

2. Beneficence

Allah, the Wise, has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

(Surely Allah is with those who guard (against evil) and those who do good (to others)). 1

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) has stated:

عَاتِبْ أَخَاكَ بِالْإِحْسَانِ إِلَيْهِ

(Admonish your brother (in faith) by exhibiting kindness towards him.) 2

Short Explanation

Allah loves the person who possesses the attribute of beneficence. Just as Allah has exhibited kindness towards us, it is essential for us to exhibit a greater beneficence towards others.

Even if a person has wronged us, we should respond with kindness and not repay evil with evil, as this would only add fuel to the fire and cause an increase in malice and enmity.

The conduct of Divine personalities was such that if they were greeted, they would return the greeting in a better and more complete manner and if goodness was done to them, they would repay it, augmented and amplified.

Those who do goodness and exhibit beneficence towards others, attract the hearts of the people, while their deeds hurt Shaytan.

It should be noted that those who do good do not devalue or spoil their kind deeds by placing any kind of obligation (upon the person towards whom kindness is exhibited).

1) Imam Husain's Kindness to the Camel-Driver

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

“A man was trailing a woman when she was busy circling the Ka’bah. The woman was raising her hands in prayer when the man placed his hand upon her arm; at that moment God glued his hand to the woman’s arm.

People thronged to witness this strange happening in such great numbers that all movement was hindered. A person was sent to the Emir of Makkah to inform him of the incident. He gathered all the scholars around him and together they tried to settle on a suitable resolution to the problem. Many ordinary people also assembled, interested to know the sentence that would be pronounced for this crime.

As they all stood perplexed over the issue, the Emir finally said, “Is there anyone from the family of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w) here?”

Those around him said, “Yes! Husain Ibn 'Ali (a.s.) is here.”

That night, the Emir ordered the Imam (a.s.) to be brought before him. He sought to know the ruling for this incident from the Imam (a.s.).

First, the Imam (a.s.) turned towards the Ka’bah and raised his hands. He stood in this position for a while, after which he supplicated. Then, approaching the man the Imam separated his glued hand from the arm of the woman by the power of his Imamate.

The Emir asked the Imam (a.s.), “O’ Husain (a.s.)! Should I not punish him?”

“No,” replied the Imam (a.s.).

The author says: This was the kindness which the Imam (a.s.) had exhibited towards the camel-driver, but it was the same person who repaid this act of kindness by cutting off the Imam’s hands in order to snatch his (a.s.) belt, in the darkness of the night of 11th Muharram.³

2) Abu Ayyub Ansaari

Abu Ayyub Ansaari was one of the distinguished companions of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.). When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, all the tribes of Madinah requested him to stay with them, but he said:

“The place where I stay shall depend on where my camel sits down.”

When the procession reached a place near the houses of Bani Maalik Ibn Najjar, which later came to house the door of the Prophet’s mosque, the camel sat down to rest. But a short while later it stood up again and began to walk, only to return and rest at the place where it had previously rested.

The people began approaching the Holy Prophet (s.a.w), and inviting him to be their guest. Seeing this, Abu Ayyub immediately lifted the Holy Prophet’s (s.a.w.) saddlebag from the camel’s back and carried it into his own house.

When the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) noticed that the saddlebag was missing, he inquired, “What has happened to the saddle-bag?”

Those around him informed him that Abu Ayyub had taken it into his own house.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) remarked: “A person should always accompany his luggage,” and then proceeded into Abu Ayyub’s house and stayed there till the time when the houses around the mosque were constructed.

Initially, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) was accommodated in a room on the ground floor, whereas Abu Ayyub occupied the top storey, but later, he requested:

“O’ Messenger of Allah! It is unbecoming that you stay below, while we occupy the top storey; it would be more appropriate if you were to move to the top.”

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) agreed and asked for his things to be moved to the top.

Abu Ayyub was in the ranks of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and participated in battles like Badr and Uhud, fighting against the enemies of Islam and putting on a scintillating exhibition of valour and courage.

One night, on the way back home after victory in the battle of Khaibar, Abu Ayyub stayed awake the entire night, guarding the tent of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.).

When morning dawned, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) inquired: “Who is out there?”

“It’s me, Abu Ayyub,” came the reply.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) twice said, “May Allah exhibit mercy upon you!”

Thus, Abu Ayyub, through the kindness he showed to the Prophet, both with his money and his soul, became the beneficiary of this supplication of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.).⁴

3) Recompense for the Poems

One *Nawroz* day, Mansur Dawaaniqui, the Abbasid Caliph who took over the caliphate after his brother Abu al-A'bbas Saffaah, ordered Imam Musa Kadhim (a.s.) to present himself in the gathering of the Eid of Nawroz. This was so that the people could come and greet him and offer their gifts to him, which he should accept.

The Imam (a.s.) told Mansur, "Nawroz is the customary Eid of the Iranians and nothing has been said about it in Islam."

To which Mansur replied, "This act is politically motivated and is intended to keep my soldiers happy. I place you under the oath of the Great God that you accept my request and present yourself at that gathering."

The Imam (a.s.) agreed and arrived at the assembly. The army generals, nobles and the common masses arrived in his august presence, greeted him, and presented their gifts to him.

In the meantime, Mansur had ordered one of his slaves to position himself near the Imam (a.s.) and maintain a record of the money and gifts presented to him. The last person who had come to meet the Imam (a.s.) was an old man, who said to him:

"O' Son of the Messenger of Allah! I am an impoverished person and lack the money to present you with gifts, but my gift for you today are three verses of elegy, which my grandfather had composed for your grandfather, Husain Ibn Ali(a.s.)."

Having said this, he then recited the verses.⁵

The Imam (a.s.) responded appreciatively, saying, "I have accepted your gift," after which he prayed for the man.

Then, turning to the slave, he instructed, "Go to Mansur, inform him of these gifts and ask him what has to be done about them?"

The slave did as he was told and upon returning, said to the Imam (a.s.):

"The Caliph has said: I have given them to you (Imam Musa Kadhim) as gifts. Spend them as you desire."

The Imam (a.s.) told the old man, "Take these riches and gifts, for I am giving them all to you as gifts."⁶

4) Prophet Yusuf and his Brothers

Years after the incident when the brothers of Yusuf (a.s.) had deceptively taken him outside the city, beaten him and flung him into the well thereby forcing their father into perpetual weeping and anguish over his loss, the brothers heard that Yusuf had become the king of Misr. They and their father went to meet him.

The very first sentence which Yusuf uttered upon seeing them, was: *And He was indeed kind to me when He took me out of the prison.*⁷

Apparently, it was out of courtesy that Yusuf desisted from mentioning the troubles he had experienced; first being flung into the well, then his subsequent slavery and then unpleasant incidents, which he had to endure due to the acts of his brothers. He did not wish to revive those bitter memories, which would cause them to experience mortification and embarrassment.

He then added, “It was Shaitan who incited my brothers to commit those inappropriate deeds towards me, hurling me into the well and separating me from my father; however, the Glorious God exhibited kindness towards me in that he made those very acts a means for granting eminence and reverence to our family!”

Attributing the unjust acts of his brothers to Shaytan and regarding him as the prime culprit for the crimes of his brothers, was another example of Yusuf’s (a.s.) magnanimity. He thus shielded them from embarrassment and left them with an opportunity to apologize for their deeds.

He said:

“There shall be no reproof against you, (from) this day⁸ You can rest assured with respect to me, for I have forgiven you and chosen to disregard all that has happened previously, and on behalf of God too, I can give you this good news and seek from Him that Allah may forgive you and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful⁹.

“Surely he who guards (against evil) and is patient (is rewarded¹⁰) for surely Allah does not waste the reward of those who do good.”¹¹

Author’s note: The lesson, which Hadhrat Yusuf (a.s.) taught everyone, was that of exhibiting kindness and beneficence in response to evil behaviour, and hopefully, we too can conduct ourselves in the same manner with respect to our brethren-in-faith, Inshaallah.

1. Holy Qur’an, ch. Al-Nahl (16), vs. 128.

2. Nahjul Balaghah (Faidh al-Islam), pg. 1165.

3. Raahnama-e-Sa’adat, vol. 1, pg. 36; Shajarah-e-Tuba, pg. 422.

4. Payghambar Wa Yaraan, vol. 1, pg. 20–27; Bihaar al–Anwaar, vol. 6, pg. 554.

5. عَجِبْتُ لِمَصْفُورٍ عَلَكَ فَرِنْدُهُ يَوْمَ الْهَيَّاجِ عَلَكَ غُبَّارٍ

6. Muntahal Aa'maal, vol. 2, pg. 187.

7. Holy Qur'an, ch. Yusuf (12), vs. 100.

8. Holy Qur'an, ch. Yusuf (12), vs. 92.

9. Ibid, vs. 92.

10. Ibid, vs. 90 مَن يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

11. Taareekh–e–Anbiya, pg. 334–347.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/anecdotes-reflection-part-1-sayyid-ali-akbar-sadaaqat/2-beneficence>