

source inescapable. For man is made in the image or form of God, and he cannot escape That of which he is an image, and which is thus more fully constitutive of 'his' reality than he is himself, just as, to return to our earlier image, the reflection is more fully real in and as the Light of which it is a reflection than it is as a reflection. Thus, God describes Himself as being *closer to him [man] than his jugular vein* (L: 16); and the divine reality *cometh between [a man] and his own heart* (VIII: 24). The beauty of the divine presence, therefore, is not only transcendent, it is also immanent and all-pervasive. We can therefore adapt the formula of the first *shahāda* of Islam and say: 'There is no beauty except [that of] God (*lā jamāla illā 'Lāhī*)'. This testimony appears to us as an appropriate response to the universal, and indeed unavoidable, beauty of God. For if it be true that He 'sees' us—*He is with you wherever ye be* (LVII: 4)—it is also true that we cannot help 'seeing' Him and the beauty of the countenance divine: *Wherever ye turn, there is the Face of God*. (II: 115)

THE MORAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

Gholamreza Raeseian

In this paper I will try to study briefly the moral system of Islam and then have a glance at some moral principles which are found in the Qur'an and Shi'a tradition. When we talk about a moral system there should be some supreme goal/s that human beings try to achieve and against which we can evaluate their actions and characters. The Islamic moral system is based on the following facts:

1. Man is composite of soul and body. We believe that the reality of man is soul, because all his knowledge, tendencies and intentions are related to the soul which remains after death for ever. The Qur'an refers to this reality in the following verses: 32: 9, 15; 29: 38; 72: 23; 115. On the reality of death, the Qur'an says: 'God takes the soul of men when they die' (Chapter 39). This shows that the soul of men will be alive for ever and the body will be destroyed.

Reflecting on the Qur'an, one may conclude that the soul of men is an eternal and divine element and that at the time of death God or His angel/s take/s the soul and it leaves the body. The soul remains forever, so it should be trained and purified.

It should be noted that the soul in this world needs the body to perform its actions and activities and that the body is the vessel of the soul toward the supreme goal, so we should regard it as a vessel not more.

2. The soul can be perfected and developed. This means that the soul can achieve more knowledge and obtain more human perfection. The moral perfection of a human being is the very supreme perfection of soul.

3. The soul has free-will and informed choice. This is an important characteristic of the soul by which it can choose the supreme goal and perform the suitable activity to achieve it. Moral perfection depends on free-will and knowledge has effects upon the choice.

4. Mankind loves himself, that is, an essential characteristic of mankind is self-love. Human will is based on two things: knowledge and self-love.
5. Man inclines towards infinite perfection. It should be noted that people may make mistakes in discovering what human perfection is. Here we can understand the importance of the divine revelation in introducing perfection.

According to Islam, the supreme goal and ultimate end is closeness and nearness to God. The idea of nearness to God has been mentioned in some verses, such as: 89: 27-30; 54: 54 and 55. Nearness to God has been sought by the infallible Imams, e.g:

My God, so make us travel on the roads that arrive at thee and set us in to motion on the paths nearest to reaching thee!

... To thee is the gladness of my eye, joining thee the wish of my soul. Toward thee is my yearning in love for thee my passionate longing ... thy neighbourhood my request, nearness to thee the utmost object of my asking ... [The Whispered Prayer of the Devotees 76].

My God, place us with him whom thou hast chosen for thy nearness ... granted gazing upon thy face shown the favour of thy good pleasure given refuge from separation from thee and thy loathing, settled in a sure sitting place in thy neighbourhood, whom thou hast picked for contemplating thee. [The Whispered Prayer of the Lovers 77]

Cool my burning thirst but reaching thee. Quench my ardour but meeting thee. Damp my yearning but gazing upon thy face. Settle my settling place without closeness to thee ... eliminate my grief but thy nearness; [The Whispered Prayer of the Utterly Poor 79]

To come near to God people should be purified. For this purpose God has sent His prophets with instructions to people for the purity of their soul. There are some verses in the Qur'an on this matter. For example, the Qur'an says:

He is the one who has sent amongst illiterate people an apostle from among themselves who recites to them His

verses and purifies them and teaches them the Book and the wisdom. (62: 2)

In another chapter God puts emphasis on the purification and purity of the human soul by swearing eleven times as follows:

I swear by the sun and its brilliance and the moon when it follows the sun and the day when it makes manifest the sun (and her beauty) and the night when it covers the sun and the heaven and Him who made it and the earth and Him who extended it and the soul and Him who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it. He will indeed be successful who purifies it and he will indeed fail whoever pollutes and corrupts it. (91: 1-10)

Thus, there seems to be no doubt about the necessity of the purification and refinement of the soul, but it should be noted that the purification of the soul is a prerequisite to approximation to God. The exclusive way to get nearer to God is purification of the soul and the exclusive way to purify it is worship. So all moral principles and obligations help us purify the soul. The Qur'an says:

And that you should worship Me alone, this is the right path. (36: 61)

In another verse, the Qur'an introduces the worship as an aim and goal of the creation of jinn and men. (51: 56) 'And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should worship Me'.

THE ROLE OF INTENTION

We name action as worship when it has two characteristics: the first one is that it must be in itself good and the second is that it must be performed for the sake of God. So intention is very important and essential.

THE ROLE OF THE FAITH

It is obvious that the intention of getting nearer to God is not possible without believing in God. Therefore, the origin for any value in the Islamic moral order is faith (or belief in God). According to the Qur'an, faith helps people in observing moral principles:

Certainly you have in the Apostle of God an excellent example for him who hopes in God and the Last Day and remembers God much. (33: 21)

Now let us categorize the moral teachings of the Qur'an:

- I principles and commands that govern one's relationship with God
- II those that govern one's relationships with oneself
- III those that govern one's relationship with one's family (household)
- IV those that govern one's relationships with other people

THE FIRST GROUP

There are many principles and commands in this category, but I will mention only some of them.

Remembrance of God: In many verses the Holy Qur'an commands the believers to remember God. For example, the Qur'an says:

Remember Me, I will remember you and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me. (2: 152)
Remember your lord much and glorify Him in the evening and the morning. (3: 41)
Remember your lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening, and be not of the heedless ones. (7: 205)
O you who believe remember God, remembering frequently. (33: 41)
And remember the name of your lord and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion. (73: 8)

The remembrance of God has many advantages and benefits such as serenity and tranquillity of the heart. In chapter 13 verse 28 God says:

Those who believe and whose hearts find serenity by the remembrance of God; now surely by God's remembrance hearts find serenity and tranquillity.

The other benefit of remembrance of God is the luminosity of hearts. In this regard Imam 'Ali, the first Imam of the Shi'a, says:

Certainly God, the glorified, has made His remembrance the luminosity and shine of the hearts. (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 219)

The third benefit is that remembrance of God is the medicine and cure of diseases of the heart.

Loyalty: God in various verses of the Qur'an commands us to worship Him sincerely and faithfully:

Surely We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, therefore worship God being sincere to Him in obedience. (39: 2)

Say: I am commanded that I should worship God being sincere to Him in obedience. (*Ibid.* 11)

And they were not enjoined anything except that they should worship God being sincere to Him in obedience. (98: 5)

Addressing Abraham, God says:

Say: surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for God, the lord of the worlds.

Repentance: In various verses God asks the believers to repent towards Him and ask His forgiveness:

O you who believe! Repent towards God a sincere repentance. (66: 8)

Repent to God all of you, O believers! So that you may be successful. (24: 31)

And ask forgiveness of your lord, then repent towards Him
surely my lord is Merciful, loving-kind. (11:90)

Trust in God: There are many verses in which God commands the believers to trust Him:

And on God should you rely and trust if you are believers.
(5: 23)

THE SECOND GROUP

Again there are many principles and commands in this category, but I mention only some of them.

Purification of the soul: In chapter 91 (the Sun) God says:

I swear by ... the soul and Him who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it. He will indeed be successful who purifies it.

Self-control:

And as for him who fears to stand in the presence of his lord and forbids his own soul from its whims and caprices then surely the Garden (Paradise) that is the abode. (79: 41 and 42)
O David! ... do not follow the whims and caprices of your own soul for they will lead you astray from God's path. (38: 26)
O you who believe ... Do not follow your low desires (the whim of your soul). (4: 135)

In *Nahj al-Balaghah* Imam 'Ali is quoted as saying:

In the past I had a brother-in-faith, and he was prestigious in my view because the world was humble in his eyes ... if two things confronted him he would see which was more akin to his whims and he would oppose it.

Truthfulness: There is an emphasis on truthfulness in the Holy Qur'an and traditions. I cite some of them:

O you who believe! Fear the wrath of God, and say only that which is true. (33: 70)
O you who believe! Fear the wrath of God and be with those who speak the truth. (9: 119)

The Holy Prophet asked Imam 'Ali:

'O 'Ali, those who keep these four characters enjoy perfect Islam. These characters are telling only truth, showing gratitude, prudence and good mannerism. O 'Ali! ... Honesty whitens the face and the honesty will be recorded by God as truthful. You should know that the honesty is blessed.'

After appointing Ma'adh b. Jabal as the governor of Yemen, the Holy Prophet told him:

I command you to fear God and tell the truth.

Humbleness:

And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who go (walk) on the earth with humility and when the ignorant address them they reply peaceably and with great courtesy. (25: 63)
And don't treat people with arrogance, nor go about in the land exulting over much, surely God does not love any self-conceited boaster. (31: 18)

Being moderate and balanced:

They are the ones who, when spending of their sustenance for the sake of God, are neither extravagant nor miserly: as with everything else they practise moderation and strike a correct balance between the extremes. (25: 97)
And do not utter your prayer with a very raised voice nor be silent with regard to it, and seek a way between these. (17: 110)
And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the balance, that you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure, and keep up the balance with equity and do not make the measure deficient. (55: 7-9)

Patience:

O you who believe! Seek assistance through patience and prayer, surely God is with the patient. (2: 152)
O you who believe! Be patient and excel in patience and remain steadfast, and be careful of (your duty to) God, that you may be successful. (3: 200)
And be patient and your patience is not but by (the assistance of) God. (16: 127)

Suppression of anger:

It (Paradise) has been prepared for those who suppress their anger. (3: 137)

Avoidance of suspicion:

O, you who believe! Avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin. (49: 12)

Imam 'Ali said:

Do not regard an expression uttered by any person as evil if you can find it capable of bearing some good.

Protection of tongue:

The Prophet said:

The salvation of the believer is in the protection of his tongue

The Prophet also said:

The belief of a person cannot be firm unless his heart is firm, and his heart cannot be firm unless his tongue is firm.

Lugman said to his son:

O my son! If you think that the speech is silver, surely the silence is gold.

Uttering slander:

Woe to every slanderer, defamer! (104: 1)

Imam 'Ali said:

The worst defect is to regard that thing (in other) defect which is present in you.

He also said:

He who sees his own shortcomings (defects) keeps away from looking into other's shortcomings.

Freedom from envy:

Or do they envy the people for what God has given them of His grace? (4: 54)
Say: I seek refuge in (with) the lord of the dawn from the evil of the envious when he envies. (113: 5)

The Prophet said:

Surely envy destroys the faith as fire destroys the firewood.

Imam 'Ali said:

Health of body comes from paucity of envy.

GROUP THREE

Islam has high regard for family life. There are many verses and traditions about the significance of family life and the way relationships between members of the family should be regulated. About the aim of marriage, the Qur'an says:

Another of God's signs is that He created mates for you from among your own kind so that your mind and body might find peace and tranquillity with them. He established love and

mercy between you so that you might coexist in peace and harmony ... (30: 22)

On necessity of religious training of the members of the family, the Qur'an says:

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from the fire of Hell. (66: 6)

O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters and all believing women to dress modestly when leaving their homes. Their dress serves to identify them as women of modest mien for whom intimate contact with strangers is strictly forbidden thus helping to prevent harassment and intimidation. (33: 59)

The Qur'an also urges members of the family to have love and mercy for each other. For example, we read:

And treat them (women) kindly. (4: 19)

And your lord has commanded that you shall not worship none but Him and has commanded you to treat your parents with good will and respect. If one or both of them should live to old age, do not reproach them in the slightest or send them away in anger. (17: 23 and 24)

And He has enjoined on me to be dutiful to my mother. (19: 31)

The Qur'an goes even further and addresses some disciplines that must be observed at home. For example, it says that there are three occasions on which children should not enter their parents' bedroom without their permission:

O you who believe! there are three occasions on which your slaves, your maids, and those of your children who have not yet reached puberty must ask your permission before entering your room: before the morning prayer, when you are still in your night clothes; in the middle of the day when you undress because of the heat and after the late evening prayer when you are preparing to sleep. At these times it is wrong for them to enter your room without your permission. (24: 58)

GROUP FOUR

There are many rules and principles that govern relationships with others. Some of them are as follows.

Fulfilling one's promise:

And fulfil the promise surely (every) promise shall be questioned about. (17: 34)

And those who are faithful to their trusts and their covenant. (70: 32)

Delivery of the trust:

Surely God commands you to make over trusts to their owners. (4: 58)

If one of you trusts another then he who is trusted should deliver his trust. (2: 283)

Pardon:

And those who restrain (their) anger and pardon people. (3: 135)

They should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that God should forgive you? And God is Forgiving Merciful. (24: 22)

The Holy Prophet said:

May I lead you to the best moralities of this world and the life to come? These moralities are to regard him who disregard you, give him who deprived you (of his bestowals) and pardon him who wronged you.

Imam 'Ali said:

When you gain power over your adversary pardon him by way of thanks for being able to overpower him.

Serving people: In Islam it is very important to render a service to fellow human beings. For example, the Qur'an reports that Jesus Christ said:

And He has made me blessed wherever I may be. (19:31)

Commenting on this verse, Imam Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the Shi'a, said:

'This means that God has made me very useful (for the people).'

Holy Prophet said:

'To believe in God and to benefit His servants are the two highest characters.'

'God loves most the servants who benefit others.'

'There are some servants (of God) to whom people resort in needs. They will be safe from the agony of God on the Day of Resurrection.'

CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS IN MAKING VALUES AND IDEALS: AUTHORITIES IN THE MAKING OF HUMAN VALUES

Abbas Ali Shameli

INTRODUCTION

Several questions and dilemmas emerge when we discuss values education. What do we mean by the term 'values'? Are values private or public? Are they built subjectively or do they exist objectively? Furthermore, do we recognize values as absolute concepts or do they change relative to various circumstances, cultures, ages, nations or other variables? The widely divergent answers to these questions reflect the fundamental philosophies, schools of thought and worldviews of the men and women who author them. Western societies, influenced mainly by individualism and positivism, often side with subjectivity and relativism. Halstead argues (Halstead 1996, pp. 4-6). It is, nonetheless, vital to note that the Western approach is not a single coherent school of thought. Numerous approaches have emerged in the West to deal with values education. It is difficult even to find an inclusive list of these approaches. The liberal democratic model (Halstead 1996), Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Morris 1994), character education (Lickona 1993a), the post-modern approach (Tappan and Brown 1996), and religious moral education (Moran 1989) are only a few examples of theories in values education. Superka and his colleagues in an older study have provided another list of other approaches in values education. Their typology includes inculcation, analysis, clarification and action learning as the current approaches in values education (Superka *et al.*, 1975). Even a brief discussion of these varying approaches requires an independent study, and clearly falls beyond the present one. I only enumerated these approaches to show the difficulty of entering the domain of values education as an avenue for self-development.

Societies with idealistic or realistic, secular or religious approaches follow other perspectives. Answers then are not formulated