

## The Holy Ahlul-Bayt (A.S.); Ethical Role-Models

☰ Category: [Ahl al-Bayt](#)

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### Moral conduct

Moral conduct is a mood arousing good behavior with others by showing happy mien, nice wording, and kind manners. As he was asked about the limit of moral conduct, Imam as-Sadiq (a) answered: “It is to be modest, speak honorably, and meet your brother cheerfully.”

One of the expectations that every judicious individual exerts efforts for achieving is to have an attractive personality. It is surely a noble aim that cannot be attained by everyone except the virtuous and those who are characterized by knowledgeability, liberality, courage, and the like good traits.

All virtues, however, cannot be true matters of admiration unless they are connected to moral conduct. On that account, moral conduct is the core and pivot of virtues. The Ahlul-Bayt (a) used a variety of instructive methods in favor of glorifying the moral conduct so remarkably:

The Prophet (S) said: “The best of you are the most well-mannered and generous ones who go on intimate terms with people and people go on intimate terms with them, and whose places of residence are frequently trodden on by guests<sup>1</sup>.”

“He who has a good nature will have the reward of those who observe fasting in days and keep awake praying at nights<sup>2</sup>.”

“You cannot treat people by means of your wealth; hence, you should treat them by means of your moral conduct<sup>3</sup>.”

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: “The most perfect believers<sup>4</sup>, in the sight of faith, are the most well-mannered<sup>5</sup>.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “After the fulfillment of the obligatory religious duties, the most favorable thing that a servant offers to Allah is to extend the moral conducts over people<sup>6</sup>.”

“Allah gives a servant for his moral conduct the same reward that He gives to the mujahid7.”

“The moral conduct dissolves sins in the same way as the sun dissolves snow8.”

“Piety and moral conduct construct the countries and prolong the ages9.”

“If you want to be respected, you should be lenient, and if you want to be disrespected, you may be severe10.”

God did not send any messenger to people before He had adorned him with moral conduct, which is, then, the symbol of the prophets' virtues and the title of their personalities.

The Prophet Muhammad (S) was the ideal example of moral conduct, as well as the other high moral standards. By means of his ideal moralities, he could seize the hearts, and deserved, worthily, the praise of God:

“Most surely, you conform yourself to sublime morality. (68:4)”

Imam Ali (a), describing the moralities of the holy Prophet (S), said:

“He was the most generous, the bravest, the most truthful and the most faithful, and in terms of temper, the most lenient and in terms of association, the most honorable. Any one seeing him for the first time is filled with awe, and any one associating with him loves him. I have never seen his like before and after him11.”

As a picture of the Prophet's moral conduct, it is sufficient to refer to his story with people of Koreish12 who allied each other against him and showed him various sorts of bitterness that obliged him to flee his hometown. When God gave him victory against them, they were quite sure he would revenge himself upon them. He said nothing to them but, ‘what do you think I am going to do with you?’ ‘Only the good, for you are a noble brother and the son of a noble brother,’ answered they. He said: ‘I will repeat the same wording of my brother Joseph the prophet: (Today, you are not condemned.) Go, you are released.’

Anas narrated: I was with the Prophet who was putting a garment of a tough margin when a Bedouin pulled him so violently that the margin of his garment left an effect on his neck. ‘Muhammad,’ said the Bedouin, ‘load on my two camels with the fortune of God that is in your possession, because it is neither yours nor your father's.’

The Prophet (S) kept silent for a while before he said, ‘The fortune is Allah's, and I am His servant.’ He then added, ‘Do you, Bedouin, not think you will be retaliated for your deed?’

‘No, I do not,’ answered the Bedouin.

‘Why?’ asked the Prophet.

The Bedouin said, ‘Because you do not set evil for an evil.’

The Prophet laughed and ordered to load on the back of the Bedouin's camel with barley and wheat13.

Amirul-Mu'minin14 (a) narrated:

The Prophet (S) told the very rich Jew whom he had owed a few dinars15 that he had nothing to

pay him back at that time. The Jew decided not to leave the Prophet before he would pay him. The Prophet therefore sat with him. In the same place, he offered the Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Eshaa, and Fajr prayers. As he noticed that his companions were threatening that Jew, the Prophet (S) looked at them and said, 'What are you doing?' 'God's Messenger,' said they, 'he is detaining you.' The Prophet answered, 'Allah has not sent me to wrong any person, including the followers of other religions.'

As soon as the day broke, the Jew declared, 'I declare there is no god but Allah and that Mohamed is His servant and messenger. I will dedicate half of my fortune to the cause of God. By God I swear, I only did so to notice the conformity of your descriptions to these that are mentioned in the Torah. I have seen your characteristics in the Torah: Muhammad son of Abdullah, the born in Mecca, will emigrate to Teeba. He is neither rude nor coarse nor abusive nor adorned with obscenity. I declare there is no god but Allah and you are surely the messenger of God. This is my fortune: I offer it to you so that you will apply to it the rules that God has revealed<sup>16</sup>.'

Thus were the sinless Imams with regard to the excellence of moralities:

Imam Abu Muhammad al-Askari (a) related:

Amirul-Mu'minin (a), once, received the two faithful men who visited him so warmly, honored them, and asked them to sit in the head of his session. They were a father and his son. After they had finished the meal that the Imam served to them, Qanbar his servant brought a washtub, a wooden pitcher, and a handkerchief. Amirul-Mu'minin (a) took the pitcher to pour water on the hands of the guest. The man refused so intensely, but Amirul-Mu'minin insisted on pouring water on his hand and asked him to behave as if it was Qanbar who would do so to him. The man did. Amirul-Mu'minin, then, handed the pitcher to his son Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya and said, 'son, if that son had visited me alone without his father, I myself would have poured water on his hand. Allah does not accept to put fathers and sons on the same level when they are in the same place. Since the father poured on the hands of the father, the son then should pour on the hands of the son.'

Hence, Muhammad poured on the hands of the son. On this event, Imam al-Askari (a) commented:

"He who copies Ali in this deed is the true Shiite<sup>17</sup>."

It is related that Imams al-Hasan and al-Hussein once noticed an old man performing the ritual ablution incorrectly. They avoided stating to him directly; hence, they agreed on making him the arbiter who should rule of the most accurate ablution. As they performed the ablution before him, the old man said, "Sirs! You both have performed the very accurate ablution, but it seems

that the old man can master nothing. He now declares his repentance out of your blessing and mercy to the members of your grandfather's community<sup>18</sup>"

It is also related that, once, a servant of Imam al- Hussein (a) committed a mistake that caused him to be punished. The Imam therefore gave the orders of beating him.

"Sir," said the servant, "(Remember God's saying) those who refrain the anger."

The Imam, hence, ordered to release him.

"Sir," said the servant, "(Remember God's saying) and those who forgive people."

The Imam, hence, forgave him.

"Sir," said the servant, "(Remember God's saying) and Allah loves those who do good."

The Imam said, "Go, you are free for the sake of

Allah. I will also double your payment<sup>19</sup>"

As-Sawli narrated the following:

A disagreement occurred between al-Hussein and Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya who wrote to his brother: "So then, brother! Your and my father is the same. You are not preferred to me and I am not preferred to you in this point. Regarding your mother Fatima the daughter of the Messenger of God, if my mother possesses gold that is filling the earth, she will never reach the standing of your mother. If you read this missive, you may visit me so that I will please you. You are surely worthier of virtue than I am. Peace and God's grace and blessings be upon you."

Al-Hussein did, and they were no longer engaged in any disagreement.

Muhammad Ibn Ja'far and others narrated the following:

A kinsman of Ali Ibn al-Hussein (a) stood in front of him and insulted. The Imam, however, did not reply. When the man went away, the Imam said to his companions: "You have heard what that man had said. I want you to come with me so that you may hear my reply."

"We will," we replied, "we, however, wanted you to answer him."

The Imam took his shoes and went reciting (God's saying): (Those who refrain from anger and those who forgive the people. Allah loves those who do good.)

We understood that he would not say anything to that man.

When the Imam was in front of that man's house, he shouted (at the servants), "Tell him that it is Ali Ibn al-Hussein."

The man rushed out towards us with evil intent. He had no doubt that the purpose of the Imam's attendance had been to repay him for some of his evil deeds.

"Brother," said Ali Ibn al-Hussein, "you stood proudly over me and over spoke. If you have said what is really in my character, I then seek Allah's forgiveness. If you have said what is not in my character, Allah may forgive you!"

The man kissed the Imam between the eyes and confessed: "I said what was not in your character. In fact, I am worthier of seeking God's forgiveness<sup>20</sup>."

Ali Ibn al-Hussein (a) narrated: Amirul-Mu'minin (a) went for facing the three individuals who had sworn by Lat and Uzza<sup>21</sup> and took upon themselves the pledge of killing the Prophet (S) He could kill one and capture the others. When he carried out the Prophet's order of advancing one of them before him, the Prophet (S) asked him to declare that there is no god but Allah and that he is His messenger. The man answered: "To move the unshakable Mount Abu Qubays is easier for me than uttering this statement." Hence, the Prophet (S) asked Amirul- Mu'minin (a) to behead him.

The same thing was said to the other man whose answer was, "Attach me to the previous." The Prophet (S), also, asked Amirul-Mu'minin (a) to attach him to the previous. In this very time, the Archangel Gabriel descended and said to the Prophet (S): "Muhammad, your Lord sends His salaams to you and asks you not to kill this one, because he was well-mannered and openhanded with his people." The Prophet (S) shouted at Amirul-Mu'minin: "Ali, stop it. The messenger of my Lord has just told me that this man was well-mannered and openhanded with his people." As he heard the Prophet's statement, the man who was under the edge of the sword wondered: "Was it the messenger of your Lord who told you of this?" The Prophet (S) said: "Yes, it was."

The man said: "By God I swear, I have never possessed a single dirham<sup>22</sup> while a brother of mine does not have it. I also have never frowned my face in warfare. I now declare that there is no god but Allah and you are surely the messenger of God." The Prophet (S) commented: "This is a man whose moral conduct and openhandedness have drawn him to the gardens of bliss."<sup>23</sup>

Notes:

1. Quoted from al-Kafi.
2. Quoted from al-Kafi.
3. Quoted from Men La Yahdhuruh ul-Faqih.
4. Believer stands for every individual who believes in the fundamental beliefs of Islam. It differs from Muslim in the point that a Muslim is everyone who utters the shahada (The Muslim profession of faith: La ilaha illa (A)llah, Muhammadun rasul Allah, 'there is no god but Allah, [and] Muhammad is the messenger of God') verbally, even if he does not believe in it, while the believer is the individual who utters the shahada and believe in it in heart.
5. Quoted from al-Kafi.
6. Quoted from al-Kafi.
7. Mujahid is the performer of jihad.
8. Quoted from al-Kafi.
9. Quoted from al-Kafi.
10. Quoted from Tuhaf ul-Uqoul.

11. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar.
12. Koreish is the tribe that inhabited Mecca in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (S) and to which he belonged.
13. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar.
14. Amir ul-Mu'minin (the commander of the faithful) is a name that the Prophet (S) gave exclusively to Ali ibn Abi Talib (a). However, all the leaders that ruled the Islamic states had it to themselves.
15. Dinar is the golden currency of the Arabs and the Islamic states.
16. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 6
17. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar
18. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 10, quoted from Uyouun ul- Mahasin; p. 89
19. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 10, quoted from Keshf ul- Ghumma.
20. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 11/17, quoted from I'lam ul- Wara and al-Irshad.
21. Lat and Uzza are the two major idols the Arabs were regarding as gods before Islam.
22. Dirham is the currency of the Arabs as well as the Islamic states
23. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 15 part 2 p. 210.