

The Best of Morals

It is reported from the Prophet (s) that he said:

“I was sent to complete the best of morals.”

Allah, the Almighty, has given man intellect and made him a creature who thinks and differentiates between good and evil. He shows him what is the best and what is the worst and what is the most desirable and what is the most disliked among deeds. Man indeed knows that injustice, lying and tormenting others are hateful while justice, truthfulness and being benevolent are good. His ability to think makes him distinct from animals; to love good, praiseworthy and moral behaviour and dislike bad, and immoral conduct.

It is man's sense of morals that is among the essential characteristics which distinguish him from other creatures. Animals neither know morals or principles nor are responsible in the same way as man is in being able to differentiate between what is good and righteous and what is bad and evil.

Therefore a man who is characterised by bad morals, like lying, cheating, being unjust, deceitful and hypocritical is worse than an animal and his existence in human society is a danger to all other people.

Islam teaches us as human beings to follow a life of principles, characterised by the best moral virtues, and to avoid wrongful behaviour.

The Holy Prophet (s) explains through his saying: “I was sent to complete the best of morals.” That among the fundamental aims of Islam is to educate man with the most virtuous principles and to steer him clear from vices and immoral conduct.

A man with a bad character causes harm not only to society but also to himself. He who tells lies, does unjust deeds, backbites, hates, deceives and betrays others, surely loses the trust and respect of others.

An ill-tempered man also exposes himself to Allah's anger as well as to people's aversion. He causes the spread of corruption in social life, and becomes a decaying influence and a destroyer among the people. Therefore, the Holy Prophet (s) warns us against such ill-natured men through his sermon:

“Whoever is ill-tempered causes harm to himself” in which he also instructs Muslims to be good-mannered and virtuous as the path towards man's perfection.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a) quotes the Messenger of Allah (s) as having said:

“Indeed the most perfect among the believers is of the best of morals.”¹

The Glorious Messenger (s) further told us that among the best deeds on the Resurrection Day are good manners. He said: “Nothing will be put on man's scale on Resurrection Day better than good manners.”²

It is obligatory for Muslims to improve their manners and to treat people gently and avoid those who are characterised by ill behaviour. Prophet Muhammad (s) himself, due to his truthfulness, honesty, and his fair dealing with people, forgiving evil-doers, and being generous, courageous, just, and the doer of good for all, is exemplary and the prime model of conduct for all Muslims to follow.

The Holy Qur'an aptly and precisely describes and praises such people by saying:

“And most surely you conform (yourself) to sublime morality.” Holy Qur'an (68:4)

1. Kulaini, Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, p.99.

2. Ibid.