

Concerning The Alids ('alawiya)

Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far, the mercy of Allah upon him: Our belief concerning the Alids ('alawiya) is that they are the progeny of the Messenger of Allah, and that devotion to them is obligatory, because it is the requital of his apostleship. Says Allah, Exalted is He:

“Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no requital therefor, save loving – kindness of (my) kinsfolk” (Qur'an 42:23).¹

The acceptance of *sadaqa*² is forbidden to them, because it is the dirt contained in the hands of the people. And there is no purification³ for them (the people) save what they give to their (*sadat's*) slaves and slave-girls, or to one another. But as for the *khumus*, this is permitted to them in lieu of the *zakat*, which was forbidden to them.

And our belief concerning those (*sadat* or '*alawiya*) who act sinfully is that they will be punished doubly, and those who do good acts among them will receive a double reward. They are all equal to one another in view of the Prophet's saying, when he looked at the sons of Abu Talib, namely 'Ali and Ja'far Tayyar: Our daughters are like our sons, and our sons, like our daughters. Imam Ja'far said: He who disobeys the religion of Allah and be-friends His enemies or shows enmity towards His friends, complete dissociation (*bara'a*) from him is obligatory (*wajib*), whoever he may happen to be and to whichever tribe he may happen to belong.

The Prince of Believers, 'Ali, told his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiya: Your courtesy, due to innate nobility, is more excellent than mere noble lineage.⁴ Imam Ja'far said: My devotion (*walaya*) towards the Prince of Believers is dearer to me than my descent from him. Imam Ja'far was asked concerning the family (*al*) of the Prophet Muhammad, and he replied that the family of Muhammad were (those close relations who were) forbidden to him (the Prophet) in marriage.⁵

And the Glorious and Mighty says: ***“And verily We sent Noah and Abraham and placed the prophethood and the Scripture among their seed; so among them is he who goeth right but many of them are evil-livers” (Qur'an 57:26)***

Imam Ja'far was asked concerning the saying of Allah the Mighty and Glorious:

“And then We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those of our servants whom We elected. But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are lukewarm⁶, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by Allah's leave” (Qur'an 35:32).

He said: By those “who wrong themselves” (*zalim*) are meant those who do not recognize the right of the Imam; and by “the lukewarm (middling, fair)” (*muqtasid*) are meant those who know his right; and by those “who outstrip (others) by good deeds, by Allah's leave” are meant the Imams.

Imam Ja'far was asked by his son Isma'il: What will be the condition of the sinners among us? He said:

“It will not be in accordance with your desires, nor the desires of the People of the Scripture. He who doeth wrong will have the recompense thereof, and will not find against Allah any protecting friend or helper” (Qur'an 4: 123).

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir in a lengthy tradition says: There is no relationship between Allah and any one else. Verily the person most liked among them in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing, and one who acts most obediently to Him. I swear by Allah, no man can approach Allah, the Mighty and Glorious, except through obedience.

We possess no immunity from the Fire, and not one of us has an argument which will prevail against Allah. He who is obedient to Allah is a friend to us; and he who is disobedient to Allah is an enemy to us. No one can reach (us) except through piety and good deeds. And Noah said:

“My Lord! Lo! My son is of my household! Surely Thy promise is the truth and Thou art the most just of Judges. “He said: O Noah! Lo! He is not of thy household; lo! he is of evil conduct, so ask not of Me that whereof thou hast no knowledge. I admonish thee lest thou be among the ignorant. “He said: My Lord! in Thee do I seek refuge (from the sin) that I should ask of Thee that whereof I have no knowledge. Unless Thou forgive me and have mercy on me I shall be among the lost” (Qur'an 11:45-47).

And Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq was asked concerning the saying of Allah the Mighty and Glorious:

“And on the Day of Resurrection thou (O Muhammad) seest those who lied concerning Allah with their faces blackened. Is not the house of the scorners in Hell?” (Qur'an 39:60).

He said: (This refers to him) who claims to be Imam, without being one, even if he were an Alid and a Fatimid.⁷ And Imam Ja'far told his companions: There is no difference between you and those who oppose you save “that which is concealed” (*al-mudmar*).

He was asked: And what is “that which is concealed”? He said: That which you call absolution (*bara'a*). Now as for him who opposes you and his neighbor (*jar*), seek absolution in respect of him even if he

were an Alid and a Fatimid.

And he (Imam Ja'far) spoke to his companions concerning his son 'Abdu'l-lah: He does not follow (the religion) which you follow, and verily I have nothing to do with him. May Allah the Mighty and Glorious have nothing to do with him.

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1. The Urdu translator is explaining the word qurba (kinsfolk) says: It is related in the Tafsir Majma'u'l-Bayan on the authority of Imam Zaynu'l-'Abidin and others that the expression qurba meant the progeny of the Prophet. Similar traditions are also related on the authority of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq and Imam Muhammad al-Baghir. Said b. Jubayr relates on the authority of 'Abdu'l-lah b. 'Abbas that when this verse of mawadda was revealed several companions of the Prophet asked him who the people towards whom devotion was enjoined. The Prophet replied that it referred to 'All and Fatima and their descendants. On walaya, see note 258, page 149.
 2. The Urdu translator explains that apart from the descendants of 'Ali and Fatima (sadat), even those who are descendants of Hishim are forbidden to take sadaqa (charity) from a non-Hashimite. And obviously sadat are nobler and more excellent than them.
 3. Reading with N لأنها أوساخ في أيدي الناس ولا طهارة لهم إلا صدقتهم إلخ; D omits لا.
 4. Lit. "Your courtesy on account of your nobility is more noble for you than the nobility of (that is, the nobility which you inherit from) your forefathers". Here a distinction is drawn between personal nobility born of one's own sense of courtesy and modesty, and the nobility due to lineage and ancestry. The play upon the word شرف is to be noted.
 5. This is omitted in D.
 6. This expression also means "fair, middling".
 7. N من زعم... بامام قل (sic) وإن كان علوياً قال وإن كان علوياً و فاطمياً D; من زعم انه امام و ليس بامام قبل و إن كان علوياً فاطمياً N.

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