such big issues. They may call themselves Believers, but if we explore into the depth of their hearts, we will find that it is not free from doubt and suspicion. The contrary is also true. That is to say the truthful people, because they themselves are truthful and honest, tend to accept whatever they hear unless there is evidence to the contrary.

Liars have a special pessimism and suspicion on everybody and everything. They assume everything false, untrue, or at least suspicious. How is it possible for such people to believe the prophets without any doubt and suspicion? So we see in the history that hypocrites and liars often attributed 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, he can justify his violation through false excuses. For such persons, 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. On the other hand, one who is bound to the principle of “truthfulness and honesty”, feels obliged to fulfill his duties and promises and so cannot be improvident and careless.

## The Liar Does Not Trust Even In Himself!

Not only do the liars mistrust others and assume them to be like themselves, but they also lack trust in themselves, because they are suspicious of all realities, including the degree of their ability and power when facing problems and different events of life as well as their determination and will power in performing tasks.

We read in aphorisms of Imam Ali (a.s.):

اِيّاكَ وَ مُصادَقَةَ الْكَذّابِ فَاِنَّهٗ كَالسَّرابِ! يُقَرِّبُ عَلَيْكَ الْبَعِيدَ وَ يُبَعِّدُ عَلَيْكَ الْقَرِيبَ.

You should avoid making friends with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you feel that things far away are near and near things are far.[[59]](#footnote-59)

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

## Sources of Lies

As mentioned, lie originates from one of the mental weaknesses:

Sometimes, a man lies for the fear of poverty, abandonment and losing his position and rank.

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

Sometimes, passions as well as excessive love or hatred causes a man to lie in favor of one he loves or against one who is hated by him.

Or he lies in respect of scientific, historical or other such issues for the sake of showing off and to create a false impression of the extent of his knowledge.

But all of these vicious attributes, which are the sources of lie, actually originate from one’s defective personality and weakness of spirit and belief. Those who do not believe in their own personality and have a feeble spirit, resort to lie, falsification, fraud and treachery for gaining their purposes and escaping losses. The high minded individuals with strong personality rely on their own personality and ability to achieve their goals. Moreover, those with a strong belief in the All Powerful Creator, who know that He is the source of all blessings, victories and successes, that His power overcomes all powers and His support is unmatchable, do not have any reason for resorting to untruth and lying for gaining a benefit or escaping a loss.

And sometimes this dangerous vice takes root in man because of inattention to the disadvantages of lies and importance of truthfulness, or due to an unhealthy family or social environment. Another important factor in lying is that it generates a feeling of low self-worth and inferiority complex. Those who are so affected try to compensate this with all types of lies, exaggeration and self-glorification.

## Way of Treating Lies

Treatment procedure will be relatively clear if we look closely at the causes. In general, to treat this moral deviation, we should 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 vice. It should be shown through an analysis and reflection of the Quranic verses and sayings of great leaders of Religion and speeches and writings of the great men that assumed benefits of lie can never outweigh the many serious 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.

There are those who believe that it is possible for a man to tell some lies and never be caught out. This is a big mistake because experience has shown that in most cases, the untruthfulness of a liar cannot be hidden. This is so because every event has different relations with time, place, individuals and other events. One, who wants to fake an event with his tongue, creates only one discrete event from among all other relations, and if he is very sharp and smart, he may also build 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 some deeper questioning, he finds himself unable to sustain the lies.

For example, consider the interesting judgement of Imam Ali (a.s.) about the young man whose father had traveled with a lot of wealth together with some people, and his companions returned without him and said he had died. They were in fact the murderers of that young man’s father and were disgraced very soon after Imam (a.s.) asked them several questions about the details of disease, death, shrouding and burying, as they had planned among themselves on telling the same lies regarding the sickness and death but they had not prepared a uniform answer for details such as where, what time of day and who had performed shrouding and funeral prayer.

The false and artificial arguments and events which a man creates for his lies, are not retained in his mind properly, because they are untrue, and if the liar is questioned at different times, he finds himself in self contradiction and confusion, and this causes the lie to surface. If it is commonly said that “a liar does not have a good memory”, it may refer to the fact that however strong his memory may be, it is not possible for a liar to memorize everything!

2. Personification – One of the most effective ways of treating lie is by developing individuals’ personality because one of the important mental causes of lie is the feeling of inferiority and low personality, and in fact lying is a kind of reaction for compensating it. If the liars can be convinced that they possess powers and talents through which they can increase their own worth and personality, they will not find any need for resorting to lie for projecting their worth.

Moreover, they should be made to realize that a reputation for honesty is a priceless asset which provides enormous material as well as spiritual benefits. One is respected by people and also enjoys a rank among the martyrs and prophets because in Holy Quran the rank of truthful people is mentioned with the rank of prophets and martyrs, where it says:

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ۚ وَحَسُنَ أُولٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

Whosoever obeys Allah, and the Messenger, they are with those whom Allah has blessed, Prophets, the truthful, martyrs, the righteous; good companions they are.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The famous scholar, “Ragheb”, in his book, “Mufradaat” 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 ideas, and his action proves his truthfulness.

3. Endeavor to strengthen the foundation of belief in Almighty Allah in the heart of liars and the fact that Almighty Allah’s power can subdue all other powers, and He is able to solve all problems including those for which the weak in faith resort to lies.

The truthful people when facing life challenges find their support in firm reliance on Almighty Allah, whereas the liars find themselves alone in such cases.

4. The motives and root causes 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 fertile ground for its spread.

5. The educational and social institutions should be cleaned up and liars removed from the scene so that gradually the culture of honesty begins to be imitated by all.

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

لا يَصْلُحُ الْكَذِبُ جِدٌّ وَ لا هَزْلٌ وَ لا اَنْ يَعِدَ اَحَدُكُمْ صَبِيَّهٗ ثُمَّ لا يَفِي لَهٗ

Lying is not proper, neither for joke nor seriously, and also is it not proper that one of you give a promise to his child, and then not fulfill it.[[61]](#footnote-61)

It goes without saying that if parents are accustomed to truthfulness (even in respect of small promises to their children), their children will never be liars.

## Lie In Exceptional Cases

The great jurists and ethics scholars following the traditions narrated in this respect have mentioned some exceptional cases where a lie may be justified and this fall under two categories: “exigency” and “reconciliation among people”.

It is narrated in a tradition from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اِحْلِفْ بِاللهِ كاذِباً وَ نَجِّ اَخاكَ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ

Swear falsely and save your innocent brother from death![[62]](#footnote-62)

There are two important points to note here:

First, all cases of exception actually return to one criterion, i.e., a lie is only permitted for the sake of more critical factors which overshadow its disadvantages. This is not restricted to “truthfulness” and “falsehood”. 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 emergency cases for preserving life and honor of oneself or others, or in planning and implementation of war plans, or expediting the end of war and bloodshed or suppressing an unjust and corrupt enemy, 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 something more important.

It is also noteworthy that prescription of “lie” in such cases is to be applied only to extent that it is absolutely necessary and not using these criteria as a pretext to indulge liberally in speaking lies which, in the absence of the exceptions, is a grave sin. In fact, mistakes in moral matters often occur in such exceptional cases which involve ambiguous matters and constitute the borderline “risk area” bounded by the “forbidden area”:

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

The forbidden degrees are divinely forbidden areas; one who leads his animal near the forbidden boundaries, there is the risk of slumping in them.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Ghazali at the end of a chapter under the title of giving up lies in “Ehyaol Oloum” writes: some people believe that fabrication of traditions in respect of the virtues of actions and exaggeration 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 no necessity for this as there are enough correct verses and traditions in any case. On the other hand, introducing this practice may result in discomposure of Religion.[[64]](#footnote-64)

We believe such exaggerations and lies constitute foolish actions and ideas which emanate from base, ignorant and unaware individuals who feign excessive love for Islam. This is extremely harmful and corrupting and such actions of the foolish friends are no less dangerous than the actions of the enemies of 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 such that the listener understands something else. For instance, someone was asked who the substitute of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is. He said, “One whose daughter was in his house”. The listener thought that he meant the one whose daughter was in Holy Prophet’s (s.a.w.a.) house, but he meant “one whose house the Prophet’s daughter was in”.

## A New Interpretation about Equivocation

But herein there is a point which may be the key to solving problems of this discussion, that is, “equivocation” does not refer to any sort of intention against appearance. Rather, equivocation pertains 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 (اِنَّكُمْ 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 different from its primary meaning.

Or when someone is asked “has that person presented this clothing to you”? In reply as equivocation, he says: “Allah may lengthen his life”. The listener supposes that the speaker means “yes, Allah may lengthen his life”, while he may not have meant that.

# 

# 5. Slander

 Dangerous weapon of cowards

 The most important motives for slander

 Dangers of slander

 Social and individual vices of slander

 Limits and types of slander

 Exceptions

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

## Dangerous Weapon of Cowards

One of the greatest and most dangerous and most popular vices is slander.

Slander involves mentioning hidden weak points and faults of others, the disclosure of which will hurt and disturb the victim. These faults may relate to religious, moral, spiritual or social aspects, or with physical aspects such as the face, limbs, actions and behaviors, or his family or possessions such as clothing, house, etc.

## The Most Important Motives for Slander

There are several motives for slander:

1. Malice and revenge: 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, he tries instead 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 derision: there are many reasons why someone may want to mock others and one of the ways of doing this is by slander.

5. Recreation and amusement: there are a lot of people who engage in belittling others or joking about their faults for amusement and laughter at parties etc. They as well as their audiences find such practices very enjoyable.

6. Excitation of curiosity instinct: this instinct which is one of the most powerful of man’s instincts encourages others to reveal the defects of different individuals, and perhaps the sweetness of slander for some people originates from the false satiation of this instinct. Such people enjoy knowing the secrets and faults of others and keep searching for such stories and therefore make the others to slander with more enthusiasm.

Understanding of these factors and identifying the reasons applicable to each case can be an effective help to us in treatment of slanderers.

It should be also noted that in most cases, these factors are not easy to detect because the slanderer’s conscience or personality may not allow him to slander in an obvious manner. So they change its appearance and slander people under the guise of being compassionate or forbidding of wrong or giving advice to others. They may even consider themselves doing a good deed. Though in reality their motive is one of the factors described above. Although this self-deception of conscience is meant to escape the stress and guilt, the fact is that couching slander in such a way is more dangerous than other types and treating it is more difficult.

## Dangers of Slander

We will now examine the gravity of this sin according to the Holy Quran and traditions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Prophet’s Household (a.s.), and then will analyze the individual and social vices that result from slander. Although most people do not give much importance to it, the original Islamic resources have put an extra emphasis on it. To illustrate this, we have selected the following ten cases which will make it abundantly clear that Islam views slander as a grave sin.

### 1. Slander in view of Holy Quran

Holy Quran has considered slander as an inhuman action, and has likened it to eating the flesh of a dead brother - a most repulsive act - and this similitude is exclusively mentioned for this sin.

Of course, the reason of this comparison is clear. In Islam’s view, a Moslem brother’s reputation and prestige is as valuable as his life. A Prophetic tradition states:

كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى لْمُسْلِمِ حَرامٌ: دَمُهٗ وَ مالُهٗ وَ عِرْضُهٗ.

Everything of a Moslem is forbidden for another Moslem: his blood, wealth and reputation.[[65]](#footnote-65)

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

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

يا اَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيراً مِنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ وَ لا تَجَسَّسُوا وَ لا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيهِ مَيْتاً فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَ اتَّقُوا اللهَ اِنَّ اللهَ تَوّابٌ رَحِيمٌ

O Believers eschew much suspicion; some suspicion is a sin. And do not spy, nor backbite one another; would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would find it abominable. And fear you Allah; assuredly Allah turns, and He is All-compassionate.[[66]](#footnote-66)

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 (ﷺ) حَتَّى اسْتَمَعَ الْعَوائِقُ فِي بُيُوتِها فَقالَ: يا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِلِسانِهٖ وَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِقَلْبِهٖ لا تَغْتابُوا الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ لا تَتَّبِعُوا عَوْراتِهِمْ فَاِنَّهٗ مَنْ تَتَبَّعَ عَوْرَةَ اَخِيهِ تَتَبَّعَ اللهُ عَوْرَتَهٗ وَ مَنْ تَتَبَّعَ اللهُ عَوْرَتَهٗ يَفْضَحُهٗ وَ لَوْ فِي جَوْفِ بَيْتِهٖ.

Barae says: Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) once spoke to us in a voice that was loud enough for women to hear in their houses. He said: O the group who has believed with your tongues, but not with your hearts! Do not slander a Moslem, and do not spy into their secret affairs. When someone pries into the secret affairs of his religious brothers, Allah reveals his secret affairs and scandalizes him inside his own house.[[67]](#footnote-67)

That slander and belief cannot co-exist in a person may indicate that the first sign of belief is observing the rights of a believer.

### 3. Slander is considered as spreading obscenity

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

مَنْ قالَ فِي مُؤْمِن ما رَأَتْهُ عَيْناهُ وَ سَمِعَتْهُ اُذُناهُ فَهُوَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قالَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ: اِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ اَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذابٌ اَلِيمٌ.

One who discloses what he has seen and heard about a believer is among those about whom Allah says: those who like the vices to spread among Believers, there shall be a painful chastisement for them.[[68]](#footnote-68)

This is not difficult to understand because in many cases the subject of slander could include breach of religious laws and revealing such faults of people may encourage and embolden others to commit similar sins thus leading to spreading of obscenities.

### 4. The corruption of slander is more severe than adultery

In the famous tradition of Jaber and Abou Saeid Khadri, it is narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اَلْغِيبَةُ اَشَدُّ مِنَ الزِّنا.

Slander is worse than adultery.[[69]](#footnote-69)

The reason mentioned under this tradition for its severity is that an adulterer may be forgiven by Almighty Allah through repentance whereas forgivance for slander is more difficult since it also involves the violation of rights of those slandered and Almighty Allah does not easily forgive sins which violate rights of the people unless the sinner also satisfies the victims with appropriate actions and seeks their pardon. Another reason could be that slander can severely damage the entire fabric of a society by destroying unity, compassion and co-operation among people, much more so than adultery.

### 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 slapped back onto the face of their owners, and an Angel says:

اَمَرَنِي رَبِّي اَنْ لا اَدَعَ عَمَلَ مَنْ يَغْتابُ النّاسَ يَتَجاوَزُ اِلى رَبِّي.

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

There are many different traditions which state the general principle that deeds of those who are indebted to people will not be accepted by Almighty Allah. This is therefore applicable to slander since slander is a sort of transgression to people’s rights which damages an important asset-their reputation.

### 6. Slander is not compatible with Islamic brotherhood

It is narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

لا تَحاسَدُوا وَ لا تَباغَضُوا وَ لا يَغْتَبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً وَ كُونُوا عِبادَ اللهِ اِخْواناً

Do not envy and spite each other and do not slander each other and O Allah’s servants be brothers to each other.[[70]](#footnote-70)

It is understood from this that envy, enmity and slander are opposites of Allah’s servitude and Islamic brotherhood. It goes without saying that the first sign of brotherhood is kindness and intimacy, which could never co-exist with slander. And the mention in the tradition of envy and spite indicates that these two are among the important causes of slander.

### 7. Slander destroys good deeds

This aspect is mentioned in several traditions. A tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

اَلْغِيبَةُ حَرامٌ عَلى كُلِّ مُسْلِم... وَ الْغِيبَةُ تَأْكُلُ الْحَسَناتِ كَما تَأْكُلُ النّارُ الْحَطَبَ.

Slander is forbidden for every Moslem, and surely slander destroys good deeds as the fire destroys wood.[[71]](#footnote-71)

And it is narrated in a tradition from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

مَنْ كانَتْ لاَِخِيهِ عِنْدَهٗ مَظْلَمَةٌ فِي عِرْض اَوْ مال فَلْيَسْتَحْلِلْها مِنْهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَيْسَ هُنالِكَ دِينارٌ وَ لا دِرْهَمٌ اِنَّما يُؤْخَذُ مِنْ حَسَناتِهٖ فَاِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهٗ حَسَنَةٌ اُخِذَ مِنْ سَيِّئاتِ صاحِبِهٖ فَزِيدَتْ عَلى سَيِّئاتِهٖ.

One who is indebted to his religious brother regarding reputation or wealth should seek his forgiveness before that Day when money will cease to be of any use. On the day of judgement, such debts will be deducted from his good deeds, and if he does not have any good deed, the sins of the other party will be added to his sins.[[72]](#footnote-72)

Slander destroys good deeds probably because it destroys one of the greatest spiritual assets of the one who is slandered - his reputation, honor and social standing. Since compensation of this “Right of People” is often impossible through material ways, Almighty Allah compensates it through spiritual means: He transfers in appropriate measure the good deeds of the slanderer to the book of deeds of the slandered, and if he does not have any good deed, Almighty Allah transfers in appropriate measure the sins of the slandered to the book of deeds of the slanderer so that the damage to reputation is fairly compensated..

### 8. Slander devalues worship and services

According to some traditions slander is one of the factors that invalidate ritual ablution and fasting.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اَلْجُلُوسُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ انْتِظاراً لِلصَّلاةِ عِبادَةٌ ما لَمْ يُحْدِث فَقِيلَ: يا رَسُولَ اللهِ! وَ مَا الْحَدَثُ؟ قالَ: الاِْغْتِيابُ

Waiting in the mosque for prayer is worship as long as a ritual impurity is not performed; it was asked: what is ritual impurity? He said: slander![[73]](#footnote-73)

And the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) also once said :

وَ مَنِ اغْتابَ مُسْلِماً بَطَلَ صَوْمُهٗ وَ نَقَضَ وُضُوءُهٗ

When one slanders a Moslem, his fasting and ritual ablution are broken.[[74]](#footnote-74)

This may indicate that worship brings about a condition of proximity to Allah 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 Almighty Allah. In the above tradition, this sense is interpreted as “violator” (breaker).

### 9. Slander excludes man from Almighty Allah’s protection and includes him in Satan’s protection

As narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in the tradition of Mofzal Ibne Omar:

مَنْ رَوى عَلى مُؤْمِن رِوايَةً يُرِيدُ بِها شَيْنَهٗ وَ هَدْمَ مُرُوَّتِهٖ لِيَسْقُطَ مِنْ اَعْيُنِ النّاسِ اَخْرَجَهُ اللهُ مِنْ ولايَتِهٖ اِلى ولايَةِ الشَّيْطانِ فَلا يَقْبَلُهُ الشَّيْطانُ

One who narrates with the purpose of backbiting and dishonoring a believer before the people, Allah shall evict him from His protection to Satan’s protection, and Satan too does not accept him.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Of course, this tradition is not merely concerned with slander. Rather, slander is one of the factors involved because the purpose of slander is to destroy the character of the other party directly or indirectly.

Exclusion from Almighty Allah’s protection according to the Holy Quranic verses indicates that Almighty Allah, who leads and supervises Believers and guides them from darkness into the light[[76]](#footnote-76), will not lead such people anymore. Protector means guide and leader as well as helper:

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

They have no protectors to help them, apart from Allah.[[77]](#footnote-77)

And it is also mentioned in the sense of savior from humiliation:

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

Who has not a partner in the kingdom, and Who has not a helper to save Him from disgrace.[[78]](#footnote-78)

And it also means forgiver of sins as in:

أَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا ۖ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ

Thou art our Protector; so forgive us and have mercy on us, for Thou art the best of forgivers.[[79]](#footnote-79)

Therefore, slanderers are deprived from all of these divine graces by being evicted from Almighty Allah’s protection and entering Satan’s protection.

And the phrase “Satan too does not accept him” may indicate that Satan cannot undertake the responsibility of their protection and supervision, and thereby leaves them alone!

10- Some ill effects of slander remain even after repentance!

It is stated in the traditions of Islamic leaders:

اَوْحَى اللهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ اِلى مُوسَى بْنِ عِمْرانَ اَنَّ الْمُغتابَ اِذا تابَ فَهُوَ آخِرُ مَنْ يَدْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ وَ اِنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَهُوَ اَوَّلُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُ النّارَ

Allah revealed to Moses, son of Emran, that if the slanderer repents, he will be the last one entering paradise; otherwise he will be the first one entering the fire.[[80]](#footnote-80)

What this seems to emphasize is that slander has both “Right of Allah” and “Right of People” aspects, and its “Right of People” aspect is more important than other rights of people, because slander destroys people’s reputation, a priceless asset which, unlike material assets, is often irrecoverable. For this reason, in some traditions, dishonoring a Moslem is considered as the highest usury as Ense narrates from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اِنَّ اَرْبَى الرِّبا عِرْضُ الرَّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ.

The most critical usury is dishonoring a Moslem.[[81]](#footnote-81)

## Social and Individual Consequences of Slander

### Ill-effects of slander from a social viewpoint:

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

Widespread slander causes the people to become aware of hidden weak points of each other, and since most of us have some weaknesses, knowing them spreads suspicion in the society. This pessimism and suspicion annihilates the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and the society will be deprived of the blessings of cooperation and will be characterized by social seclusion and mistrust.

This was pointed out in the previously quoted tradition:

لا تَحاسَدُوا وَ لا تَباغَضُوا وَ لا يَغْتَب بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً وَ كُونُوا عِبادَ اللهِ اِخْواناً

2. In most cases, slander provokes the fire of sedition and spread of enmity and spite among the people because hidden faults of individuals may be correlated with others rights, or at least be a pretext for some to damage the reputation of each other.

3. Slander lowers individual’s personality and respect and thereby their fear and avoidance of sin is decreased. Preserving their honor and prestige is one reason why many people tend to refrain from doing bad or doing so in secret. When their faults and sins are revealed through slander, that reason is no more there to hold them back, and in this way slander becomes an effective factor in promoting shamelessness and spread of corruption.

4. Slander will also cause enormous economic loss to the society because mutual mistrust and lack of confidence will prevent people from coming together to benefit from synergies of collective investments and large scale projects. Such economies will stagnate over time.

### Ill-effects of slander from an individual viewpoint:

As regards individuals, slander is an explicit injustice and transgression of the rights of others. It exposes the slanderer to the same moral consequences which the unjust persons suffer. Moreover, since slander originates from a series of immoral motives, its repetition strengthens and entrenches such condemned attributes in the slanderer.

In this way, slander eats into the values of individuals and also weakens and destroys social foundations. The traditions and holy verses quoted above reflect clearly these realities.

## Limits and Types of Slander

### 1. Types of Slander

Although at the beginning it may seem that slander is the same as mentioning hidden faults of others by tongue, but considering its main criterion, it has a much wider scope and includes slanderous expressions by any means, such as speech, writing, referring and imitation.

As narrated in a tradition: a woman came to see Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) when she left Ayesha referred to her small height with a hand gesture. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: You slandered her.[[82]](#footnote-82)

And it is mentioned in another tradition that Ayesha imitated a woman and the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) prohibited her.[[83]](#footnote-83)

It is deduced hereby that in relation to written materials if one is criticizing the opinions of the author, care should be taken to avoid slander. When criticizing the speech of someone, one finds comments being made which would clearly fall under the definition of slander, mockery, insult or humiliation, for example describing it as “funny” or “childish” or “stupid” (unless the speaker is not identified or humiliating and slandering him is permitted)

On the other hand, sometimes the slanderer does not name the slandered person directly but gives enough clues to enable the listener to identify him. This too counts as slander. For example when it is said: Today I was in the meeting, and someone spoke thus, while the listener knows in which meeting he has been.

### 2. Slander Mixed with another Sin

Sometimes this indecent deed is mixed with other indecent deeds, and loses completely its identity or appears as a righteous deed. For instance, sometimes for escaping slander the people say “I am afraid to explain as it can amount to slander” or they may 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 by leaving the matter ambiguous, provoke the addressee’s suspicion on everything in respect of the other person, and in fact magnify the slander. In addition, they have committed hypocrisy too, producing a dangerous mix of two bad deeds. Another example of such a mix is when they couch the slander in the language of sympathy as in “that poor person slipped up and committed that sin, may Allah forgive him”!

Or when a boastful person says: “Thanks to Allah, I have not resorted to wine or drugs like that person. Really, if Allah does not protect man, it will be very difficult. The trap is hard to escape, unless Allah helps.” He now commits slander, hypocrisy and self-admiration all at once!

Or when he says: “I have told him this (or will tell him)!”

And in this way, he closes the door of correction, and makes his slander more emphatic and severe with this 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 wealth in view of intellect and Religion.

Second: it is inferred from similitude of slander to eating a faithful brother’s flesh in the Chambers surah that slander is a kind 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:

اِنَّ صاحِبَ الْغِيبَةِ لا يُغْفَرُ لَهٗ حَتّى يَغْفِرَ لَهٗ صاحِبُهٗ

The slanderer is not forgiven unless the slandered person forgives him.[[84]](#footnote-84)

And the Prophetic tradition:

كَفّارَةُ مَنِ اغْتَبْتَهٗ اَنْ تَسْتَغْفِرَ لَهٗ.

The atonement of slander is asking pardon of Allah for the slandered person.[[85]](#footnote-85)

And there are traditions which consider stopping slander as a believer’s rights.

Anyway, slander is a clearly an injustice and without consent of the other party, the slanderer will not be forgiven. And we conclude that undoubtedly atonement of slander is not merely asking pardon of Almighty Allah and repentance. Only if there is no way for asking for the victim’s forgiveness and / or no damage was done to the prestige and reputation of slandered person, asking pardon of Almighty Allah may be sufficient.

## Exceptions of Slander

The jurists and ethics scholars agree that there are some cases in which slander is permitted, and while differences of opinion exist in respect of some situations and examples, the basic concepts are not in contention. Sometimes it has a spiritual and real aspect.

It can be surmised from various evidences and documents that slander are permitted in two cases:

a. When there is a more important issue involved and here we can consider a number of situations:

1. In case of consultation, for example when someone wants to enter into a transaction or partnership or marriage with the other, and wants our views. In this case it is permitted to reveal hidden faults of the other party as far as they are relevant to the subject so that the person seeking advice would know of the possible risks.

2. In case of forbidding of wrong

3. In case of averting innovation (introducing devious new practices in Islam) of an innovator

4. In case of warning a Moslem about the risk and loss which is awaiting him (even though he has not been consulted)

5. Petition and removal of injustice and restoring right

And in general all cases in which the benefit of revealing one’s hidden fault is more than its vice in view of Religion.

The reason for such exceptions is clear. It is supported by sound intellectual reasoning which can be termed as the “principle of important and more important”. However, it is very important to realize that most often unethical behaviour is caused through abuse of exceptions or through mistakes and negligence in determination of their limits and boundaries. Man tends to refrain from violating regulations and committing sins explicitly and clearly. Instead, most people try to achieve their mischievous objectives by pretending to be covered by the exceptions and in many cases they may even deceive their own conscience and console it into believing that their behaviour is within the allowed limits and exceptions and thereby avoid the unease of living with a guilty conscience.

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 taking into account all features and aspects, avoiding any bias, prejudice and favoritism. Only then can one decide about the relative importance of slandering versus abstaining from it so as not to stain himself with dangerous slanders under the pretext of availing the permitted exceptions.

b. The cases in which slander is permitted without any special advantage which is solely restricted to slander of those notorious for debauchery.

These exceptions have a basis in logic and are also supported by several traditions narrated by Shiite and Sunnite like:

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

There are three persons for whom there is no respect: one who desires to introduce unacceptable innovations in Islam, an unjust governor, and one who commits sin publicly.[[86]](#footnote-86)

And the same is mentioned in some narrations as follows:

ثَلاثَةٌ لا غِيبَةَ لَهُمْ: صاحِبُ الْهَوى وَ الْفاسِقُ الْمُعْلِنُ بِفِسْقِهٖ، وَ الاِْمامُ الْجائِرُ

2. And it is narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in a tradition:[[87]](#footnote-87)

لَيْسَ لِفاسِق غِيبَةٌ.

There is no slander for the sinner.[[88]](#footnote-88)

3. And also it is narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in another tradition:

مَنْ اَلْقى جِلْبابَ الْحَياءِ عَنْ وَجْهِهٖ فَلا غِيْبَةَ لَهٗ

One who lays aside the veil of modesty; there is no slander for him.[[89]](#footnote-89)

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

مَنْ عامَلَ النّاسَ فَلَمْ يَظْلِمْهُمْ وَ حَدَّثَهُمْ فَلَمْ يَكْذِبْهُمْ وَ واعَدَهُمْ فَلَمْ يُخْلِفْهُمْ كانَ مِمَّنْ حَرُمَتْ غِيْبَتُهٗ وَ كَمُلَتْ مُرُوَّتُهٗ وَ ظَهَرَ عَدْلُهٗ وَ وَجَبَتْ اُخُوَّتُهٗ.

Whosoever is not unjust in transactions with people, and does not lie to them in speech, and does not break his promises to them, is among those whose slander is forbidden. His personality is perfect, and his justice is manifest, and brotherhood with him is obligatory.[[90]](#footnote-90)

## Who Is Notorious For Debauchery And Why Slandering Him Is Permitted?

There are several questions to be considered:

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 private affair) or is slandering a notorious person one of the slander types and has been excluded as so called “appropriation”?

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

c. If someone is notorious in one place and not so somewhere else, is his slander permitted in the second place too or not?

d. Is permission to slander a notorious person subject to the condition that it involves calling to good and forbidding of wrong?

The reply to all of these questions depends on understanding the main point and reason for this exclusion. It is inferred from above traditions that the forbidding of slander is for the purpose of protecting a person’s respect whereas a notorious individual does not have any respect to protect. In other words, such people are not respectable in society and therefore giving up slander and preserving their reputation is not necessary. So the answers to above questions are clear when one considers that such individuals are basically outside the scope of those against whom slandering is forbidden.

But it should be noted that the notorious person is one who has completely laid aside the veil of modesty and commits sins brazenly and arrogantly. It does not include all of those who perform a sin publicly for any reason. For the latter, slander is only allowed in respect of the sins committed openly which are widely known.

# 

# 6. Suspicion and Mistrust

 Immunity from mistrust is the requisite of a safe community

 Sources of suspicion and pessimism

 Social losses of mistrust

 Individual losses of suspicion

 Ways of countering suspicion

 Methods of treating suspicion

## 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. Intellectual, material and spiritual pursuits and investments shy away from insecure places and head for refuge in secure environments! Security means more than safety of life and property. It includes safety of one’s reputation and protection of individuals’ social personality. To complete the picture, a more important aspect of security is also needed which, unfortunately, material rules are not able to provide and this is the “mental security”.

Mental security has two parts:

1. Security that a person feels within his own self - a state of “mental tranquility”. In other words, a man free from disturbing forces weighing upon his mind from all sides, free from mental storms causing anxiety and confusion. A man enjoying inner peace and a tranquil spirit.

2. Security with regard to judgements of others. That is to say others do not rush to judge him on the basis of their own narrow-minded and misguided beliefs and biases. Instead, one’s respect and reputation is preserved notwithstanding differences of opinion with others.

A full discussion of each of these two aspects of security is beyond our scope here and we will only discuss the latter.

The rules and regulations that the materialistic Governments enforce can at best provide security of life, wealth and social reputation. But such rules cannot reach the hearts and minds of the people. Complete mental security, specially being safe from bad judgements of others, is only possible through divine doctrines and heavenly Religions. Only religious beliefs and ethical principles, particularly in Islam, containing extensive and comprehensive instructions for achieving this objective, can penetrate into human psyche and provide the security. Holy Quran explicitly instructs the Believers:

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

O Believers, eschew much suspicion, some suspicion is a sin.[[91]](#footnote-91)

The phrase “much suspicion” may indicate that a major part or most of the suspicions of people about each other are “evil ones”, and thereby Holy Quran warns people about the great risk threatening their security in the minds of others.

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 reality, but surely a part of them is against reality, which is a sin and hence the better course is to avoid being a suspicious person.

This is also emphasized in traditions such as one from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اِنَّ اللهَ حَرَّمَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِ دَمَهٗ وَ مالَهٗ وَ عِرْضَهٗ وَ اَنْ يُظَنَّ بِهٖ ظَنَّ السُّو ءِ

Allah has forbidden blood, wealth, reputation and suspicion about a Moslem.[[92]](#footnote-92)

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 can affect someone lightly and sometimes acutely and severely, that is as a mental disease - and can arise from various causes, including:

1. It often happens that the source of suspicion is the urge for revenge and feelings of malice and envy. When it is not possible to take revenge by actions or verbal debates, a person resorts to scoring victories in his mind by engaging in judging, blaming, rebuking and causing a sedition there and thereby seeks mental relief. That is to say whatsoever he could not find outwardly, he seeks in his mind and imagination, and on this account he feels a sort of false enjoyment and tranquility.

This originates from a sort of “subjectivism” and “mental escape from realities” and “resorting to fantasy” which is recognized today in psychoanalysis. This also happens in many other situations in which man’s desires are not satiated in real life and causes a retreat to unconscious inner sense where the person seeks to fill the vacuum by substituting his own visions and fantasies. Sometimes, he seeks them in the world of dreams or by day-dreaming or in the world of “poetic imaginations”. For this reason, the notable poets, whose poems are full of affection, enthusiasm, charm and mirth, are those who in addition to possessing poetic talent have faced disappointments and failures and unsuccessful loves. They sought their lost and beloved one in the world of imaginations among the poetic masterstrokes and literary niceties and thereby their imagination power is highly developed.

In brief, “mental escape towards fantasy” is the source of a lot of mental events, including suspicion, pessimism and mistrust.

2. Sometimes, the source of suspicion is impurity and lack of self esteem. That is to say a man assumes the others good or bad based on the principle of “self comparison”. This is particularly apparent in the case of less educated and simple persons.

3. Excusing or reducing one’s own punishment in the court of conscience is one of the other causes of suspicion, because in this way he tries to create some partners for his offences. The suspicions about others serve to justify his own ill deeds, and to make them appear as minor or commonplace, implying that he is not the only one doing such things.

4. Suspicion may also originate from pride and selfishness. Such people want to feel superior to others in every way and so try to fabricate weaknesses for others in their minds in order to lessen their worth and elevate their own value.

5. Undesirable educational environment and interactions with parents and teacher are also important causes of pessimism and suspicion.

6. Association with misguided 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 him. People tend to form opinions about other nationalities and countries based on the individuals from those places having contact with them.

It is mentioned in Islamic traditions:

مُجالَسَةُ الْاَشْرَارِ تُورِثُ سُو ءَ الظَّنِّ بِالْاَخْيارِ.

Association with evildoers causes suspicion in the righteous.[[93]](#footnote-93)

7. Sometimes suspicion has a real source that is when corruption dominates in the people of a certain time or place, so that a man becomes suspicious of every thing based on this intellectual principle that “Suspicion connects everything to its popular sample” الظَّنُّ يُلْحِقُ الشَيْءَ بِالْاَعَمِّ الْاَغْلَبِ

## Social Losses of Mistrust

Social losses of this moral vice are immense and its undesirable effects are extensive and far reaching.

1. Suspicion causes misunderstandings in society. Those suffering from this condition look at everything pessimistically; make mistakes in recognizing the true nature of individuals, events and causes and motives of the things happening in the society. They live in the world of their own imagination unaware of what really exists out there. This “misunderstanding of realities” certainly causes backwardness, lost opportunities and failures.

2. Suspicion and pessimism are the greatest hindrance for social cooperation as well as unity and solidarity of hearts. They cause man to become an introvert, trusting no one, lonely and isolated leading to many vices caused by such lifestyle. Suspicion does not let man trust others and thereby prevents him from cooperating with others to solve problems or achieve synergies.

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 Quran too has indicated to this reality in verse 12, Suratul Chambers.

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 destroyed by mistrust, and there are a lot of competent and dignified men who are killed because of mistrust about them! And sometimes suspicion has kindled the flame of great wars. When suspicion and pessimism of Valid Ibne Aghabeh was about to cause destruction of a tribe, the Holy Quran prevented this great tragedy through instructing for clarification and investigation.[[94]](#footnote-94) Through revelation of the noble verse:

اِنْ جاءَكُمْ فاسِقٌ بِنَباء فَتَبَيَّنُوا اَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْماً بِجَهالَة فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلى ما فَعَلْتُمْ نادِمِينَ

If an ungodly man comes to you with a tiding, make clear, lest you afflict a people unwittingly, and then repent of what you have done.

5. Suspicion extinguishes kindness and friendship. It also develops hypocrisy and dissimulation among friends. This happens due to the fact that a suspicious person continues a display of friendship outwardly but the mistrust caused by suspicion has destroyed the feelings of affection and friendship for his friends within him.

In summary, the social vices and losses of suspicion and mistrust are far greater than what one imagines as is apparent from the foregoing discussion.

## Individual Losses of Suspicion

In addition to social losses, suspicion and mistrust create many other irreversible losses:

1. Mistrust is the source of distress and torture for the body and soul and a cause of anxiety and worry. Pessimistic people worry a lot and suffer on account of their imaginations about individuals and events. They become introverted and avoid meeting others because they assume that utterances or actions of people are jests and quips targeted at them!

They are afraid of consultation and sharing their problems with others (which is a useful means for relieving pain and distress) because they think that it may cause disclosure of their secrets and other problems! And on this account, they are often depressed, mirthless and sad, and gradually become useless and idle beings. If this condition of “mistrust” is intensified in man, it will become so serious that he will be afraid of everything and everyone, sees all events as harmful, misinterprets normal harmless actions of individuals as plans against himself, and thinks that everybody is out to harm or destroy him. Obviously, this condition is now more than a matter of ethics, it has developed into a serious mental disease.

Basically, all moral vices within certain limits are within the scope of ethics and should be treated by trainers of morality. But when they cross the limits into something abnormal they are considered a disease and outside the boundaries of ethics. Excessive envy, excessive pride, excessive spite is some of the examples.

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 suffering so much from suspicion that:

... يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَة عَلَيْهِمْ

They think every cry is against them.[[95]](#footnote-95)

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 of the Creator, and also is transmitted to the man’s religious beliefs. Sometimes, they have suspicions about “Divine Justice” and sometimes about “Divine Power”! They may also doubt in the divine message conveyed by divine prophets and although they may apparently be faithful to the religious principles, their hearts may consider such messages as being concocted to win wordily power and influence. This may account for rejection by most of the evil doers and hypocrites of the invitation of prophets.

3. Pessimistic people are often deprived of the inner purity because they are always slandering others in their heart. Some scholars have referred to suspicion as “slander with heart”.

## Ways of Countering Suspicion

First of all, we need to resolve a problem related to this subject, that is:

Most often, suspicion is not a matter of free will which can be avoided through making the right choice. Rather, in most cases, when observing something or hearing an utterance, or remembering a memory (with special mental backgrounds about the other person), a suspicion appears automatically and uncontrollably in man’s mind. So, how is it possible to avoid it?

The following well-known tradition also proves this point:

ثَلاثٌ لا يَسْلُمُ مِنْها اَحَدٌ: اَلطِّيَرَةُ وَ الْحَسَدُ وَ الظَّنُّ.

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

The researchers have tried 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 فِي الْمُؤْمِنِ لا يُسْتَحْسَنَّ وَ لَهٗ مِنْهُنَّ مَخْرَجٌ، فَمَخْرَجُهٗ مِنْ سُو ءِ الظَّنِّ اَنْ لا يُحَقِّقَهٗ.

There are three undesirable 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.[[96]](#footnote-96)

2. Some others say avoiding suspicion refers to not giving a follow-up to it inwardly and outwardly. In other words, he shall not harbour suspicious thoughts in his heart, avoid feelings of hatred towards the suspected person and not change his relations and behavior with him outwardly.

3. The reality is that although suspicion is not voluntary at the beginning, its continuation is optional. It usually originates from a series of unreal factors that give rise to a prejudiced view due to hasty judgements. One can take prompt corrective actions to rid oneself of these hasty notions by thinking and studying the matter in depth and considering all different probabilities. Thus it is greatly emphasized in the narrations and traditions that in dealing with issues of Muslims a man should try his best to find the truth by looking carefully into all aspects and possibilities and avoid guess work and hasty decisions.

Imam Ali (a.s.) says:

وَلا تَظُنَّنَّ بِكَلِمَة خَرَجَتْ مِنْ اَخِيكَ سُوءاً وَ اَنْتَ تَجِدُ لَها فِي الْخَيْرِ مَحْمِلا.

Do not suspect on the utterance which you hear from your brother as far as you find a proper way for it.[[97]](#footnote-97)

Therefore, while the initial sudden appearance of suspicious thoughts can be considered as out of one’s control, the subsequent continuation and lasting suspicion is a matter over which one can and should exercise one’s free will to achieve rectification and this is completely compatible with the Holy Quranic verse and traditions forbidding suspicion.

Seemingly, the phrase:

كَذِّبْ سَمْعَكَ وَ بَصَرَكَ عَنْ اَخِيكَ.

Deny your eye and ear about your brother.[[98]](#footnote-98)

Which is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) addressing Mohammad Ibne Fosail, may refer to need to finding the facts and avoiding hasty conclusions.

## Methods of Treating Suspicion

Now that the meaning of forbiddance of suspicion is made clear, we can discuss 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 in respect of the sources and factors of suspicion, we conclude that:

1. For removing suspicion, first of all we should engage in correcting ourselves so that if we compare the others with ourselves, we do not assume that they too are vicious and evil doers. At the same time we should remind ourselves that it is not correct to assume that others are like ourselves. They may possess mentalities much superior and better than us. 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 others.

2. We should purify our environment which may be the source of our suspicion and mistrust, and not associate with evil doers. Man is known by the company he keeps. 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 about their true character. These mistakes not only cause moral and spiritual losses, but also deprive us from benefitting from mental and moral resources of competent individuals due to suspicion. If our educational environment in the childhood has been unhealthy in this respect, we should cleanse our minds through studying the conditions of good doers and association with the pure persons to counteract the effects of those unhealthy childhood experiences.

3. We should regularly reflect on the individual and social losses of mistrust and the great dangers threatening us and the society, 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 also produces irreversible losses for us which are far greater than the temporary mental relief.

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 should become aware of these sources in our mental analysis, and transfer these factors from the mind’s unconscious stage to conscious stage. This is very important in treating moral deviations. When incentives from mind’s unconscious stage influence the deeds and thoughts of man, we should transfer them to conscious stage through psychoanalysis. It has a deep impression in improvement of our status, and this point is much emphasized in the present day psychoanalysis.

### Reminder

At the end of discussion about suspicion, it is noteworthy that suspicion and mistrust is justifiable only when one is in a place where majority of individuals are deviated and corrupted. In such cases, one finds it difficult to trust the other person since the probability is that he too belongs to the corrupt majority. However, even in such environments one should not become suspicious except by way of necessary precaution. In other words, while observing necessary precautions, one should not lose sight of the possibility that the suspected person may in fact be one of the righteous minorities of the society. Also, the precautionary attitude should be restricted only to the vices which have involved majority of society. In all other respects, one must always carry good opinion about others.

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

اِذَا اسْتَوْلَى الْفَسادُ عَلَى الزَّمانِ فَاَحْسَنَ رَجُلٌ الظَّنَّ بِرَجُل فَقَدْ غَرِرَ.

When corruption breaks out at a time, good opinion of individuals to each other causes being deceived.[[99]](#footnote-99)

# 

# 7. A Healthy Society under the Grace of Ethics

 Without ethics, the plan of a healthy society is defeated

 Privileges of man’s social life

 Source of formation of society

 Social values

 Islam and social concerns

 Social seclusion

 Islam and monkery

 Monkery among Christians

## Without Ethics, 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 and improvement or retardation and degeneration of men. The sociologists believe that man without society loses everything (sciences and knowledge, mental perfection, affections, and even speech and so on).

The condition of children who for some reason lost contact with human society and were brought up in the jungle amidst wild animal’s roves this point. In history, we have repeatedly observed such children. Neither they could speak and comprehend high concepts of human life, nor was there any trace of humanistic affections in them, and their behavior was just like that of wild animals!

Observing the situation of desert wanderers and nomadic tribes, whose society is very limited and small, and their communication with others is minimal, is a good example of what happens when man loses the society.

This and a lot of other factors justify the belief of sociologists that “society has priority over the individual”. Of course, an individual as a “living being” comes before the society, but not as a “human”.

And it follows that as social relations of man develop, civilization makes progress. The many new communication tools in the present world, which have brought individuals closer on a global scale, is one of the main factors shaping our 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. As we know, there are groups of “social insects”, like honey bee and termites, which enjoy a considerably developed 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 monkeys. Social life of such animals may be even more developed than men in some aspects. For example, in the beehive there are no idle or hungry bees which cannot be said even about the most developed industrial countries of the world. Method of distribution of work and income among them is very interesting and unique and has no parallels in human environments. However, their social life has two basic differences, totally separating them from man’s social life:

a. Social life of animals, however superior and more developed it may be, is limited to special parts, and their social activities are only limited to areas like building nests, collecting food,, training infants, and such like, while the scope of social life in man is much wider and almost infinite.

b. Social life of animals is completely uniform and without any change and alteration. In other words, they are always repeating the same so that for example, the present beehives are completely similar to the beehives of several millions years ago which were discovered recently, and this proves that their building methods and way of life has not changed during these long years! Compare this with human society where the change during just one century or less is enormous and hardly anything remains unchanged.

These two major differences distinguish man’s social life from that of animals. In summary, man is indebted to society for whatever perfection he has achieved in mental, material and moral aspects. Without society, the civilization and humanity will never be meaningful.

## Source of Formation of Society

Following are among the many reasons given by sociologists about why man has accepted social life including its relatively onerous rules and regulations.

1. Some believe that sense of solidarity is included in man’s nature, and he seeks the society out of an instinctive inspiration.

2. Some say that fear of natural disasters and wild animals has been the cause of the initial move by man towards a social life.

3. Some others believe that the “instinct of employment”, existing in man, has made him adopt 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 consider development of man’s needs and his inability in fulfilling them as the cause 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 it is not possible to ascertain why man has adopted social life since his creation millions of years ago. Lapse of centuries and ages has obscured the facts and we do not have enough information to form a conclusive view in this regard.

Although the last point seems more realistic in that determining the main cause of man’s attachment to society in the past is not an easy task, but it is also clear that present continuation of this social life is driven by our “desire for perfection” and “development of man’s requirements” and “inability in fulfilling them”.

To elaborate, the needs of present day human are extensive and diverse in every field whether material (food, housing, clothing, medicine, entertainment etc.) or spiritual and scientific pursuits or need for security and love. Man cannot fulfill all of them alone, hence the need to come together and embrace specialization and division of work.

Also, unlike animals, man has an inbuilt urge to avoid monotony and status quo and uniformity in life and instead has the urge to experiment and innovate and improve continuously towards perfection. This cannot be achieved in isolation. This is the second most important factor for social life, because it is the coming together of individuals of different skills and ideas that produces the synergy and richness and diversity and progress in everyone’s life.

## Social Values

Human rights call for equality of all and equity before law is one of the most basic foundations of progressive legal rules. This does not mean that the value of each person to a society is the same. Rather, it is a way for preserving discipline and preventing discrimination and misuses of the arrogant and influential classes and colonization of man by man. It is undeniable that social value of individuals is very different. For example, the value of a resourceful, gracious and competent scientist cannot be equaled by an illiterate, wicked person. Letting everyone enjoy the same benefits despite the differences in contributions will cause corruption and harm which far outweighs the effects of giving recognition to the differences in social values. In general, social value of individuals depends upon the degree of their usefulness to the society and the valuable saying of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in this respect may refer to this reality, where he says:

خَيْرُ النّاسِ اَنْفَعُهُمْ لِلنّاسِ

The best people are the most beneficial ones.[[100]](#footnote-100)

## Islam and Social Concerns

Undoubtedly, no Religion has respected relations of individual and society, and strengthened the social chains by its decrees and regulations like Islam, and why not? Such issues must be of paramount importance to a divine and universal Religion, guaranteeing education and development of hidden talents of man, and his progress towards perfection.

For understanding the importance of society in the eyes of Islam we can get sufficient idea from the following:

1. Islam’s basic instructions are about society rather than individuals. This is evident in the enactment of Islamic jurisprudence, consisting of sorbs, transactions and policies. 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. Performing this obligation in congregation is encouraged a lot and carries bigger rewards. Al-Hamd surah, which is the beginning of the prayer and includes the main invocation and supplication, is uttered in a plural form (نَعْبُدُ - نَسْتَعينُ - اِهْدِنا). And the salutation at the end of prayer is in a plural form. All of these indicate that the foundation of this great obligation is based on society. Another obligation that has powerful social connotions is the Pilgrimage.

2. Importance of social relations in the eyes of Islam is so high that good relationships are considered as one of the signs of Almighty Allah and indications of Monotheism:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهٖ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

And of His signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses, that you might repose in them, and He has set between you love and mercy.[[101]](#footnote-101)

3. Holy Quran reiterates that one of the miraculous deeds of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was creation of more friendship among the hearts, where it says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَيَّدَكَ بِنَصْرِهٖ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ

He has confirmed thee with His help, and with the Believers, and brought their hearts together.[[102]](#footnote-102)

The above verse makes an interesting reference to the point that material things alone cannot create friendship because they themselves, unlike belief and spirituality, are the causes of scattering, disturbance and struggle. It is remarkable that in this phrase of Holy Quran, confirmation of the Believers is immediately mentioned after divine confirmation, and this shows the high importance of the subject.

4. Holy Quran calls scattering and hypocrisy as one of the divine chastisements:

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

Say: He is able to send forth upon you Chastisement, from above you or from under your feet, or to confuse you in sects and to make you taste the violence of one another.[[103]](#footnote-103)

And somewhere else Holy Quran has placed it besides the burning fire, which swallows and incinerates every thing:

وَكُنْتُمْ عَلٰى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا

You were upon the brink of a pit of Fire, and He delivered you from it.[[104]](#footnote-104)

5. Holy Quran calls the relations of Believers “brotherhood” which is the nearest and most respectful of family relationships based on equality and mutual respect.

6. In Islam you will not find many sins as grave as creating enmity and mischief among people, nor good deeds as rewarding as bringing hearts of people together.

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) in Ehtejaj book:

اِنَّ مِنْ اَكْبَرِ السِّحْرِ النَّمِيمَةُ يُفَرَّقُ بِها بَيْنَ الْمُتَحابِّيْنَ وَ يُجْلَبُ الْعَداوَةُ عَلَى الْمُتَصافِينَ وَ يُسْفَكُ بِهَا الدِّماءُ وَ يُهْدَمُ بِهَا الدُّورُ وَ يُكْشَفُ بِهَا السُّتُورُ، وَ النَّمّامُ اَشَرُّ مَنْ وَطِىءَ الْاَرْضَ بِقَدَم

The most important tool (in terms of causing disunity) is gossip, which causes dispersion among the friends and attracts enmity. A lot of blood is shed as a result of it, families ruined and the secrets of people disclosed. The informer is the worst person walking on earth.[[105]](#footnote-105)

7. Islam does not even permit Moslems, save in exceptional cases, to sulk and stop communicating with each other whereby 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 strongly forbidden in more than seven traditions, and if inevitable, its permitted limit is determined to be three days.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

لا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِم اَنْ يَهْجُرَ اَخاهُ فَوقَ ثَلاثَةِ اَيّام

It is not permitted for a Moslem to sulk for more than three days with his religious brother.[[106]](#footnote-106)

And in another tradition, he says:

نُهِيَ عَنِ الْهِجْرانِ، فَمَنْ كانَ لابُدَّ فاعِلا فَلا يَهْجُر اَخاهُ اَكْثَرَ مِنْ ثَلاثَةِ اَيّام، فَمَنْ كانَ هاجِراً لاَِخِيهِ اَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذلِكَ كانَتِ النّارُ اَوْلى بِهٖ

Sulking is forbidden, and one who performs it of necessity, shall not continue it for more than three days. One, who sulks more than this, is more worthy of the Fire![[107]](#footnote-107)

In these traditions, Islamic leaders have introduced continuation of sulk as a unIslamic practice, and taking the lead in reconciliation as the cause of taking the lead in entry to paradise.

8. In Islam, kindness, friendship, equality, assistance and cooperation are duties of each Moslem, and all are obligated to observe these principles.

We read in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (a.s.):

يَحِقُّ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ الاِْجْتِهادُ فِي التَّواصُلِ، وَ التَّعاوُنُ عَلَى التَّعاطُفِ، وَ الْمُواساةُ لاَِهْلِ الْحاجَةِ، وَ تَعاطُفُ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلى بَعْض، حَتّى تَكُونُوا كَما اَمَرَكُمُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلّ رُحَماءُ بَيْنَهُمْ

It is obligatory for Moslems to try for reconciliation and bringing together of hearts, to display cooperation coupled with kindness, observe equity among the needy, and express their affection to each other in order to be among those about whom Allah says: “they are kind to each other”.[[108]](#footnote-108)

9. Islam has not only mentioned the matters of friendship, kindness, social cooperation, and equity as a command and obligation, but has also offered comprehensive plans for their materialization.

Thus, on one hand Islam has forbidden acts causing dispersion, hypocrisy and scattering, including slander, gossip, strictness in adjudication, suspicion, and on the other hand has eulogized the factors resulting in kindness, friendship and mutual trust, such as visiting, shaking hands and embracing, holding good opinion, expressing friendship to each other, defending the reputation of each other in one’s absence, reconciliation of differences and fulfilling supplications of each other and such like. In this way Islam has founded a humanistic society in its complete sense based on real affections, and has emphasized it to the extent of describing it as one of the most essential means of life.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيَسْكُنُ اِلَى الْمُؤْمِنِ كَما يَسْكُنُ الْقَلْبُ الْظَمآنُ اِلَى الْماءِ الْبارِدِ

The same tranquility, which the thirsty feel on finding water, the Believers feel in solidarity with each other.[[109]](#footnote-109)

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

10. It is noteworthy that sky is the limit as far as Islam’s encouragement of social relations is concerned. Islam calls for making these relations closer and stronger and goes on to say that Believers should be so close to each other that if one is afflicted with pain the others should feel the same pain.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in a tradition says:

اَلا وَ اِنَّ وُدَّ الْمُؤْمِنِ مِنْ اَعْظَمِ سَبَبِ الاِْيمانِ ... اَلا وَ اِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَيْنِ اِذا تَحابّا فِي اللهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ تَصافَيا فِي اللهِ كانا كَالْجَسَدِ الْواحِدِ اِذَا اشْتَكى اَحَدُهُما مِنْ جَسَدِهٖ مَوْضِعاً وَجَدَ الاْخَرُ اَلَمَ ذلِكَ 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 the pleasure of Allah, 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.[[110]](#footnote-110)

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 same organ will become painful in the body of the other without any special cause. That is to say the spiritual relation is so strong that the complications of each body are transferred to the other (as it is narrated about some of Holy Prophet’s (s.a.w.a.) companions).

This is not unlikely considering the following two factors.

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 causes such as organ disorders or microbes, but 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 relations, and then that particular distress will influence his body and make the similar organ painful.

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

Imam Ali (a.s.) in a Sermon to rectify the thinking of divisive minority of “Kharijites” (Rebels) says:

وَ الْزَمُوا السَّوادَ الْاَعْظَمَ فَاِنَّ يَدَ اللهِ مَعَ الْجَماعَةِ وَ اِيّاكُمْ وَ الْفُرْقَةَ فَاِنَّ الشّاذَّ مِنَ النّاسِ لِلشَّيْطانِ كَما اَنَّ الشّاذَّ مِنَ الْغَنَمِ لِلذِّئْبِ... وَ اِنَّما حُكِّمَ الْحَكَمانِ لِيُحْيِيا ما اَحْيَا الْقُرْآنُ وَ يُمِيتا ما اَماتَ الْقُرْآنُ، وَ اِحْياؤُهُ الاِْجْتِماعُ عَلَيْهِ وَ اِماتَتُهُ الاِْفْتِراقُ عَنْهُ.

Be with the great majority because Allah’s hand (of protection) is on keeping unity. You should beware of division because the one who leaves the group is (a prey) for Satan just as the sheep that leaves its flock is (a prey) for the wolf. Certainly the two arbitrators were appointed to revive what Holy Quran revives and to kill what Holy Quran kills. Revival of Holy Quran means uniting each other and acting accordingly, and killing it refers to scattering and isolation from it.[[111]](#footnote-111)

History shows that smaller societies tend to be more retarded in terms of culture and progress of human civilization. Developed cultures and civilizations have formed in the larger and more extensive societies.

Thus, the advice above first invites people to be part of the great societies and then it states that Almighty Allah’s hand is over such societies. In contrast, the isolated ones are the victim of Satan and are excluded from divine support. The similitude mentioned in the next phrase shows that overcoming the social problems and salvation from the paws of wolves is only possible through the society. Thus the greater depth and mass in a society makes it more powerful and victorious.

And finally, it concludes that reviving Holy Quran means gathering and uniting around it, and killing it means scattering and proceeding in a path alone!

The following facts also illustrate Islam’s emphasis on coming together and forming larger communities:

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 Moslems, and finally The Sacred Mosque, which is the greatest center of Islamic society, is in proportion to their social situation.

2. Islam has encouraged child bearing and increasing population. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says:

اُطْلُبُوا الْوَلَدَ فَاِنِّي مُكاثِرٌ بِكُمُ الْاُمَمَ غَداً

Desire child because I will boast on the Day of Resurrection in respect of the plentitude of your population.[[112]](#footnote-112)

It should be noted that plentitude of population may cause problems in some societies in view of insufficient food and such like, but these transitory and exceptional problems cannot nullify the value of human resources for a society.

## Social Seclusion

Sociologists believe that social seclusion, in any shape or form, has very unfavorable effects for the spirit and body of individual and society. This is so in respect of 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 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 cenobites that seclusion has ill effects in their spirit, and causes depression, despair, delusion and most often a sort of mental disorder.[[113]](#footnote-113)

The effects of social seclusion in desert travelers 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 for 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 progress 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 is the view of Islam in this respect?

Islam condemns social seclusion in all its forms including monkery. The well-known tradition, “there is no monkery in Islam” «لا رَهْبانِيَّةَ فِي الاِْسْلامِ»is narrated in most books on traditions. Monkery is a term which is commonly applied to those who dissociate from people and go into seclusion for worship and/or fear of Almighty Allah.

## 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 some cruel and oppressive 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 humiliation and scattering.[[114]](#footnote-114)

## Mental Origin

Basically, the mental reaction of various individuals and nations to defeats and failures is different. Some tend towards 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 nature and health, the following tradition can explain the attitude of Islam towards it:

Osman Ibne Mazoun resorted to monkery as a result of a mental shock (losing his beloved child) and resorted to worship to relieve his grief. When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was informed, he forbade him and said:

اِنَّ اللهَ تَبارَكَ وَ تَعالى لَمْ يَكْتُبْ عَلَيْنَا الرُّهْبانِيَّةَ

The Great Allah has not assigned monkery for us.

Then he added to it a fundamental phrase:

اِنَّما رُهْبانِيَّةُ اُمَّتِي الْجِهادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ

Surely, the monkery of my nation is to struggle in the way of Allah.[[115]](#footnote-115)

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

And it is narrated from Imam Musa ibne (a.s.) Ja’far that someone asked him:

عَنِ الرَّجُلِ الْمُسْلِمِ هَلْ يَصْلُحُ اَنْ يَسِيحَ فِي الْاَرْضِ اَوْ يَتَرَهَّبَ فِي بَيْت لا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ؟ قالَ(ؑ): لا

Is it permitted for a Muslim to become a wanderer or adopt monkery and not go out of his house? He said: no.[[116]](#footnote-116)

Wandering in this tradition may refer to a sort of monkery in the form of travelling around without luggage and provision with the purpose of staying away from cities and societies and/or escaping from home and family.

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 Islam.

Moreover, Holy Quran has called monkery, which is common among Christians, a condemned innovation:

وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا

And monasticism they invented - We did not prescribe it for them, only seeking the good pleasure of Allah; but they observed it not as it should be observed.[[117]](#footnote-117)

Having examined Islam’s attitude towards monkery, we need to now explore the question: Has monkery existed in other Religions?

According to the Islamic documents there has been a sort of monkery in Christianity, but very different from the present monkery and program of monks. Because the appearance of above phrase indicates that Almighty Allah has prescribed a sort of monkery for them, with the purpose of seeking Almighty Allah’s pleasure, but they did not observe its limits, and invented another one instead of it that Holy Quran 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) it did not involve giving up marriage absolutely, social seclusion and separation from society, and living in the convents and cloisters, which are among the practices of today’s monkery. According to authoritative 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 Allah (s.w.t.) mingled with a sort of asceticism, being heedless to worldly splendor, and simplicity while living within the society, as in the case of Christ (a.s.) and his disciples.

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 this false and innovative monkery and, as will be seen later, some of them committed unlawful acts in the convents. Instead of righteousness, chastity and being heedless of the world, some indulged in worldliness and provided facilities for revelry, pleasure, and carouse in some of those centers established in 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, fought vigorously with the Christians. After being defeated by this Emperor, they escaped and resorted to the mountains and deserts.[[118]](#footnote-118)

It is noteworthy that the same is narrated in the traditions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), when he said to Ibne Masoud: Do you know whereof monkery originates?

He said: Allah 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.a.w.a.)), and engaged in worship therein.[[119]](#footnote-119)

Viel Dorant, the famous Christian historian writes a detailed discussion in respect of monks in 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 and was at its peak 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, handicrafts, embroidery and other amusements of nuns.

One of the most basic requisites of monkery was giving up marriage absolutely. Farid Vajdi narrates in the encyclopedia 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, history recounts a lot of calamities and tragedies so that Pop “third Inossan” described one of the convents as “lupanar”![[120]](#footnote-120)

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

# 

# 8. Social Units

 How a powerful social unit is formed

 The most powerful social relation

 Islam and global unique society

 How to create a mental unity

 Spirit of unity in Islamic instructions

1. Moral development

2. Forgiveness and pardon

3. Replying vice with goodness

4. Stopping violence

## The most critical issue in social life is how to form a great and powerful unit from the small units

Human society has fluctuated between various small and great units since the beginning. Following factors 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 color of man is the same color 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, 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. Although, in most parts of the world, natural borders still form the geographical borders, there are many which for various reasons are no longer based on 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 communist and capitalist blocks is one of the manifest samples of this sort of classification. Although at the beginning it was thought that this classification is for ever and there was no possibility of reconciliation between these two doctrines but it was gradually found that the artificial aspect of this division and separation was 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 notion of coexistence among social units and, step by step, it was changed from speech to action.

Although self-interest 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 factors for disunity and scattering is unavoidable or permanent. This perception makes the path clearer and paves the way for the future when all of human societies can be combined in one unit.

## The Most Powerful Social Relation

Formation of a great social unit, particularly on a global scale, primarily requires the following:

### 1. Facility of Means of Communication

This issue has already been solved to a great extent and no doubt will become even better in the future through development in technology.

### 2. Unity of Ideology

Although it is possible to create a unique society without mental unity based on the “unity of vital interests” and “common human aspects”, but there is no doubt that collaboration among different classes and wings of such society will be weak, cold, and unstable and tinged with fear and mistrust. In such conditions cooperation will be limited and circumspect and cannot achieve a fully organized, alive and happy society.

On the other hand if mental unity binds individuals to each other and joins their hearts through strong common beliefs and goals, a very united society with extensive cooperation and full and long lasting understanding and collaboration will be formed.

### 3. Perfect Mental and Moral Development

For establishment of such a society, a sufficient mental development is required for understanding the wider perspective and benefits of merger of all human societies into one global unit. And sufficient moral development is also required to enable tolerance and resolution of inevitable disagreements and adapting oneself for the greater good of the society as a whole. It is not so difficult to convince man that being united has benefits for all but it is very difficult to gain acceptance over differing viewpoints.

The synergies from unity are easy to explain. One can see how disunity and isolation causes wastage of a significant part of society’s human and economic resources. At times such wastage can be more than half of the total resources. For example, the present world in which there is an intense competition between the East and the West, perhaps more than half of their active human powers are consumed as follows: army personnel, army reserves, intelligence services and their affiliated systems, customs and immigration staff, scientists and workers employed in weapons production and their affiliated branches. Nowadays, countries tend to allocate a large part of their expense budgets on defense, war, intelligence gathering and other projects aimed at gaining competitive military advantage over their rivals. All these costs get incurred even when there is no war and they get wasted. The costs escalate enormously when wars break out. Countries justify such costs by saying it is imperative for maintaining their independence. In other words all this wastage of resources has no reason except to achieve separation of human societies from each other. It is just like two commercial institutions spending fifty percent of their capital and time on repressing and destroying each other’s business. It goes without saying that it will have no result save loss and damage to both of them. Therefore, if a perfect unity is achieved among all human societies, the “efficiency” of their activities in all aspects of life will increase significantly. Everyone can understand this issue well.

However, on moral issues, there is no doubt that individuals differ a lot be it their tastes or tactfulness or way of thinking. There are moderates and extremists, sentimentalists and rationalists, advocates of subjectivism versus objectivism, authoritative versus consensual and democratic systems and so on. One can make certain changes and modifications in the beliefs, affections, thoughts, and desires of different individuals but these differences are neither deniable nor completely removable.

Those who want a life full of peace and close cooperation in a great global society need to reach a level of “moral development” where they can recognize the realities in respect of differences in mental, spiritual, and moral structures and be able to tolerate and respect the different viewpoints of others, they should be able to accept the wishes of others in case of disagreement on marginal issues and not expect others to follow them in all cases. They should avoid imposing their viewpoints on them and not treat marginal issues as of fundamental importance. Forgiveness, tolerance, broad-mindedness, subtilty and patience are all necessary for dealing with moral differences. Without the right attitude even two persons cannot live in peace and cooperation. For sure, such moral development is not attainable through negotiation. Rather, it is only possible through proper education and imbibing of moral values which brings about purification in man.

## Islam and Global Society

Islam has paved the way for formation of a unique global society in different aspects, because:

Firstly, Islam appeared in a society which was racist to the core. One’s tribal and genetic affiliations were everything and dominated all social aspects and interactions. Even its cities were not a city in a real sense because the tribes lived completely separate from each other. Islam changed all that. It stood against racism in all its forms. It used their own logic about racial ties being based on common blood relations and common ancestors and made them understand that if you think at a higher level, the human society are all created from two spouses.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثٰى

O people, We have created you from one male and female.[[121]](#footnote-121)

And thereby “human brotherhood” replaced “tribal brotherhood” and “mankind’s blood” replaced “tribe’s blood”.

Islam also stated that although the issue of preserving parentage, relations and connection of individuals to tribes and forefathers is necessary, but it should not be for the sake of boasting or discriminating against others. Rather it is for knowing each other through this special social classification.

It is true that preserving rights of individuals in the society necessitates that individuals are given identities and recognition. The most natural and accurate way is by reference to their forefathers, ancestors, nations and tribes. But this should only be for purposes of knowing, not for boasting:

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

And We appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another.[[122]](#footnote-122)

Islam declares that the criterion for dignity and “value” of individuals is their spiritual virtues and piety and not heritage. Those who inherit attractive attributes have after all acquired them gratuitously and as such cannot be the true measure of their worth.

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is the most Allah fearing of you.[[123]](#footnote-123)

And with this Islam has struck a mighty blow against the roots of racism and the schisms caused by it.

Islam has also struck at the source of world discord and disunity by disfavoring exclusive approaches amidst arbitrary geographical boundaries and encouraging universal brotherhood through its invitation to all countries of world. We can find this amply demonstrated within the numerous phrases used in the Holy Quran:

a. Quranic addresses, except those meant for the Believers, are of a general nature and include all peoples and nations of the world without any discrimination. Examples are: “O people”, “O My Servants”, “O Children of Adam” and “O man”.[[124]](#footnote-124)

b. Holy Quran looks upon the entire world as one vast territory that belongs to one Supreme Creator:

يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

O My servants who believe! Surely My earth is vast, therefore Me alone should you serve![[125]](#footnote-125)

And at another place it invites people to travel all over the world to observe for themselves the ruins of the civilizations of the ancestors and learn lessons from their lives as to the fate that awaits the sinners and the unjust.

فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

So, journey in the land, and behold how was the end of them that cried lies![[126]](#footnote-126)

And it invites people to act righteously and to avoid corruption on the earth:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

Do not spread corruption in the land, after it has been set right.[[127]](#footnote-127)

Elsewhere it calls the earth the inheritance of righteous and good doers, who will finally govern it:

أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ.

The earth shall be the inheritance of My righteous servants.[[128]](#footnote-128)

c. Holy Quran explicitly instructs Muslims not to bind themselves to staying in a particular place. If they cannot implement their divine obligations in a place, they shall immigrate to other parts of the earth.

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَا

The angels will say, “But was not Allah’s earth wide, so that you might have emigrated in it?”[[129]](#footnote-129)

d. Holy Quran has never emphasized on the social units being separated as different territories. 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. Outside the domain of Islam too, ideological and belief borders separate it from the others.[[130]](#footnote-130)

Islam has made an extensive attempt for establishment of an “ideological unity” among mankind through its disciplines and ordinances. Contrary to the ideological relationships of political parties and such like being formed in recent times, the unity espoused by Islam is not confined to a particular class, population or nation. Rather, it is concerned with human society as a whole. This freedom from racial, colour and other prejudices elevates Islamic ideology above others since most of the political parties and groups in the world and their affiliated philosophical doctrines, although founded on their respective common ideologies, lack the global perspective to start with or have lost it over time.

We are not going to discuss about the correctness or otherwise of such doctrines and parties. We only want to explain that all of them have a significant weak point in that they are not in a position to create a mental unity among all men from all races and nations. Islam aims at unity that permeates all. It is not restricted to followers of Islam; rather the followers of other Religions too can share it. It provides a comprehensive plan for protecting the rights of religious minorities living in the Islamic territories, as well as defending their interests.

## How to Create a Mental Unity

Let’s look at the Islamic concepts and instructions which can help us in achieving this great objective.

The principle of monotheism, which forms the basis of all Islamic sciences: Islam presents a clear and pristine picture of one Supreme Creator and completely washes away those confused concepts of multiple deities concocted to serve diversity of thoughts and egos and which produce fertile grounds for social discords. Islam asserts that there is no disunity and variety in Almighty Allah’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 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[[131]](#footnote-131), 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.[[132]](#footnote-132)

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”.[[133]](#footnote-133)

Many idols were worshipped by the people of Makkah prior to the advent of Islam. Islam dealt a most decisive blow to such flawed thinking and practices, replacing them with its brilliant concept of the purest form of monotheism. At the very core of Islam’s strong foundation is this belief which all its followers must believe in unequivocally: “There is no Allah, except Allah”.

Holy Quran further clarifies that Allah is the only Allah of the earth as well as the all other creations in the entire universe.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلٰهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلٰهٌ

And it is He who in heaven is Allah and in earth is Allah.[[134]](#footnote-134)

And somewhere else it says:

إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدًا

None is there in the Heavens and Earth but he comes to the All-Merciful as a Servant.[[135]](#footnote-135)

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 الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ ۖ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِنْ فُطُورٍ

Thou seest not in the Creation of the All-Merciful any imperfection. Return thy gaze; seest thou any fissure?[[136]](#footnote-136)

The Holy Quran also states that all living creatures have a common source of origin.

مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

Of water We fashioned every living thing.[[137]](#footnote-137)

And thus Islam rejects one of the other basic foundations of polytheism and belief in the lords of species. Because this belief mostly originates from the assumption that each of the world’s creatures is an independent and separate unit with an independent creator.

Islam also proclaims that Almighty Allah is Ever-present and very near to all his creatures.

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

And We are nigher him than you, but you do not see Us.[[138]](#footnote-138)

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

And We are nearer to him than the jugular vein.[[139]](#footnote-139)

مَعَ كُلِّ شَيْء لا بِمُقارَنَة وَ غَيْرُ كُلِّ شَيء لا بِمُزايَلَة

He is with everything but not in physical nearness. He is different from everything but not in physical separation.[[140]](#footnote-140)

## Spirit of Unity in Islamic Instructions

The spirit of unity in the Islamic instructions is not restricted to the principle of “Unity of Allah” 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 as far as the core principles and basic truths are concerned. Apparent differences relate either to practical aspects appropriate to the different time periods or to distortions of the original message.

This spirit is also visible in the Islamic ordinances, rules and regulations, because the subject of such regulations is none other than man. A common theme that runs through them is to warn against harmful things and cause reflection:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

And perform the prayer of My remembrance.[[141]](#footnote-141)

And they have a disciplinary effect and lead to simplicity, education and control of rebellious sensual desires. This is the unique spirit of all Islamic sorbs.

Islamic sorbs are all performed in one language, and this too fosters 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, richness of words, derivations, compounds and its special tone).

The spirit of unity is also witnessed in congregational prayers. Its highest manifestation is found in the annual hajj pilgrimage. Millions of Believers from all corners of the world come to Makkah dressed in the same modest dress, raising the same slogans and with the common purpose of seeking the pleasure of Allah. Rich and poor, black, white and brown, young and old, all stand side by side in prayer ... a mass of men and women from the most diverse backgrounds, bowing and prostrating in unison and humility in worship of the Creator. It’s an absolutely amazing sight, totally awesome, unmatched by any other gathering in the entire world. It has a particular splendor similar to the unique system of the world of creation.

The color of Islam is the color of creation. Islam is in sync with nature and creation. To an outsider looking down at the earth, the array of worshippers in their congregational prayers would resemble the concentric circles gathering around a center, signifying a perfect unity.

### 1. Moral Development

## The forgotten principles without which the world will not experience peace and tranquility

For the formation of a real society, especially on a global scale that includes the entire world population; moral development is required in addition to ideological unity and mental development.

Without moral development, people living in a society will find it very difficult to tolerate each other and reconcile their contrary views and prevent disputes. In this respect, the need for training and guidance from Divine Prophets is very clear because, as we said before, morality without the underpinning system of belief and Religion explained and demonstrated by the Prophets will not have a strong basis and support.

Now, we return to the plans proffered by 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 only some of the vast number of available tools - stating all of them is beyond the scope of this concise discussion.

With regard to the variations in the creation of body, soul, mentalities and sentiments of individuals a well known tradition states:

لَوْ عَلِمَ النّاسُ كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللهُ هذا الْخَلْقَ لَمْ يَلُمْ اَحَدٌ اَحَداً.

If people knew how Allah has created people, no one would blame the other![[142]](#footnote-142)

And it is narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

اَلنّاسُ مَعادِنٌ كَمَعادِنِ الذَّهَبِ وَ الْفِضَّةِ

The people are the mines like the mines of gold and silver.[[143]](#footnote-143)

When one accepts and takes into account the many differences inherent in the spirit and sentiments, training and level of knowledge and mental backgrounds of individuals, it is easier to address the issues of intolerance and social conflicts. For example, we have often seen that parents are very upset when a child breaks a glass or spoils his clothes and they may severely punish and criticize the child. Yet if we study the matter correctly, we will see that there is no real justification for their anger. The child may not have the knowledge needed to differentiate between breakable and non-breakable vessels and about how to place them to avoid their slipping and falling down or, even if he knows all of these, he may not have enough strength to hold on to the glass. If at present we are more skillful in handling these vessels, it is because of the experiences of our childhood, because childhood is the period of trial and errors and acquiring knowledge about the environment.

The same is true about our reactions to adults. Some habits of my friend may be repugnant to me and I may decide on discontinuing my friendship, but when I consider the educational environment of my friend, and the spiritual and emotional aspects of his upbringing, I find that I would do the same if I was in his place. My neighbour speaks loudly and disturbs me but when I consider his physical attributes such as the structure of his larynx and degree of sensivity of his eardrums, I can see that his fault is perhaps not as serious as I had first imagined.

However this should not be mistaken as subscribing to the view that everyone is faultless in respect of all their misdeeds and instead blame the spiritual, physical and external factors as the cause of the misdeeds. The correct approach is to put emphasis on training rather than leave the people as they are so that they do whatsoever they want; the key is to accept the realities of diversities as this will assist in solving disputes, removing objections and promoting tolerance.

### 2. Forgiveness and Pardon

It is very difficult to find people who are immune from making mistakes and there are plenty who violate the rights of others intentionally or otherwise. Those aggrieved may resort to acts of vengeance and that leads to ever escalating conflicts of reprisals on both sides. Once started, this cycle of vindictive attacks becomes uncontrollable in severity and scope. Efforts to control are hampered by different perceptions of the first offence on the part of the offender and the victim and as long as a party feels that justice has not been done, the conflict goes on and on.

The reason why the fire of sedition, war, and disputes is never extinguished in a lot of tribes and nations in the past and present is that each of them responds to the crime of the other with a more vigorous crime, and the battle continues to escalate. The only thing which can break this cycle and extinguish the fire of sedition is the spirit of forgiveness, pardon and reconciliation.

It should be mentioned here that those who initiate the cessation of conflict through forgiveness do not just benefit the other party but also relieve themselves from the certain losses which they would have suffered from continuation of the struggle. In addition they acquire a great moral victory. A careful study will show that vengeance does not produce any benefit save a transitory relief and a false sense of superiority. And then one is in anxiety, waiting for the vengeance of other party. The soothing effect of “forgiveness” is much deeper and the spiritual and social excellence achieved by it is real and long lasting.

Islam recommends forgiveness with very interesting and compelling arguments and considers it as one of the most critical Islamic obligation. This can be seen from the following examples:

وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

But let them pardon and forgive. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you?[[144]](#footnote-144)

Above verse indicates the reality that none of us are free of sins, and just as we like Almighty Allah to forgive our sins, we too should show forbearance in encounters with others. It should be noted that one who refrains from outward vengeance but continues to harbour resentment and sulks or talks about the offences of the other party has not actually forgiven him. Real forgiveness involves a complete removal of all negative thoughts and feelings.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ

They will question thee concerning what they should spend. Say: abundance (forgiveness).[[145]](#footnote-145)

One must understand that spending in charity is not merely concerned with wealth. Rather, foregoing one’s own rights can be more important than parting with wealth. Forgiving others can be very difficult because it goes against the natural urge in most people to seek revenge but its benefits in creating discipline and social justice are also very significant.

This sort of turning from the reply to a question towards another reply is repeatedly observed in Holy Quran, and this is one of the attractive points in Holy Quran that at times it is not bound to the requested question in its replies. Rather, it considers the real requirement of the other party and answers accordingly or mentions advantages and results:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

They will question thee concerning the new moons. Say: They are appointed times for the people, and the Pilgrimage.[[146]](#footnote-146)

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ (ﷺ)ثَلاثٌ وَ الَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهٖ لَوْ كُنْتُ حَلاّفاً لَحَلَفْتُ عَلَيْهِنَّ: ما نَقَصَ مالٌ مِنْ صَدَقَة فَتَصَدَّقُوا، وَ لا عَفا رَجُلٌ مَظْلَمَةً يَبْتَغِي بِها وَجْهَ اللهِ اِلاّ زادَهُ اللهُ بِها عِزّاً يَوْمَ الْقِيامَةِ، وَ لا فَتَحَ رَجُلٌ عَلى نَفْسِهٖ بابَ مَسْأَلَةِ اِلاّ فَتَحَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ بابَ فَقْر

Islam’s Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in one of his sayings laid great emphasis on three things: Charity never causes a decrease in wealth, so pay alms. Secondly, whenever someone forgives an injustice for Allah’s pleasure, Allah increases his dignity on the day of resurrection. And thirdly, whenever a person pursues excessive demands and desires, Allah opens a door of poverty to him.[[147]](#footnote-147)

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللهِ(ﷺ): عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْعَفْوِ فَاِنَّ الْعَفْوَ لا يَزِيدُ الْعَبْدَ اِلاّ عِزّاً فَتَعافَوْا يُعِزُّكُمُ اللهُ

Do not forget forgiveness, because forgiveness increases man’s honor. So forgive each other; Allah shall honor you.[[148]](#footnote-148)

عَنْ الْباقِرِ (ؑ): النَّدامَةُ عَلَى الْعَفْوِ اَفْضَلُ وَ اَيْسَرُ مِنَ النَّدامَةِ عَلَى الْعُقُوبَةِ

It is easier to suffer the regret one may feel for forgiving someone than regretting for inviting punishment.[[149]](#footnote-149)

عَنْ اَبِي الْحَسَنِ (الرِّضا) (ؑ) مَا الْتَقَتْ فِئَتانِ قَطُّ اِلاّ نُصِرَ اَعْظَمُهُما عَفْواً

Imam Reza (a.s.) said: When two groups confront each other, one who pardons more, will be helped.[[150]](#footnote-150)

As you will observe, victory is introduced as one of the direct effects of forgiveness in these traditions. Vengeance at the time of having power is usually caused by an animal instinct, and can be observed in the animals too. But forgiveness and pardon is a sign of personality and self control, majesty and magnificence of spirit which can outshine the burning flame of anger and vindictiveness. Therefore the higher capacity of forgiveness in some individuals indicates their higher values and prestige, and so they will be honored.

Furthermore, vengeance never attracts people’s respect or affection towards the avengers, while forgiveness and pardon has a deep effect in attraction of public opinion and creating affection and positive feelings towards the pardoner, and this is considered as one of the effective factors in victory.

### 3. Replying to Offence with Goodness

In Islamic resources, including the Holy Quran and traditions, a more significant and higher stage of pardon and forgiveness is when one responds to an offence with goodness! Undoubtedly, this deed is the highest manifestation of human spirit and requires moral education and special spiritual elegance, and has a miraculous effect in humanizing the hearts filled with enmity. And it is the best “lesson” which one can give to the aggressors and wrongdoers. Moreover, 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 Holy Quran:

ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

Repel with that which is fairer and behold, he between whom and thee there is enmity shall be as if he was a loyal friend. Yet none shall receive it, except the steadfast; none shall receive it, except a man of mighty fortune.[[151]](#footnote-151)

The first verse points to the miraculous effect of “repel with that which is fairer” (replying vice with goodness), thanks to which one can change the greatest enemies to intimate friends.

Then, in the next sentence, it is emphasized that only those are worthy for attainment to this rank who possess strong 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 fairer” 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, 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 provides a strong catalyst for them to change for the better. 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 Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Islamic leaders about this prominent attribute, it is introduced as one of the greatest and highest humanitarian attributes:

قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (ﷺ) فِي خُطْبَتِهٖ: اَلا اُخْبِرُكُمْ بِخَيْرِ خَلائِقِ الدُّنْيا وَ الاْخِرَةِ؟ اَلْعَفْوُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ، وَ تَصِلُ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ، وَ الاِْحْسانُ اِلى مَنْ اَساءَ اِلَيْكَ، وَ اِعْطاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) once asked: Would you like me to inform you of one of the best moralities of the world and hereafter? Forgiving one who has been unjust to you, and maintaining relations with those who have broken their relation with you, and goodness with one who has been unjust with you, and giving to one who has deprived you.[[152]](#footnote-152)

According to this tradition which Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has expressed in public during a lecture, 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 one phrase is concerned with forgiveness and pardon.

عَنْ اَبِي جَعْفَر (الْباقِرِ) (ؑ): ثَلاثٌ لا يَزِيدُ اللهُ بِهِنَّ الْمَرْءَ الْمُسْلِمَ اِلاّ عِزّاً: الصَّفْحُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَهٗ، وَ اِعْطاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَهٗ، وَ الصِّلَةُ لِمَنْ قَطَعَهٗ

Imam Baqir (a.s.) said: There are three things which do not result in anything but honor: 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.[[153]](#footnote-153)

In the above tradition too, three deeds are called the means of honor and power, two of which are concerned with repelling vice with goodness, and one is concerned with forgiveness and pardon.

However, forgiveness and pardon should not be confused with submission to an unjust enemy. Rather, such submission is the sign of weakness and lack of personality whereas forgiveness is the sign of magnanimity and personality. Forgiveness and pardon relate to wrongs done to one’s personal rights (rather than rights of the society) and where the wronged person is capable of taking revenge but instead chooses to forgive.

### 4. Stopping Violence

Resorting to violence in solving social problems, particularly global and international problems, is one of the most important causes of conflicts as well as dangerous and unpleasant events. Resorting to violence excites the sense of malice in the hearts and lightens the fire of vengeance. Not only is violence ineffective in resolving crises, but often it intensifies the conflict and multiplies the miseries. A lot of problems of present world originate from it.

Resorting to violence is never advisable. Man pays a heavy price for it. Yet, despite all of its ominous defects, risks and consequences, it is the first solution which man seems to resort to for solving the problems. Adopting peaceful solutions has an intellectual aspect whereas resorting to violence has an emotional aspect, and we know that man’s intellectual growth and development is the later 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 teaching tolerance and advising against resorting to violence except when all other ways are closed. A brave individual or nation is less likely to use violence for solving social problems because they can resolve most problems in peaceful ways through the power of thinking and ethical ways.

Islam has put a strong emphasis on this critical issue and numerous traditions are narrated from great Islamic leaders about the role of “tolerance”*[[154]](#footnote-154)* in man’s life. Following traditions clearly demonstrate Islam’s logic in this respect.

عَنِ النَّبِيّ (ﷺ): اِنَّ فِي الرِّفْقِ الزِّيادَةَ وَ الْبَرَكَةَ وَ مَنْ يُحْرَمُ الرِّفْقَ يُحْرَمُ الْخَيْرَ

There is bounty and blessing in tolerance and forbearance, and one who is deprived from forbearance and amenity, will be deprived from goodness.[[155]](#footnote-155)

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 النَّبِيِّ (ﷺ): لَوْ كانَ الرِّفْقُ خَلْقاً يُرى ما كانَ مِمّا خَلَقَ اللهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ شَىْء اَحْسَنَ مِنْهُ

If tolerance was depicted, there would be no creature better than it.[[156]](#footnote-156)

In this tradition, stopping violence is called the most beautiful moral face, and it means that violence is the ugliest face that human spirit may have.

قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (ﷺ): مَا اصْطَحَبَ اثْنانِ اِلاّ كانَ اَعْظَمُهُما اَجْراً وَ اَحَبُّهُما اِلَى اللهِ اَرْفَقَهُما بِصاحِبِهٖ.

From two persons, one whose friendship and tolerance is more than the other, will have more reward and is more pleasing to Allah.[[157]](#footnote-157)

In this tradition, the greatest rewards and most favorite ranks before Almighty Allah belong to those who advocate tolerance and peace and flexibility in life.

عَنْ اَبِي جَعْفَرِ الْباقِرِ (ؑ): مَنْ قُسِمَ لَهٗ الرِّفْقُ قُسِمَ لَهٗ الاِْيمانُ.

One who is granted flexibility, belief is granted to him.[[158]](#footnote-158)

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 enrages man such that he loses control over his mind and actions and becomes prone to making huge blunders and blasphemies.

Also, violence is often the source of suspicion and mistrust on Almighty Allah’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 اَبِي جَعْفَر (ؑ): قالَ: قالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ (ﷺ): اِنَّ الرِّفْقَ لَمْ يُضَعْ عَلى شَيْء اِلاّ زانَهٗ وَ لا نُزِعَ مِنْ شَىْء اِلاّ شانَهٗ.

Tolerance and flexibility embellish whatever they accompany and disfigure whatever they separate from.[[159]](#footnote-159)

According to this wise saying tolerance and peacefulness adorns everything and violence disfigures everything and any deed and person.

عَنْ اَبِي جَعْفَر (ؑ): اِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ رَفِيقٌ يُحِبُّ الْرِّفْقَ وَ يُعْطِي عَلَى الرِّفْقِ ما لا يُعْطِي عَلَى الْعُنْفِ.

Allah has tolerance, and likes tolerance, and what He bestows for tolerance, He does not bestow for violence and harshness.[[160]](#footnote-160)

According to this tradition, tolerance and peacefulness are divine attributes.

The important point to note is that Islam’s enemies often distort the image of Islam, associating it with violence and citing in support the battles that were fought to defend Islam. However, if they were to study the procedures adopted by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in these battles, his behavior with the enemies who had rejected his invitation and were thirsty for his blood, his conduct with the prisoners of war and the defeated nations and the people injured in the battlefield, they would find that these constitute some of the most brilliant chapters in Islam’s history. They stand out as clear evidence of Islam’s preference for peace and aversion to violence.

And more important, some try to attribute violence to Islamic clergymen just like they did to Christian clergymen in the Middle Ages. Unfortunately some narrow-minded, backward individuals, lacking in knowledge and wisdom have preached and committed violent un-Islamic actions in the name of Islam and provided the pretext to the enemies to make such criticism.

It is imperative for all Muslims to heed Islam’s message of peace and desist from extremism and violence. Action is needed by all of us to become role models and show to the world the real face of Islam through our peaceful and pragmatic conduct. A collective and persistent effort is required to counter the poisonous propaganda and distortions by the enemies. We must explain the philosophy of Islamic battles so that their defensive and/or liberative aspects are fully clarified.

It should be clarified that flexibility, mildness and non-violence do not mean submission to injustices and violence of evil doers and the stubborn and blood thirsty enemies. Rather, as Holy Quran has explicitly specified in verse 29 of The Victory surah اَشِدّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفّارِ رُحَماءُ بَيْنَهُمْ - Hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another), we shall adopt a firm and severe attitude against cruel enemies and be mild with the friends. Moreover, we should be mild with the enemies who have been defeated and do not pose threats anymore.

# 

# 9. Ways of Influencing the Hearts

 What we should do for our advice to be influential on the heart of others?

 Should we be fact seeking or aggressive?

 Factors effective in influencing the hearts:

1. Seeking excellence in discussion vs. engaging in disputes

2. Stopping selfishness

3. Promoting positive affections

4. Belief in one’s own speech

5. Effect of virtue of the speaker

## What we should do for our advice to be influential on the heart of others?

One of the branches of social morality is concerned with skills that influence others and win their confidence. Success in this area of interpersonal skills is particularly necessary for the “intellectual leaders” and “missionaries”. Otherwise they will find it very difficult to achieve their objectives in educating and reforming others.

It is frequently observed that virtuous and learned people have spent their life in seclusion due to unfamiliarity with this part of social morality. People have not benefitted from their knowledge and ideas and they have not achieved success in the society of which they are worthy. In contrast, there are some people with less knowledge who have found positions higher than they deserve as a result of familiarity with and observing these principles.

### Some points to Note:

1. Since man has an inseparable relation with the society, he should be aware of the correct ways of influencing others so that he can attract their attention and win cooperation. Such public relation skills are needed for success in society by everyone irrespective of how clever or intelligent they may be. But those who are in leadership positions will need them more and spiritual leaders and religious missionaries who have to penetrate into the depths of spirit and soul of people need them the most.

2. It is important to note that we would be totally wrong if we assume that influencing others needs nothing except familiarity with strong and undeniable arguments and putting forth analyses to demonstrate advantages and disadvantages of a subject. However sounds our argument may be, the fact is that it impacts only the “conscious” part of man’s spirit whereas the major part which is man’s “unconscious” or “semiconscious” part is not influenced[[161]](#footnote-161). Success comes when the leader also enjoys an intimate relationship of trust and affection with others rather than depending solely on satiation of their intellect and thought.

3. Using techniques to influence others for one’s personal interests and gaining authority through manipulating their minds is certainly condemned as a clear example of exploitation. But skills employed to enable achievement of noble social objectives or for reforming and educating an individual are commendable and necessary tools for sound and effective leadership.

4. These interpersonal skills require understanding of the principles of psychology, psychoanalysis and ability to reach into man’s subconscious in general and into that of the person in question in particular. Some people have a natural talent and are inherently familiar more or less with these principles and some others have gradually become familiar them due to need and experience. But a lot of people have to acquire them through formal learning and practice.

5. It is also not the case that familiarity with the ways of influencing others is all that is required. There are a lot of people who are well read in these techniques but cannot employ them properly and appropriately. Effective application requires adequate readiness and practice and making them an intrinsic part of oneself.

6. It is clear from studying the lives of the great divine prophets, specially Islam’s Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imams from his progeny that they applied most of these principles for realization of their mission and educational purposes and they have provided us with excellent role models in this respect. Their attitude with people was so good that everyone was quickly attracted to them and their high moral teachings. Some like to think that these divine guides were using some miraculous powers but the fact is that if we follow sincerely their pristine practices and procedures in dealing with others, we too can achieve success in winning hearts and minds.

Holy Quran says about Islam’s Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

وَ يَقُولُونَ هُوَ اُذُنٌ قُلْ اُذُنُ خَيْر لَكُمْ

Saying, “He is an ear!” Say: “An ear of good for you”.[[162]](#footnote-162)

And somewhere else it says:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

It was by some mercy of Allah that thou wast gentle to them; hadst thou been harsh and hard of heart, they would have scattered from about thee.[[163]](#footnote-163)

And again it says:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Now there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you, gentle to the Believers, compassionate.[[164]](#footnote-164)

Being an “ear”, i.e., respecting what others say and avoiding undue mistrust, and also showing mildness, kindness and sympathy to others, and being concerned with their problems as one’s own problems, has a profound effect in winning their hearts and minds. As we read in the biography of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.): “He would always be the first in greeting the other person and if someone detained him for some work, he waited until the other person was ready to leave, and when someone shook hands with him, he did not move away his hand until the other party did, he called even the children with their nicknames (the best names with Arabs), and he never sat among his companions in a way that displayed his superiority over the others ...”*[[165]](#footnote-165)*

7. It goes without saying that one should never utilize improper means and devious ways for achieving the goal of influencing others. The methods should be honourable and above board and the purposes for which they are employed should be noble and wholesome. There is no right way to do a wrong thing nor should one use wrong ways even to do a right thing.

## Should we be Fact Seeking or Aggressive?

Our discussions often meet with following scenarios:

1. We have seen many times that after hours of talks we have failed to achieve any success in the progress of negotiations. We believe that the matter is completely clear and acceptable but the other party refuses 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 despite powerful means used for proving a belief or a doctrine as well as the numerous books prepared with much effort and costs, the objectives have not been realized.

5. It is often observed that scientific negotiations which are started in an earnest setting have ended up in quarrels and fights and utter mayhem. Yet, how can “mayhem” and “scientific discussion” co-exist and how can a resolution materialize from such a scenario.

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 may even 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. Why does this happen? Because these discussions are not conducted with the aim of arriving at the truth. Rather, their agenda is to gain victory and dominance over the adversary. The distinction may be subtle but it makes a huge difference. Truth seeking aims at giving to someone what he lacks without excluding him from anything, that is to say teaching him without ruining his personality. But when the hidden agenda involves destruction of the other party’s honor, pride and personality and hurting his affections, it is not surprising if it meets with hatred and resistance. As the psychologists say:

1. It is possible to suppress someone through dispute and intimidation but we will never acquire his sincere approval.

2. It is impossible to convince an ignorant person with the power of logic and confrontation.

3. The best means for victory in discussion is avoiding it. Basically, the discussions which turn into defensive, offensive or controversial debates will not succeed in gaining inner approval. Resistance of the other party indicates that he considers his dignity and status is at stake.

The discussions which agitate the other party and cause him to resist are likely to contain the following elements:

1. Humiliation of the other party or his beliefs, for instance when his opinion is called illogical, unwise, strange, unworthy etc.

2. Criticism made in presence of a third person and the other party is distraught at losing face in front of others (most people would react in this way).

3. Adopting an overbearing style as if teaching a student while the other party does not deserve or accept being lectured to.

4. A discussion in which victory is treated as the sign of excellence and superiority of the speaker and ruins the “excellence seeking” spirit of the other party.

5. A discussion aimed at proscription of some deeds of the other party or one of his relatives and friends in the past or present.

6. A discussion which has become the substructure of his thoughts as a result of suggestion of surroundings or parents and such like.

In all of the above cases one should not use ordinary methods of discussions that simply deepen the controversy but one should apply techniques that win the minds and hearts without making others lose face.

## Factors Effective in Influencing the Hearts

### 1. Seeking Excellence in Discussion v/s. Engaging in Disputes

Islam puts strong emphasis on the manner of discussions with people, especially with the ignorant ones. It advocates that we refrain from meaningless discussions which are not concerned with finding the truth. It looks upon them as nothing but disputation and nit picking.

Holy Quran says:

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ

Dispute not with the People of the Book save in the fairer manner.[[166]](#footnote-166)

And elsewhere it says:

وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

And argue with them in the better way.[[167]](#footnote-167)

In the above two verses, the discussions lacking “fairer manner” and “better way” are prohibited. In other words discussions should be characterized by sympathy, kindness, courtesy, compassion, and not cause any ill or negative effects for the other party.

There are some instances where Almighty Allah sent specific instructions to His Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to choose silence against the aggression of opponents and avoid any discussions whatsoever which may end up in disputes and obstinacy.

وَإِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

And if they dispute with thee, do thou say, “Allah knows very well what you are doing.”[[168]](#footnote-168)

In several traditions arguments and disputing is prohibited indirectly by subtle references to their negative consequences:

قالَ النَّبِيُّ (ﷺ) ذَرُوا الْمِراءَ فَاِنَّهٗ لا تُفْهَمُ حِكْمَتُهٗ وَلا تُؤْمَنُ فِتْنَتُهٗ

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: Avoid dispute because its wisdom is not understood and there is no security against its sedition.*[[169]](#footnote-169)*

وَ قالَ (ﷺ): لا يَسْتَكْمِلُ عَبْدٌ حَقِيقَةَ الْاِيْمَانِ حَتّٰى يَدَعَ الْمِرَاءَ وَ اِنْ كَانَ مُحِقًّا

And he said: No one fulfills the reality of belief, unless he leaves dispute, although he is right.*[[170]](#footnote-170)*

قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوٗدَ لِاِبْنِهٖ: يَا بُنَيَّ اِيَّاكَ وَ الْمِرَاءَ فَاِنَّهٗ لَيْسَتْ فِيْهِ مَنْفَعَةٌ وَ هُوَ يُهَيِّجُ بَيْنَ الْاِخْوَانِ الْعَدَاوَةَ

Solomon, son of David, told his son: My son! Avoid dispute because it has no profit and provokes the fire of enmity among the brothers.[[171]](#footnote-171)

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ(ﷺ):ما ضَلَّ قَوْمٌ بَعْدَ هُدًى كَانُوْا عَلَيْهِ اِلاَّ اُوْتُوا الْجَدَلَ.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: no nation strays after guidance, save it engages in dispute.[[172]](#footnote-172)

عَنْ اَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ؑ) : يا كُمَيْلُ! اِيّاكَ وَ الْمِرَاءَ فَاِنَّكَ تُغْرِيْ بِنَفْسِكَ السُّفَهَآءَ اِذا فَعَلْتَ وَ تُفْسِدُ الْاِخَآءَ.

Commander of the Believers (Imam Ali) (a.s.) said: O Komeil! Avoid fussing because in this way you turn the ignorant against yourself, and destroy brotherhood.[[173]](#footnote-173)

The ill effects of discussions mixed with dispute and aggression are precisely dealt with 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 since belief involves submission and surrender to the truth).

3. Dispute results in sedition and attracting enmity and hostility (because no one wants to lose face).

4. Dispute causes misguidance (because it excites the sense of obstinacy, selfishness and prejudice and thereby covers the visage of truth).

5. If one disputes with the ignorant, it provokes them to become disrespectful and insulting (because when they find their reputation at stake, they will not care about the respect that they accorded to the learned in normal conditions).

To avoid all these dangerous and destructive repercussions, Islam instructs that we keep away from discussions and debates which involve aggression and hostility even if they are to do with proving the truth.

### 2. Stopping Selfishness

One who wants to influence the heart and minds of others should never make it look as if “an idea belonging to him” is being accepted by the other party. Rather, he should let the reality surface in a neutral, matter of fact way or, better still, let it seem as if the idea is being generated by or coming from the other party!

As we know everybody loves his ideas like he loves his own 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 of man’s instincts. And in contrast, the thoughts of others are strange to man like the others’ children, and naturally fail to attract his interest, and may even provoke his sense of competition and jealousy.

Therefore, it is much easier to get acceptance of truths that reach a person through his own thinking. In such cases “intellect” and “affection” are on the same side. If the truths enter his mind as something coming from a stranger, a contradiction and struggle occurs between his “intellect” and “affection”, the result of which in most individuals is victory for affection. Intellect tends to accept it as it is true but affection finds it strange and belonging to someone else and refrains from accepting it.It is noteworthy that if our real purpose is seeking the truth and not personal victory, 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 should we insist on it being accepted as “my idea”. Several experiments conducted in this respect have proved that applying this method for penetration into the thoughts of others has been successful. Basically, for achievement of this goal the following principles should be observed:

1. One should proffer the idea partially and let the other party come up with the rest of it with guidance from the speaker. In fact, the speaker should play the role of a counselor whose job is to bring out the best in the other party by guiding him to use his talents to the fullest.

2. The discussions should proceed in the form of posing the right questions and prompting analysis of options and enable the other party to think through and uncover the answers as their own idea.

3. One should strictly avoid taking personal credit for the idea and boasting about it with 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 recognized and mentioned as a proof. This should also be done if such supportive material can be attributed to those respected and loved by the other party, like his father, family, or intimate friend.

Holy Quran provides an excellent example of effective communication. Its influence on people’s thinking has been so wonderful that some have referred to it as “magic”. It often applies above techniques in its arguments against those with adversarial and distorted beliefs using phrases like:

ءَاِلٰهٌ مَعَ اللهِ

Is there a god with Allah?[[174]](#footnote-174)

مَنْ اِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللهِ

What god other than Allah?[[175]](#footnote-175)

هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللهِ

Is there any creator, apart from Allah?[[176]](#footnote-176)

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ يَعْقِلُوْنَ بِهَا

What! have they not journeyed in the land so that they have hearts to understand with or ears to hear with?[[177]](#footnote-177)

It stipulates different issues and poses questions in a way that encourages and prompts the reader to use his own reasoning and conscience to arrive at the conclusion and see the truth.

### 3. Promoting Positive Affections

As mentioned earlier, one should always try to avoid creating a conflict between one’s intellect and affections. To allow these two to pull in the same direction, following methods should be applied:

1. Everyone loves his own name and it is the most harmonic song for him. To win his heart one should use it often and in a respectful way choosing the one he likes best in case he has several names or nicknames. We have read in the traditions that a man should be called by his “nickname”*[[178]](#footnote-178)*. (Nickname is the most respectful name with Arabs). It is also narrated that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) called everybody with his best name and even selected an appropriate nickname for those lacking any nickname.

2. First, an opportunity should be given to the others for saying their piece and one should carefully listen to what they say. This shows that one is sincerely seeking the truth and is sympathetic and respects the other party. Each of these aspects is quite effective in promoting a positive and friendly attitude in the other person. Everyone is naturally tempted to focus all of his efforts on getting his ideas and arguments across and monopolise the discussion but by doing this he betrays a closed mind and shows that he has no intention to consider the views of others. This turns off the other party and his arguments are likely to fall on deaf ears - he is sowing seeds in a thorny land. It often happens that individuals come into a discussion with a negative mind carrying a baggage of complexes and biases which need a release. If one allows them to express them fully and get them off their chest, they are likely to feel much better after that and would be ready for hearing the truth. We read about Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and leaders of right guidance that they granted ample opportunity to the other parties to speak.

3. Show interest in things which the other party likes and talks to them about their near and dear ones. We read about Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that sometimes when he was alone with some of his companions, he asked them about their family concerns and wife and children and about their other interests.

4. Show appreciation for the praise-worthy points put forward by the other party and readily accepts the points on which there is no dispute. It will then be easier for him to accept issues where his case is weak or erroneous.

5. Sincere sympathy, in its real sense, is one of the most critical factors in attracting others and making them receptive to one’s ideas. In such cases they may accept the arguments even if they are not completely convinced as they would like to believe that his comments are correct and his proposals are beneficial for them. One of the reasons for the wonderful results from the speeches of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was that everybody recognized him as someone who was really and sincerely sympathetic towards them:

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَفْسَكَ عَلٰى آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ أَسَفًا

Yet perchance, if they believe not in this tiding, thou wilt consume thyself, following after them, of grief.[[179]](#footnote-179)

And we read in the biography of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

وَلَا يَأْتِيْهِ اَحَدٌ حُرٌّ اَوْ عَبْدٌ اَوْ اَمَةٌ اِلاَّ قَامَ مَعَهٗ فِي حَاجَتِهٖ.

Whoever came to him, whether a free man or a slave or a bondmaid, he accompanied him (her) and helped them in their work.[[180]](#footnote-180)

6. The way of pointing out mistakes should be such that while it may not endear him to the other party it should at least avoid being hurtful and as far as possible the mistakes should get corrected in a subtle way rather than through blunt and direct means that cause loss of face. “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 pointing out mistakes indirectly.

7. We should avoid provoking the other person in a way that he becomes obstinate. And if he insists on a matter which is not the main issue of discussion and criticizes it we should not brush him aside or oppose or disagree with him but join him in criticizing things that deserve to be criticized. This will disarm the other party and he will be more receptive on the main issues. For instance, if we want to invite someone to Islam and find that he insists instead on making the point about bad actions of Muslims we should not defend such Muslims and in fact join him in criticism of bad behaviour (of course, without exaggeration) and explain that such actions are not acceptable in Islam and then proceed to make our case about the main issue. Certainly, we will be more successful.

### 4. 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 and can be used with great effect in influencing others. As we know the tongue and speech is the interpreter of one’s mind and thoughts. It is not surprising that the 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 that sounds very impressive and smart but if his tone shows that he does not believe in it so much, it causes the audience to doubt in the correctness of that issue. On the contrary, if a subject is not easy to accept but the speaker comes across as firmly believing in what he says, the speech will carry more credibility with the audience.

It is also important to note that one’s lack of belief in a matter cannot be totally hidden through playing with words or other such techniques especially when speaking on emotional subjects. Also, it is important that the speaker walks the talk, i.e., practices what he preaches. A speech backed by action shows that the speaker believes in his message and will thus have greater influence on the audience.

### 5. Effect of Virtue of the Speaker

It is said:

لا تَنْظُرْ اِلٰى مَنْ قالَ، بَلِ انْظُرْ اِلٰى مَا قَالَ.

Do not consider the speaker; rather consider his (her) message.

But in reality it is difficult for anyone to keep the two separate because everybody looks upon the speech as the product of the speaker’s being. In one sense, speech is a transformation in man’s energies. Chemical energy is transformed into mechanical energy in the cells and mechanical energy to acoustic energy. And in terms of its spiritual contents, it is the product of thoughts, education, environment, knowledge, attributes, and spiritual states.

Thus, any speech has the color of its speaker, and carries the speaker’s attributes, his spirituality or his ugly attributes. For this reason, when a virtuous individual speaks all the doors of human spirit is opened and his speech reaches into the hearts and minds. And in contrast, a speech uttered by an impure and evil person meets with an unconscious negative reaction of the hearer and finds the doors of reception closed to it.

# 

# 10. Relation of Ethics and Education

 What is education?

 Holy Quran and education

 Personality and character

 Relation of education and personality

 Factors comprising personality

The most important issue that a man faces with is education. Rather, if we consider education in its broader 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. 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 habits, the reasons for their formation and development, ways of achieving good morality and suppressing 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 described education as “revision in the experiences of the past and their reformation for making the experiences more meaningful, and making the individual ready for guidance in the future experiences”.[[181]](#footnote-181)

We believe that the above three 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. Routine, aimless and non-educational actions

In the second type, one either does 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, and puts his finger on the key without information and previous experience. But after perceiving this cause and effect relation, and revising 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 with understanding.

## Holy Quran and Education

Phrases like “purification” and “exit from darkness to light” are used instead of education in Holy Quran. One of the following two verses refers to “genetic education” and the other to “legislative education”:

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهٗ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ.

It is He who blesses you, and His angels, to bring you forth from the shadows into the light.[[182]](#footnote-182)

We know that Allah’s blessing to His servants is his mercy and favors, and angels’ blessing 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 عَلٰى عَبْدِهٖ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

It is He who sends down upon His servant signs, clear signs that He may bring you forth from the shadows into the light.[[183]](#footnote-183)

In the above verse too, which refers to legislative education, leading from darkness to the light is considered as the purpose.

It is understood from this interpretation that an uneducated man is like someone who is in absolute darkness. Such a person has potential and talents but does not have any power to activate them and apply them towards a goal. He can neither adopt a clear way nor reach any destination.

But when he is educated and trained, it is like going from darkness into the light. Light is the means of training and development and blossoming of talents, and the means of leadership and orientation and setting and reaching goals, 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 discussions but also in common day to day conversations and almost everybody knows its meaning. However, a precise, clear and detailed definition of the term “personality” is very difficult, and for these reason psychologists these days have come up with many different definitions and according to one of the psychologists hundreds of definitions are presented by scientists for this term since each of them have studied this complicated concept from a particular point of view.

From among the suggested definitions, following could be considered:

1. “Personality is the total of all effects of an individual in the society”. In other words, “personality of each individual is his social effect”.*[[184]](#footnote-184)*

The problem with this and similar definitions is that they deny existence of personality in socially ineffective individuals (like reclusive or disabled persons). And for this reason personality in this definition has only a “practical” aspect, not “descriptive” whereas personality in the usual sense is considered as one of the mental qualities.

2. “Personality is the general quality of an individual’s behavior which is manifested in his specific habits, thought and interpretation, desires, mode 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 introverted individuals, but is similar with regards to giving an active or passive aspect as well as external effect and impression to personality.

3. The other definition presented by some of the psychologists is that “personality is the internal discipline of motives, reactions, perceptions and remembrances which determines man’s manner in his behavior”.

Since this definition pays attention to internal and descriptive aspect of personality it is free from the previous problems, but it will be closer to its real sense 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.

Character: Most psychologists have used “personality” and “character” as meaning the same thing but recently some of them have treated them as different terms. “Character” is used for moral aspects, virtues and vices. In other words, character is for evaluation of personality with the moral scales of goodness and vice, while they consider personality as indicator of all mental, moral, intellectual, emotional and even physical qualities.

## Relation of Education and Personality

Whichever way we define “personality” it has a very close relation with “education” in every 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.

Weak perceptions and other significant personality deficiencies of those who have been separated from human society due to some events and have grown up among animals since childhood is one of the clearest evidence of the relationship between personality and education.

We also see examples of how a nation which was at the same stage of development as another suddenly starts developing much faster than the latter when it is blessed with a competent leader. This is another proof of the role of education in the uplift of individuals and society. This can also be demonstrated in the case of similar individuals growing up to be quite different due to differences in their environments. The strong relation of personality and education is well stated by the scholar who says: Leave some children with me and tell me to nurture them with any mentality you may desire: brave, coward, generous, stingy.

## Factors Comprising Personality

The factors that shape man’s personality are too numerous to recount but the most important of these are:

1. Creation (physical and mental structure)

2. Heritage

3. Secretion of glands

4. Nutrition

5. Family environment

6. Social environment (occupation, situation of city and country, propagation systems, government, economical situation)

7. Education

8. Companions and friends (neighbors, partners, schoolmates)

9. Suggestions (by oneself and others)

10. Studies and mental intake

11. Unpredicted events

12. Will and intent of man and his endeavours

It goes without saying that since there is a close relation between personality and education, we can think of all the above factors as educative in one sense.

A study of the above twelve issues would cover a wide scope and can be studied as a separate subject under the title of “man and educative concerns”. We hope to have this opportunity in the future.

وَ آخِرُ دَعْوانا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ للهِِ رَبِّ الْعالَمِينَ

1. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 61/65, tradition 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Naraaqi, Jaameus Saadaat 67/1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Surah Baqarah (2), verse 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 122/11, narration 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The same book, 123, narration 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Surah Baqarah (2), verse 200 to 202 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Surah Aa’raaf (7), verse 32 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Nahjul Balagah, aphorisms, no. 390 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 447/11 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 197/74 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Kulaini, Kaafi 375/2 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, volume 2, page 128 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 191/74 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Surah Kahf (18), verse 28 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 185/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Surah Noor (24), verse 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 604/8 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The same book, page 605 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 609/8 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Surah Nisaa (4), verse 100 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 31/19 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Surah Ankaboot (29), verse 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ali Ibn Ibrahim commentary, vol. 2, page 151 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 270/73 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Narrated from the book, “The World which I know”, page 68 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Surah Maryam (19), verse 49 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Surah Kahf (18), verse 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 9/4, narrator of tradition is Abou Saeid Khodri, and it is mentioned in the marginalia of Ehyaaul Oloom that it is a repeatedly stated tradition. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 110/70 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 7/4 [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 60/47 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Surah Ra’d (13), verse 33 [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Surah Nisaa (4), verse 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 279/72 [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Surah Nahl (16), verse 90 [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ehyaaul Oloom, and Mohajjatul Baizaa [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 315/2 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Nahjul Balagah, aphorisms, no. 148 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 262/75, and Mohajjatul Baizaa, 193/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Surah Maryam (19), verse 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Surah Maryam (19), verse 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 90/77 and Mohajjatul Baizaa 192/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 194/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, vol. 5, page 195 [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 195/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Nahjul Balagah, aphorisms, no. 71 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Nahjul Balagah, aphorisms, no. 349 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 196/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 8/71 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Surah Muhammad (47), verse 30 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Tabarsi, Mishkaatul Anwaar, 300, Haidariyah Publications, Najaf [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. The same document, page 299 [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 263/72 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Surah Tawbah (9), verse 77 [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Surah Nahl (16), verse 105 [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 262/72 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 249/72 [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. The same document, volume 78, page 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Nahjul Balagah, aphorisms, no. 38 [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Surah Nisaa (4), verse 69 [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 577/8 [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 134/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Saduq, Faqeeh, vol. 4, page 75 [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ghazzaali, Ehyaaul Oloom, 139/3 [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 251/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Surah Hojoraat (49), verse 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 251/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 240/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. The same document, page 222 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Mohaddis Noori, Mustadrakul Wasaael, 118/9 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 257/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 273/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 255/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. The same document, page 254 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 168/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. «اللهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُماتِ اِلَى النُّورِ» Surah Baqarah (2), verse 257 [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Surah Sho’raa (42), verse 46 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Surah Bani Israaeel (17), verse 111 [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Surah Aa’raaf (7), verse 155 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 222/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, page 254 [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ghazzaali, Ehyaaul Oloom, 145/3, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 256/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ghazzaali, Ehyahol Oloum, 145/3 [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 251/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, volume 75, page 242 & Mohajjatul Baizaa, volume 5, page 273 [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 253/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ghazzaali, Ehyaaul Oloom [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 236/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 233/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, volume 5, page 393 [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Surah Hojoraat (49), verse 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Faiz-e-Kashani, Mohajjatul Baizaa, 268/5 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 197/74, narration 31 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Please study the occasion of revelation under verse 6, Surah Hojoraat, in the Example Commentary (Tafsir Namoonah) [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Surah Munaafeqoon (63), verse 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 201/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Kulaini, Kaafi, 362/2 [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Kulaini, Kaafi, 147/8 [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 197/75, narration 18 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Nahjul Fassaha, page 315 [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Surah Room (30), verse 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Surah Anfaal (8), verses 62 & 63 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Surah Ana’am (6), verse 65 [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Surah Aal-e-Imraan (3), verse 103 [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Tabarsi, Ehtejaj, 340/2 [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 189/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 586/8, narration 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 552/8, narration 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 280/74 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. The same document [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Nahjul Balagah, sermon 127 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, 3/14, narration 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Sociology, Samuel King, page 428 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Refer to the history of “Viel Dorant” [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 170/8, narration 112 [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 119/70, narration 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Surah Hadeed (57), verse 27 [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Refer to the encyclopedia of twentieth century, article monk [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Refer to Majmaul Bayaan commentary, under verse 27 of Surah Hadeed, and Behaarul Anwaar, volume 70, subject “forbiddance of monkery” [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Viel Dorant, history of civilization, 443/13 [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Surah Hojoraat (49), verse 13 [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. يا اَيُّهَا النّاسُ اِنِّي رَسُولُ اللهِ اِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعاً, “O mankind, I am the Messenger Like, of Allah to you all”, Surah Aa’raaf (7), verse 158

     يا عِبادِ فَاتَّقُونِ, “My servants who believe, fear your Lord”, The (39), Companies surah verse 16

     يا بَنى آدَمَ لا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطانُ, “Children of Adam! Let not Satan tempt you!”, Surah Aa’raaf (7), verse 27

     يا اَيُّهَا الاِْنْسانُ اِنَّكَ كادِحٌ اِلى رَبِّكَ كَدْحاً, “O Man! Thou art labouring unto thy Lord laboriously”, Surah Insheqaaq (84), verse 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Surah Ankaboot (29), verse 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Surah Nahl (16), verse 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Surah Aa’raaf (7), verse 56 [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Surah Ambiyaa (21), verse 105 [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Surah Nisaa (4), verse 97 [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Refer to the book “Zawaaherul Kalaam”, vol. 21, beginning of “Warfare” book [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Hamourabi is a well-known conqueror king who is reputable for the interesting rules, which are left by him as memorial. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Albermaleh, History of Eastern Nations, 81/1 [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. The same document, page 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Surah Zukhruf (43), verse 84 [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Surah Maryam (19), verse 93 [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Surah Mulk (67), verse 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Surah Ambiyaa (21), verse 30 [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Surah Waaqeah (56), verse 85 [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Surah Qaf (50), verse 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Nahjul Balagah, Sermon 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Surah TaaHaa (20), verse 14 [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 164/69, tradition 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Kulaini, Kaafi, 177/8 [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Surah Noor (24), verse 22 [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Surah Baqarah (2), verse 219 [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Surah Baqarah (2), verse 189 [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Ghazzaali, Ehyaaul Oloom, 182/3 [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Kulaini, Kaafi 108/2, some narrators of Six Reliable Tradition Collections have mentioned it. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Surah Fusselat (41), verses 34 & 35 [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 399/71 [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, volume 71, page 403 [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Tolerance is the opposite side of violence and harshness. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar 60/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar 63/75 [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 268/76 [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Kulaini, Kaafi, 118/2, narration 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Kulaini, Kaafi, 119/2, tradition 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. The same document, tradition 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. 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 dark and forgotten area of mind and 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 or never be remembered due to their negative relation with one of the tendencies, are all concentrated in this part. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Surah Tawbah (9), verse 61 [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Surah Aal-e-Imraan (3), verse 159 [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Surah Tawbah (9), verse 128 [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Extracted from Ehyaaul Oloom, 365/2 to 367 [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Surah Ankaboot (29), verse 46 [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Surah Nahl (16), verse 125 [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Surah Hajj (22), verse 68 [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 138/2 [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. The same document, narration 53 [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 134/14 [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Ibn Maajah, Sonan Ibn Maajah, 19/1, published in Beirut [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 270/77, narration 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Surah Naml (27), verse 61 [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Surah Qasas (28), verse 72 [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Surah Faatir (35), verse 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Surah Hajj (22), verse 46 [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Hurr-e-Aameli, Wasaaelush Shia, volume 8, chapter 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Surah Kahf (18), verse 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Majlisi, Behaarul Anwaar, 226/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Ali Shariat madari, Principles of Education, summarized [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Surah Ahzaab (33), verse 43 [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Surah Hadeed (57), verse 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Developmental personality, page 453 [↑](#footnote-ref-184)