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A Muslim in Society

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A concise introductory text about the appropriate behaviour of Muslims and their conduct with others in society.

Author(s):

- N/A [3]

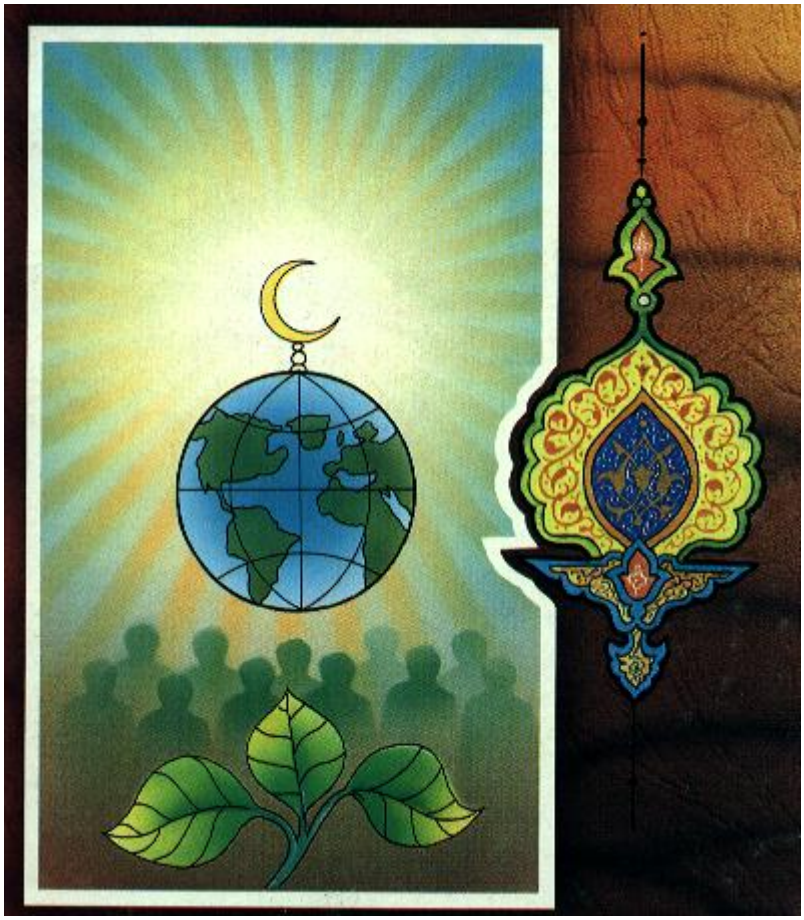
Publisher(s):

- Al Balagh Foundation [4]

Category:

- General [5]
- Kids Corner [6]

Image:



Topic Tags:

- Societal conduct [7]
- Islamic morality [8]

Miscellaneous information:
Published by: Al Balagh Foundation P.O. Box 1977/19395, Tehran Islamic Republic of Iran

Introduction

Society is defined as an enduring and co-operating social group whose members have developed organized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another. Our world is vast and made up of many societies, each having their own special pattern of relationships connected through language, customs or common interests. These societies tend to close themselves to others who do not share these common factors. This is true for all societies, except one.

Muslims come from many countries. Indeed, we cannot find any country on earth today that does not boast a Muslim community of some size. They speak different languages, have different customs, and generally, because of their specific environment, have different interests and goals. What makes this society of more than 1 billion people so special is that they all share a common belief in a superior religion; a religion based on brotherhood and peace. Therefore, a Muslim from Nigeria has no fear or apprehension when meeting a Muslim from Chicago or Venezuela.

The bond between all Muslims is the single phrase:

“There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger.”

So, we have one billion brothers and sisters across the world believing, without deviation, in one single thought. This belief makes the Muslim society, or ummah, one of the most unique and the largest in all history.

A society, as we defined it, is enduring. What makes it so? Propagation of its message and guidelines not only familiarises those who are estranged to its ideas, but also helps the society itself to better understand its own responsibilities.

Islam is not a closed society. It is open to all of God's creation and invites all to partake of its refreshing and cleansing waters. What are the responsibilities of this great society and what is the responsibility of a Muslim in this society? This booklet answers these questions and gives the reader, Muslim and non-Muslim, a clear understanding of Islamic duties and responsibilities in our world today. We pray to Almighty Allah that its message will guide those who are part of this society and those who may enter it, God willing.

Al-Balagh Foundation

Responsibility

The Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“No foot of a servant (of Allah) will move on the Resurrection Day before being asked about four things: his years and how he spent them, his body and how he used it, his wealth and how he earned and spent it, and about his love towards us, the Ahlul Bayt (a) [1]
Explanation:

The Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (s), teaches us, through this glorious tradition hadith, that it is obligatory to make use of the blessings and bounties that Almighty Allah granted us. It also explains to us that we are held accountable for the way we use our time, property, health and strength, and we should use them properly in the life of this world.

Surely Allah, the Most High, created man and gave him life for a certain time. He gave him wisdom, strength, free will, wealth, etc. to enable him to use them in doing good and useful deeds, obtaining knowledge, and worshipping Him.

If man wastes these blessings and bounties without taking any advantage of them, undoubtedly he will be held responsible for them on the Resurrection Day.

Accordingly, man must be aware of his responsibility. He must feel a responsibility to Allah on the Resurrection Day. Thus Allah, the Almighty, will hold him to account on that Day for the wealth that He gave him and how he obtained and used it. Did he obtain it through lawful means like agriculture, industry, trading and the like, or through unlawful ways like deceiving others, robbery, oppression and the like? If he earned it through unlawful actions, his lot will be punishment and torture. If his wealth was gained through lawful means, most surely Allah will reward him and be pleased with him.

On the Resurrection Day, man will be questioned about the property that he owned in the life of this world and how he used it. Did he spend it on forbidden deeds such as drinking

alcohol, gambling, frivolous entertainment, etc? Or, did he spend it on himself and his family, participating in establishing useful and charitable projects and foundations to help the poor and needy?

He will also be questioned in the Hereafter about his time and youthful strength and health. Did he use them in doing good deeds and in obedience to Allah?

He will also be questioned about his love for the Ahlul Bayt (the Prophet's pure and sinless Household). Definitely, the love of Ahlul Bayt (a) is an obligatory duty upon all Muslims.

Through the narrations and traditions of the Prophet of Allah (s) it is clearly obligatory for every Muslim to love the Ahlul Bayt (a) and obey them, be faithful to them and act according to their instructions and guidance.

The Holy Qur'an also makes clear to us that the love of the Ahlul Bayt (a) is obligatory:

"...say: I do not ask of you any reward for it (the message) but love for my near relatives..." Holy Qur'an (42:23)

The Prophet of Allah (s) interpreted and explained this verse to the Muslims by saying that 'near relatives' referred to the household of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (s).

When they heard this verse the Muslims asked the Holy Prophet (s), "Who are your near relatives, whose love Allah has made obligatory on us?" The Apostle of Allah replied: "Ali, Fatimah and her two sons (Hasan and Hussein)."2

So, we understand that love for Ahlul Bayt and their offspring is an obligation upon all Muslims. On Judgement Day they will be questioned about this love, and whoever departs from the love of Ahlul-Bait indeed departs from one of the obligatory duties of his religion and becomes distant from the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s).

The Best wisdom is to Fear Allah.

1. This hadith is narrated by Suyyoti in Ihya' al Mayyit, p.36.
2. Al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir al-Kashshaf.

How to Act Upon the Holy Qur9an

Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) said:

"Whoever makes unlawful deeds lawful, never believed in the Qur'an". 1

The Holy Qur'an is Allah's message revealed to Prophet Muhammad (s) through His angel Gabriel (a). Allah, the Almighty, ordered the Prophet (s) to convey it to all people, to guide them towards peace and goodness, to instruct them in useful actions and to teach them to abstain from evil actions and corruption.

Thus, the Qur'an teaches us issues and matters related to our religion. Among them are:

1. To believe in Allah, His angels, His prophets and the Day of Judgement.

2. To develop good manners and behaviour like telling the truth, love, co-operation, respect of parents, etc.

3. To show us what is lawful (permitted) and what is unlawful (forbidden), urging us towards lawful deeds and forbidding us from unlawful ones. For instance, Allah made the following deeds unlawful (forbidden): robbery, suicide, gambling, lying, injustice, theft, wronging our neighbours, helping oppressors and those guilty of wrongdoing, eating dead animals or the flesh of swine (pork), and drinking alcohol.

It is obligatory for us, as Muslims, to give up these forbidden deeds and others that the Holy Qur'an specifies as forbidden *haram*. This is so because we believe that everything which is forbidden is useless and fruitless for us and for other people.

Therefore it does not please us to be beaten or have our property stolen or to be deceived or oppressed. We abstain from such forbidden deeds. We realize that every forbidden act is useless to us and if we indulge in them we will suffer Allah's displeasure. It becomes obligatory for us to give them up.

Indeed, whoever gives up deeds forbidden by the Holy Qur'an is a truthful believer of the Qur'an as Allah's word and he always follows it during his life. Whoever does not give up these forbidden actions and does them as if they are lawful is one who does not believe that the Qur'an is Allah's word revealed to His Prophet ...because he does not give up what Allah, the Most High, has forbidden. Hence, we should think, whether a certain act is lawful or unlawful, before saying or doing anything. If it is lawful we may do it, but if it is unlawful we must abstain from doing it. Our Prophet Muhammad (s) says: Man is never a true believer unless he gives up deeds forbidden by the Qur'an.

Most Surely it is an Honoured Qur'an, in a Preserved Book (56:77-78)

1. Al-Harrani, Tuhaf al-Uqool an aali al-Rasool, p. 39

Calling To Islam

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) narrates:

Once the Messenger of Allah (s) sent Imam Ali (a) to Yemen to guide people to Islam, teach them Islamic laws and regulations, and to spread Islam among the people. He said to Imam Ali (a):

“Do not declare war on any person unless you have first invited him to Islam.”

This meant that he should begin the mission by spreading Islam and explaining its principles to non-Muslims through clear proofs and reason. This is so because Islam is the religion of reason and knowledge. If any enter the faith, they become your brothers in religion. If they refuse Islam then he should fight them for persisting in their infidelity and unbelief, and wanting to defend oppression and corruption.

The Messenger of Allah (s) said to Imam Ali (a), after explaining to him how to spread Islam and convey its message:

“...if Allah guides only one person through you, it will be better for you than all that the sun has risen or set over.”[1]

By this noble hadith, the Messenger of Allah (s) explains the significance of Islamic call Da'wah and its great importance to Allah, the Almighty. He also points out the greatness of those who invite or call others to Islam. These missionaries undertake the task of spreading Islam and inviting non-Muslims to enter into the faith, thus saving them from disbelief, oppression and corruption. They also undertake the duty of guiding every deviated one who has gone astray from the right path, by teaching Islamic laws, education and thoughts. They also explain the right Islamic concepts.

Surely, whoever guides a deviator, whether non-believer in Islam or a Muslim who commits evil deeds but misunderstands Islam, gains more to his own benefit than owning the whole world because the possessions of the world perish while the reward of guiding people will remain permanent with Allah and will be a cause of Allah's pleasure. The believer who guides people will enter Paradise. Guiding others will gain the reward of Paradise and Allah's pleasure, while possessing the whole world with its property and wealth will gain nothing in the Hereafter.

It is obligatory for every Muslim to be a caller to Islam and to spread the word of Islam in every corner of the world. Today there are more than one billion Muslims! Believers, through calling others, can convey the Islamic religion to mankind and spread its message to different parts of the world. Such work guides and reforms man. Without calling people to Islam no one would be guided and the true religion can not spread to others.

Muslims themselves should learn about Islam and act according to its laws and principles, inviting others to believe in Islam and act accordingly. Indeed guiding one person is better than whatever man possesses in this world because this guidance is a step towards saving people and reforming them. The meaning of guidance and Islamic Call *Da'wah* is to spread Islam among people and to teach them Islamic laws, principles and ideologies, as well as how to act and believe according to these laws.

1. Al-Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. 6, Kitab al-Jihad, Bab wujud al-Du'a ila al-Islam.

Opposing the Oppressors and the Unjust

It is narrated that the great companion, Jabir bin Abdullah al-Ansari quoted the Messenger of Allah (s) as saying:

“Whoever pleases an unjust ruler, and deviates from the right path, is expelled from the religion of Allah.”[1]

We all know that the social life of any community requires the establishment of a government that undertakes the task of providing schools, universities, hospitals, roads, bridges, law and order, state security, national defence, etc. So, Allah ordered Muslims to have a state, a government and to also have a leader (an Imam) who has power, authority and sovereignty.

The leader of the Muslims, who has power over everything related to strength and

authority, should possess the following qualifications:

1. He should be a free man, sane, pubescent, and of legitimate birth.

2. He should be pious (God-fearing) and just in his rule over the people.

3. He should rule and govern according to Allah's laws and regulations i.e. the Qur'an and the sunnah (tradition) of the Prophet (s).

4. He should have the ability to run the affairs of the state and be familiar with the principles of government and politics.

5. He should be faqih (jurisprudent) and familiar with Islamic laws and teachings.

It is obligatory for all Muslims to obey such a Muslim leader who possesses the necessary qualifications, and to act according to his instructions and to carry out his orders. In this case, obeying him will be an obligatory duty for Muslims as long as he obeys Allah's regulations. If, God forbid, he disobeys Allah and acts against His laws, he should not be obeyed nor co-operated with.

Accordingly, the Messenger of Allah (s) says:

“Whoever commits evil deeds such as murder, losing his temper, oppressing others, drinking alcohol, and giving or taking bribes to please an unjust ruler, or co-operates with him, is not a true Muslim. He is expelled from the religion because Islam forbids these actions and deeds.”

The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (s) says:

“Never obey anyone when your obedience to him is disobedience to the Creator.”

Indeed, man's social life will not be happy except by following the Divine laws revealed in the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Traditions. For both of them bid us to discard the forbidden actions, and to perform the obligatory actions, protecting people's rights, establishing justice, seeking bounty in life, guarding the interests of the Muslim community and setting people free from the control of the oppressors.

Thus through these Islamic laws and instructions, we form a developed Islamic society in which justice, mercy, love and equality exist and in which all kinds of corruption, crime and aggression disappear.

There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

1. Al-Tabari, Mishkat al-Anwar, Fasil al-Dukhul ala al-Salatin wa ahwalihim.

Advice

The Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“Religion is pure truth and sincerity.” He was asked: 'To whom should this be addressed?' He replied: 'To Allah, His Messenger, Muslim leaders (Imams), and to all Muslim communities.'” [1]

The Messenger of Allah (s), through this hadith, explains the importance of giving advice to others and shows us how a Muslim can be a good advisor in the cause of Allah and His Messenger. The meaning of giving good advice is to preserve the Islamic religion and convey its Divine Message to all people in order to guide them to the right path.

Surely the Muslim who maintains and guards the Book of Allah against distortions and forgery is a good advisor for Allah, the Almighty. The Muslim who protects the Prophet's traditions against innovation and falsities is also a good advisor for the Holy Prophet (s).

It is obligatory for Muslims to be characterised by good Islamic morals including giving sound advice to others for the sake of Allah and His Messenger.

Our Holy Prophet, Muhammad (s), emphasizes to Muslims that our religion is giving advice to others. He himself came to guide people towards what is right and forbid them from what is wrong. In fact, all prophets (peace be upon them) came with their Scriptures to advise and guide people towards righteousness and goodness in this world and the Hereafter. This is the real meaning of giving advice for Muslims and their leaders, *Imams*.

The leaders of religion are those scholars *ulama*' of the Muslims, and their rulers, who govern the people according to Islamic laws, *shari'ah.*

Therefore every Muslim should advise leaders if they make mistakes, do not rule with justice or if they are not familiar with, or misinterpret some Islamic obligations.

Giving advice to other Muslims has two aspects:

1. Guiding Muslim rulers to govern with truth, justice and equality, and not to oppress the people, not to refuse to correct their actions, or to supply services to society such as building universities, schools, hospitals, industries, mosques, etc.

2. If those rulers are not familiar with Islamic laws, or disagree with them, or do not rule according to Islamic laws, Muslims should explain to them the right way of Islam and its laws. They should guide the leaders towards righteousness and should not fear any unjust authority, because Mlah has already authorised the ruler to do his job, including giving advice, enjoining what is right and good and forbidding what is wrong and bad.

It is also obligatory for a Muslim to give advice to Muslim scholars *ulama*' if they do not enjoin good and forbid evil, or if these scholars give verdicts (legal opinions) which contradict Allah's instructions in order to please the oppressors or seek the pleasure of the unjust for worldly gain.

Among the benefits of giving advice for the rest of the Muslims is to keep them united. Without dividing them we should direct them towards acting according to Islamic laws and co-operating with each other. This also preserves their interests.

A Muslim advisor to his nation is the one who loves doing good and is covetous of the interest of Muslims. He is the one who, when given responsibility, practising a profession, or assuming leadership, preserves Muslim property and interests, and guides the Muslims towards good acts and obedience to Allah, the Almighty.

Giving advice can be done through a good speech, sermon or lecture. It can be done through publications and broadcasting.

In the event that our good and Islamic advice falls on deaf ears of unjust rulers or deviated scholars, in that case, Muslims should cut their relations with them and not cooperate with them. They should strive to replace them with good and righteous persons.

1. Al-Hurr al-Amili, vol. 6, Abwab fil al-Ma'roof, Bab wujub nasihat al-Mu'min.

Good And Bad Deeds

The Prophet of Allah (s) says:

“Whoever prescribes a good commandment and people practice it, he will reap its reward and the reward of those who do it and nothing will decrease their reward. Whoever prescribes a bad commandment and people follow it, he will suffer its heavy burden and the burden of those who practice it and nothing will decrease its burden. 1

If we look at the people who live in a human society, among them we will find those who do righteous deeds, goodness and favours to people because they love goodness for all. For instance, there is one who builds a school for his community or a hospital, or establishes a charitable association to call people to Islam. He collects and distributes charity to the poor. He founds a co-operative factory or farm to provide employment. He does what is right and forbids what is wrong.

When we see such a righteous and beneficent man, we cooperate and participate with him in doing good deeds and try to follow his example. People learn to do good deeds from his example. Certainly, this man is the cause of others doing good deeds: it is he who awakens and guides them towards doing such useful and good deeds. Without him, others might not do such good actions. This man who prescribed the good commandment, i.e., he enjoined righteous deeds among the people he knew, and started useful beneficial projects for his community, deserves a reward increased by the rewards of the people who are guided by him to do good deeds because of his advice and example. This multiple reward is due to him, for he directed and advised the people to do good deeds, and without him no one might have been guided to righteousness. Thus the Holy Prophet (s) says:

“Whoever guides (others) towards good is like the doer of it.”2

Among the people we may also find one who is evil and wicked. He lives in the community like a germ in the human body. He not only weakens society but, being a contagious element, spreads evil to others. This man causes corruption and evil actions that spread ugly deeds. He sets up dens of evil and contrives to corrupt society. His corrupting actions include wildly extravagant and grossly self-indulgent spending, deceit, promiscuity, gambling, drinking alcohol, drug abuse, etc. As the people follow his corrupt deeds, he is responsible not only for his own sinful deeds, but also for the sins of those who follow his example. This is because he advised them toward evil deeds. He is the main cause for the existence of corruption, injustice and evil in a society. Without him, this corruption and evil would not have spread.

Surely, we can see that Islam is the religion of reformation, goodness and righteousness.

Summary

1. Islam is the religion of goodness and righteousness. It orders Muslims to do good deeds so that others may follow them.

2. Whoever prescribes a good commandment for the people will have the reward like the doer of the deed.

3. Whoever prescribes a bad commandment for the people will have the punishment like the doer of the deed.

1. Sunan Ibn Maj, Majma' al-Bayan, al-Tabrasi
2. Al-Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 6, Kitab al-Amr bil al-Ma'roof

Forbidding What Is Wrong

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“Surely Allah, the Almighty, dislikes the believer who is weak in his faith” He was asked: 'Who is the believer who is weak in his faith?' He answered: “The one who does not forbid what is wrong.”[1]

Human society contains people who like to do good and righteous deeds that benefit all people and put right the wrong in society. These people never do forbidden acts, neither do they abandon their obligations or acts of charity.

On the other hand there are people who are wicked and corrupt. They seek to spread corruption. They do sinful and harmful deeds in the society in which they live, such as: deceiving, drinking alcohol, gambling, hoarding food supplies, transgressing the rights of others, dealing drugs, and spreading promiscuity. They take power over the society and rule with oppression and enmity. They govern with injustice and disobey the Islamic laws and system.

It is obligatory for all Muslims to stand against such corruption and prevent it from continuing. These corrupt people disobey Allah's orders and do not defend the laws of the Islamic society, nor do they respect the rights of others.

Allah, the Just, will hold the Muslims accountable, and punish them on the Day of Judgement if they keep silent against such people. Indeed, whoever keeps silent against corruption, he encourages its spread! These peddlers of corruption are like germs in the human body; they destroy it completely and even contaminate others if they are not stopped.

The Holy Prophet of Allah (s) says, that whoever does not forbid what is wrong is weak in faith and has no sincerity towards his religion. If a Muslim is true and sincere in his belief, he will do his utmost to prevent such wicked and harmful deeds.

Let us be truthful and sincere believers who do what is right and forbid what is wrong. Such

actions are among the qualities of the prophets (peace be upon them). Let us not be weak in faith or be passive to what is wrong.

Summary

1. Forbidding what is wrong is an obligation upon every Muslim who can perform it. It is among the means of reforming and saving the society from evil and corruption.

2. Among the qualifications of a believer is enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

3. Whoever does not forbid what is wrong is weak in his faith, because he does not defend Allah's religion.

4. Indeed Allah dislikes the one who keeps silent when seeing any forbidden act.

1. Al-Hurr al-Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'a Bab al-Amir bil Ma'roof.

Jihad (Holy Struggle) is an Obligatory Duty

"O Prophet! Strive hard agaunt the infidels and the hypocrites, and be firm against them, and their abode is hell, and evil is their resort." Holy Qur'an (66:9)

"Go forth (equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive hard in Allah's cause with your property and own selves; this is better for you, if you know." Holy Qur'an (9:41)

Jihad is a holy duty made obligatory upon all Muslims by Allah, the Almighty. The Muslims should defend themselves if being attacked in order to preserve their faith, spread Islam, and stand against tyrants and oppressors. Allah made *jihad* obligatory, in all its forms, whether it is the jihad of society or self, speaking a word for the sake of preserving Islamic call *Da'wah*, or defending the sanctuaries of the Muslim nation. Jihad is considered among the best forms of worship with Allah, the Most High.

He who spends even a small amount of money in Allah's way will find his reward increased many times by the Beneficent Creator. Whoever is harmed or suffers inflictions in the cause of Allah will have his reward with Allah on the Resurrection Day.

The martyr who sacrifices himself and dies for the sake of his faith finds his place in Paradise. He receives blessings from the prophets and the righteous. He is alive and provided for by Allah, The Exalted.

Reciprocal Responsibility Among Muslims

It is narrated that Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a), quoting the Messenger of Allah (s) as saying:

“He who passes his night satiated while his neighbour is in a state of hunger, has no faith in me.”[1]

Allah, the Most High, created this earth and provided food, water, air, sun, moon and the stars, to fulfill all the needs of man in this life. He made provision for all mankind. Each man has the right to take his needs from these provisions.

Allah ordered Muslims to work and earn a living to gain their provisions. A man has the right to work in all fields including agriculture, industry, trade, medicine, or teaching, to obtain his provisions and gain lawful property. No one has the right to prevent him from doing so.

Thus everyone obtains wealth to satisfy his needs from employment, and spends it on himself and his family, saving any extra. However, human society contains poor and needy people with no property, food, housing or clothes. Therefore, it is obligatory for the rich to provide such people with what they need so that no one remains in poverty.

The Messenger of Allah (s) advises Muslims that whoever passes his night satiated and restful in his home with his family, while he has poor neighbours who pass their night hungry, has no true belief in the Messenger of Allah (s) and is denying him too. Had such a man been a true believer, he would have given food to his neighbours and not let them pass the night in hunger.

Surely, Allah is displeased with those who accumulate wealth, food, and property while others suffer from poverty, hunger and deprivation. Islam is the religion of justice, equality, charity and mercy. Giving to the poor is one of the important actions of the faith. Giving to the poor and needy is mentioned many times in the Holy Qur'an.

“Have you considered him who belies religion? Such is the one who treats the orphans with harshness, and does not urge (others) to feed the needy.” Holy Qur'an (107:1-3)

Muslims should help the poor and needy before they are forced to ask for it. Muslims should establish charitable and co-operative associations in schools, mosques, districts and villages to help the needy. Allah has promised to recompense them with rewards in the Hereafter. Who is truer to a promise than Allah?

A true believer suffers greatly if he sees his believing brother hungry or in need, and is not satisfied while the rest of the believers and their families remain in need.

1. Al-Bihbodi, al-Kafi p.170, First Edition.

Spending Wealth

The Messenger of Allah (s) said:

“We (prophets) were not sent to amass the wealth, but to spend it.”

Indeed Allah created the earth and supplied it with ample provision for all human beings. In it we find grains, fruits, vegetables, trees, animals, seas, fish, metals like iron, gold, silver, platinum, copper, etc., and oil. Other materials lie in the depths of the earth to satisfy the needs of the people, like diamonds, coal, etc.

If these provisions are distributed equally among mankind, no one on this earth will remain in poverty.

People are classified into two groups:

1. The first group are those who work in fields such as agriculture, industry, technology, science, etc., and earn their living and needs through working. They do not need help.

2. The second group are the old, orphans, refugees, poor and disabled who need help because they are unable of doing such work. There are also people who can work but either cannot find work, or work but their salary does not cover their needs.

It is obligatory for the first group to spend out of their possessions and to pay the poor-rates *zakat* in order to provide the second group with their needs so they do not remain in want.

The Prophet of Allah (s) explains to the Muslims how to distribute property, provisions and charity to all people. He says: Surely Allah sent the prophets to spend wealth on the needy and to teach people the way of spending. Allah never sent prophets to amass wealth and forget the poor. The prophets forbade the rich from amassing wealth and saving it in banks and treasuries while others are left to live in miserable poverty."

The Prophet of Allah (s), through this tradition, explains to the Muslims that he came to teach them how to spend their wealth on the poor by charitable deeds, like building mosques, schools, hospitals, bridges, irrigation systems, roads, etc., and forbid them from amassing wealth and depriving the poor of a reasonable standard of living by refusing to spend their wealth in charitable and beneficial ways.

Responsibility Towards Society

"Surely Allah commands justice and the doing of good (to others), and giving to the kindred, and He forbids indecency and evil and rebellion. He admonishes you that you may be mindful. And fulfill the covenant of Allah, when you have made a covenant, and break not your oaths after confirming them; and you have indeed made Allah your surety. Surely Allah knows what you do." Holy Qur'an (16:90-91)

If we read these holy verses and ponder on their meaning, what do we learn? How do we reform ourselves and society?

These verses certainly train a Muslim in the best behavior, and order them to form a strong Islamic society. They also order justice among the people. For example, they order man to be just among his children when giving them money or when buying them clothes or dealing with them at home. He should not differentiate between them (i.e. to prefer one above the other). Further, they order the judge to pass judgement with justice and not to be unjust over the rights of others. Allah is Just and loves justice.

The Holy Qur'an explains that it is obligatory for Muslims to practice justice in both their deeds and their speech so no one will be oppressed or lose his right. The Qur'an also warns Muslims to do good and charitable deeds voluntarily.

Whoever helps the poor or removes enmity between two persons or visits his neighbour or teaches others the way of guidance and belief is indeed the doer of good and beneficence.

Surely, giving charity and doing good and striving towards its spread among the society makes up a strong and homogeneous society in which love, co-operation and progress flourish.

The Holy Qur'an wants a Muslim to be beneficent. Surely Allah is the Beneficent, Who loves beneficence.

The Qur'an, through these verses, orders Muslims to give their relatives their rights and help the needy and the sick, to ask after those who move away, and to maintain good relations with them.

The Prophet of Allah (s) also orders the Muslims to have good relations with their relatives when he says:

“Treat your relatives with compassion even it be (only) by a salutation (salam).”

The Qur'an also forbids Muslims against committing indecency, evil and rebellion including those harmful deeds that cause the halt of progress in society, misery to mankind and the collapse of nations. The Holy Qur'an also orders Muslims to fulfill their promises and forbids them from giving promises without fulfilling them. Muslims should respect their covenants and promises when they deal with others. They should strive towards doing deeds that please Allah and never go against Islamic laws.

What do These Holy Verses Teach Us?

These verses teach Muslims the best social behaviour that reforms human society, strengthens relations among people and encourages goodness and happiness.

Briefly, they teach us the following:

1. Muslims should practice and follow justice in society and achieve it among their people: for example, distributing wealth and benefits among the needy, giving just verdicts in courts of law, treating family and relatives equally, and practising justice in every facet of life.

2. Muslims should do good deeds and have good relations with their relatives,

3. Muslims should fulfill their promises and covenants if these promises and covenants are according to Islamic laws.

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

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[3] http://www.al-islam.org/person/na
[4] http://www.al-islam.org/organization/al-balagh-foundation-0
[5] http://www.al-islam.org/library/general-education-society
[6] http://www.al-islam.org/library/kids-corner
[7] http://www.al-islam.org/tags/societal-conduct
[8] http://www.al-islam.org/tags/islamic-morality