

A True Believer is Forbearing and Patient

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We have been narrating a tradition from the Prophet of Islam (S) to the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) in which the Noble Prophet (S) listed one hundred and three characteristics of a true believer and of them, thirty-one have been discussed, and in today's discussion, we cover another four

...حَلِيمًا إِذَا جُهِلَ عَلَيْهِ، صَبُورًا عَلَى مَنْ أَسَاءَ إِلَيْهِ، يُبَجِّلُ الْكَبِيرَ وَ يُرَحِّمُ الصَّغِيرَ...

the true believer is one who) when a person (says) something out of ignorance about him, is)" forbearing; patient when a person does something bad act to him; shows respect to his elders and shows mercy to the young ones..."[1]

The thirty-second characteristic of a true believer is that he shows forbearance when a person acts with ignorance in relation to him, and if the ignorant person says something bad to him, then he bears it with patience and he does not reply to the bad thing with something bad. The thirty-third characteristic is that he bears with patience when a person intentionally commits something bad to him. The difference between this characteristic and the previous one is that the previous characteristic was in relation to when a person said something bad, whereas this second level, it is in relation to a person doing a bad action against him. In Islam we have both what is known as the legislative law and the ethical law. The legislative law states that if a person does something bad to you, then you are permitted to do something bad to him in return but only to that limit which he has done to you. In these regards, the :Qur'an states

فَمَنْ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ

So then if a person attacks you then you too attack him just as he attacked you."[2]

These sorts of laws have been put into place so that those who wish to perform bad deeds would not go to an extreme (of performing bad acts because they know there would be some sort of accountability even in this world). However the ethical law (in relation to this) is that not only should we not retaliate with bad in the face of a bad deed, rather, we should repel the bad :act with something nice! In this regards, the Qur'an states

وَ إِذَا مَرَّ بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا

[And when they pass by vain and trivial acts, they pass by with dignity.] [3]

إِذْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ

[Repel evil with that which is much better.] [4]

وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

And when the ignorant people address them, they (simply) say, 'Peace'. [5]

This is the ethical law.

The thirty-fourth characteristic of a true believer is that one shows respect to the elders. The issue of showing respect to one's elders and old people of the community has been mentioned quite often in the traditions. The late Shaikh 'Abbas al-Qummi narrates the following tradition :in his work Safinatul Bihar

مَنْ وَقَّرَ ذَا شَيْبَةٍ لِشَيْبَتِهِ آمَنَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِنْ فَرْعِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ

The person who shows humility to an old person due to his old age, Allah, the Most High, will protect that person from the evil on the Day of Judgement. [6]

:In another tradition it is mentioned

إِنَّ مِنْ إِجْلَالِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى إِكْرَامُ ذِي الشَّيْبَةِ الْمُسْلِمِ

Surely one of the greatest things of Allah, the Most High, is the showing of respect to the older Muslims. [7]

The thirty-fifth characteristic of a true believer is that he shows mercy and compassion to those younger than him.

It is well known that when a person meets a, old person, he shows respect simply for the fact that the person is of old age, and when someone meets a younger person he shows him honour and respect because he has committed less sins than him(since he has been on this !Earth a shorter time

Notes:

[1] Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 64, pg. 311

[2] Surat al-Baqarah (2), Verse 194

[3] Surat al-Furqan (35), Verse 72

[4] Surat al-Mu'minun (23), Verse 96

[5] Surat al-Furqan (35), Verse 63

[6] Safinat al-Bihar, under the word شيب

.Ibid [7]