

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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deride another, haply the last may be better than the first. Defame not your people nor call them names. Eschew too much suspicion; Also spy not, nor backbite one another. Do not charge anyone with anything of which you have no proof, and remember that the ear and the eye and the heart will all be called to account.

Moral Qualities Related to the Doing of Good

The [discussion of] moral qualities related to discarding evil have now concluded. We now set forth the qualities related to the doing of good, i.e. the second type of moral qualities which are related to doing good. The first of these is forbearance or forgiveness. He who commits an offence against another causes him pain or harm and deserves to be punished either through the process of the law, with imprisonment or fine, or directly by the person offended. To forgive him, if forgiveness should be appropriate, would be to do him good. In this context the teaching of the Holy Quran is:

وَالْكُظُمِينَ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ⁷⁴
 جَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ⁷⁵

74. And those who suppress anger and pardon men; (The Holy Quran, Āl-e-‘Imrān 3:135)

That is, good men are those who control their tempers when they are roused and who overlook people's faults when that is appropriate. The recompense of an injury is a penalty in proportion thereto; but whoso forgives and effects thereby a reform in the offender, and no harm is apprehended, that is to say, exercises forgiveness on its appropriate occasion, will have his reward with Allah.

This verse shows that the Quran does not teach non-resistance to evil on all occasions, or that mischief makers and wrongdoers should never be punished. Its teaching is that one must consider whether the occasion calls for forgiveness or punishment, and to adopt the course which would be best in the interests both of the offender and the public. Sometimes an offender turns away from wrongdoing in consequence of being forgiven, and sometimes forgiveness incites him to further wrongdoing. Therefore, God Almighty directs that we should not develop the habit of forgiving blindly on all occasions, but should consider carefully whether forgiveness or punishment would be most appropriate, and, therefore, a virtue, in each particular case, and should adopt that course. Some people are

75. And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forgives and *his act* brings about reformation, his reward is with Allāh. (The Holy Quran, ash-Shūrā 42:41)

so vindictive that they keep in mind the wrongs done to their fathers through generations, and there are others who carry forbearance and forgiveness to the extreme, sometimes even to the limit of shamelessness. They exercise such weakness, forgiveness and forbearance as are utterly inconsistent with dignity, honour, and chastity. Their conduct is a stain on good character and the result of their forgiveness and forbearance is that people are disgusted with them. That is why the Holy Quran attaches the condition of appropriate time and place for the exercise of every moral quality, and does not approve the exercise of a moral quality out of its place.

It should be remembered that forgiveness is not a moral quality in itself. It is a natural impulse which is found in children also. A child soon forgets an injury, if it is inflicted upon him wrongfully, and again approaches affectionately the person who has inflicted the injury upon him, even if such a person should intend to kill him. He is pleased with his beguiling words. Such forgiveness is in no sense a moral quality. It would become a moral quality when it is exercised in its proper place and on its proper occasion; otherwise it would only be a natural impulse. There are few people who are able to distinguish between a natural impulse and a moral quality. We have repeatedly

pointed out the distinction between a true moral quality and a natural condition, which is that a moral quality is conditioned by conformity to place and occasion, and a natural impulse often comes into play out of place. A cow is harmless and a goat is humble but we do not attribute these qualities to them because they are not invested with a sense of time and place. Divine wisdom and God's true and perfect Book have made every moral quality subject to time and place for its proper exercise.

The second moral quality in this category is equity, and the third is benevolence and the fourth is graciousness as between kindred. God, the Glorious, has said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۗ

This means that we are commanded to return good for good, and to exercise benevolence when it is called for, and to do good with natural eagerness as between kindred, when that should be appropriate. God Almighty forbids transgression or that you should exercise benevolence out of place or should

76. Verily, Allāh enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. (The Holy Quran, an-Nahl 16:91)

refrain from exercising it when it is called for; or that you should fall short of exercising graciousness as between kindred on its proper occasion, or should extend it beyond its appropriate limit. This verse sets forth three gradations of doing good.

The **first** is the doing of good in return for good. This is the lowest gradation and even an average person can easily acquire this gradation that he should do good to those who do good to him.

The **second** gradation is a little more difficult than the first, and that is to take the initiative in doing good out of pure benevolence. This is the middle grade. Most people act benevolently towards the poor, but there is a hidden deficiency in benevolence, that the person exercising benevolence is conscious of it and desires gratitude or prayer in return for his benevolence. If on any occasion the other person should turn against him, he considers him ungrateful. On occasion he reminds him of his benevolence or puts some heavy burden upon him. The benevolent ones have been admonished by God Almighty:

لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى⁷⁷

That is, O those who do good to others—good that should be based on sincerity—do not render it

77. Render not vain your alms by taunt or injury. (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:265)

vain by reminding them what favours you have done them or by inflicting injury on them. The Arabic word for alms (*Sadaqah*) is derived from a root (*sidq*) that means sincerity. If the heart is not inspired by sincerity in bestowing alms, the almsgiving ceases to be alms and becomes mere display. That is why those who exercise benevolence have been admonished by God Almighty not to render vain their benevolence by reproaches or injury.

The **third** grade of doing good is graciousness as between kindred. God Almighty directs that in this grade there should be no idea of benevolence or any desire for gratitude, but good should be done out of such eager sympathy as, for instance, a mother does good to her child. This is the highest grade of doing good which cannot be exceeded. But God Almighty has conditioned all these grades of doing good with their appropriate time and place. The verse cited above clearly indicates that if these virtues are not exercised in their proper places they would become vices. For instance, if equity exceeds its limits it would take on an unwholesome aspect and would become indecent. In the same way, misuse of benevolence would take on a form which would be repelled by reason and conscience; and in the same way graciousness between kindred would become transgression. The Arabic word

for transgression is *baghī*, which connotes excessive rain which ruins crops. A deficiency in the discharge of an obligation or an excess in its discharge are both *baghī*. In short, whichever of these three qualities is exercised out of place becomes tainted. That is why they are all three qualities conditioned by the due observance of place and occasion. It should be remembered that equity or benevolence or graciousness between kindred are not in themselves moral qualities. They are man's natural conditions and faculties that are exhibited even by children before they develop their reason. Reason is a condition of the exercise of a moral quality and there is also a condition that every moral quality should be exercised in its proper place and on its proper occasion.

There are several other directions set out in the Holy Quran concerning benevolence which are all made subject to the condition of place and time.

It is said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تَتَمَمَّوا
 الْحَيَاتِ مِنْهُ 78
 لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ 79

78. O you who believe! spend of the good things that you have earned,.....and seek not what is bad to spend out of it (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:268)

وَ أَحْسِنُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ⁸⁰
 إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ۗ عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ
 بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ۗ ⁸¹
 وَيُطْعَمُونَ السَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ۗ إِنَّمَا
 نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ۗ ⁸²
 وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْإِن
 السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَالسَّائِلِينَ ۗ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ ⁸³
 إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ⁸⁴
 وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ
 وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ ⁸⁵

79. Render not vain your alms by taunt and injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men, (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:265)

80. And do good; surely, Allāh loves those who do good. (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:196)

81. But the virtuous drink of a cup, tempered with camphor—A spring wherefrom the servants of Allāh drink. They make it gush forth—a forceful gushing forth. (The Holy Quran, ad-Dahr 76:6-7)

82. And they feed, for love of Him, the poor, the orphan, and the prisoner, *Saying*, 'We feed you for Allāh's pleasure *only*. We desire no reward nor thanks from you. (The Holy Quran, ad-Dahr 76:9-10)

83. And spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask *for charity*, and for *ransoming* the captives; (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:178)

84. When they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but moderate between the two; (The Holy Quran, al-Furqān 25:68)

85. And those who join what Allāh has commanded to be joined, and fear their Lord, and dread the evil reckoning; (The Holy Quran, ar-Ra'd 13:22)

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ 86
 الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ 87
 وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً 88
 إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ
 قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغُرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ 89
 فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ 89
 لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ 90
 وَآتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا 91
 وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي
 الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنُبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا
 مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ۗ الَّذِينَ

86. And in their wealth was a share for one who asked for help and *for* one who could not. (The Holy Quran, adh-Dhāriyāt 51:20)

87. Those who spend in prosperity and adversity, (The Holy Quran, Āl-e-‘Imrān 3:135)

88. And spend out of that with which We have provided them, secretly and openly, (The Holy Quran, ar-Ra‘d 13:23)

89. The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the *freeing of slaves*, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allāh, and for the wayfarer—an ordinance from Allāh. And Allāh is All-Knowing, Wise. (The Holy Quran, at-Taubah 9:60)

90. Never shall you attain to righteousness unless you spend out of that which you love; (The Holy Quran, Āl-e-‘Imrān 3:93)

91. And give you to the kinsman his due, and to the poor and the wayfarer, and squander not *your wealth* extravagantly. (The Holy Quran, Banī Isrā’īl 17:27)

يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ
فَضْلِهِ ۗ

That is, O ye who believe, spend by way of generosity or benevolence or charity such of your wealth as you have acquired lawfully, that is to say, no part of which has been acquired through theft or bribery or dishonesty or embezzlement or wrongdoing. Do not select for charity out of it that which is useless or unclean.

Render not vain your alms with reproaches or injury, that is to say, never remind your donee that you had bestowed anything on him nor inflict any injury upon him, for in such case your charity would be rendered vain, nor spend your money merely for display. Be benevolent towards your fellow beings, for Allah loves those who are benevolent.

The truly virtuous shall drink of a cup tempered with camphor. The reference to camphor means that their hearts will be cleansed of all the burning desires and impure urges of the world. The root of the Arabic word for camphor connotes suppression, or

92. And *show* kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by *your* side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allāh loves not the proud *and* the boastful. Who are niggardly and enjoin people to be niggardly, and conceal that which Allāh has given them of His bounty. (The Holy Quran, an-Nisā' 4:37-38)

covering up, which means that their illicit emotions will be suppressed and they will become pure hearted and will enjoy the coolness of understanding. Then it is said that they will drink from a spring which they shall cause to gush forth from the earth through their efforts. This indicates a deep mystery of the philosophy of paradise. Let him who has understanding understand it.

Then it is said: the truly virtuous feed the poor, the orphan, and the captive for the love of Allah with such foods as they eat themselves, assuring them: We are not laying you under any obligation but feed you only to win Allah's pleasure. We desire no return or thanks from you. This is an indication that they exercise the third grade of doing good which proceeds out of pure sympathy.

The truly virtuous are in the habit of spending their wealth out of love of God on their kindred and on the upbringing and training of orphans and in making provision for the poor and for providing comfort for travellers and for those who ask and for procuring the freedom of slaves and discharging the burdens of those who are in debt.

They are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but keep a balance between the two. They join together that which Allah has bidden to be joined, and fear their Lord. In their wealth those who ask and those

who are unable to ask have a right. By those who are unable to ask are meant animals such as dogs, cats, sparrows, oxen, donkeys, goats and others that cannot express their needs in words.

They do not hold back in times of scarcity or famine, but continue to spend at such times also according to their capacity. They spend in charity secretly and openly; secretly, so that they might safeguard themselves against displaying their charity, and openly, so that they might set an example for others. That which is set aside for charity should be spent on the poor and the needy, and on those employed in connection with its collection and distribution, and to help those who have to be rescued from some evil, and on procuring the freedom of slaves, and on those burdened with debts, and the afflicted and on other purposes which are purely for the sake of God and on those striving in the cause of Allah.

You cannot attain the highest grade of virtue unless you spend for the promotion of the welfare of your fellow beings that part of your wealth which you hold dear.

Render to the poor their due and to the needy and the wayfarer but safeguard yourselves against extravagance. This is a direction to restrain people from spending unnecessarily on weddings and

luxuries and on the occasion of the birth of a child etc.

Be benevolent towards parents and kindred, and orphans and the needy and the neighbour who is a kinsman, and the neighbour who is not related to you, and the wayfarer and your servants and your horses and your cattle and your other animals that you possess. These are the practices that God, Who is your God, loves. He loves not those who are heedless and selfish, and those who are niggardly and enjoin other people to be niggardly, and conceal their wealth and tell those who are needy that they have nothing which they can give them.

True Courage

Of the natural conditions of man is that which resembles courage, as an infant sometimes seeks to thrust his hand into the fire on account of its natural condition of fearlessness. In that condition a person fearlessly confronts tigers and other wild beasts and issues forth alone to fight a large number of people. Such a one is considered very brave. But this is only a natural condition that is found even in savage animals and in dogs. True courage which is one of the high moral qualities is conditioned by place and occasion, which are mentioned in the Holy Word of God as follows:

وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ⁹³
 وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِعَاءً وَجْهَ رَبِّهِمْ⁹⁴
 الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ
 فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ⁹⁵
 وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بَطْرًا وَرِئَاءَ
 النَّاسِ⁹⁶

That is, those who are steadfast in adversity and under affliction and in battle; their steadfastness is for the purpose of seeking the favour and countenance of Allah and not for the display of bravery. They are threatened that people have gathered together to persecute them and they should be afraid of them, but this only adds to their faith and they say: Sufficient for us is Allah. Thus their courage and bravery are not like that of dogs and wild animals which proceed from natural passions and are only one-sided. Their courage has two aspects. Sometimes

93. And the patient in poverty and afflictions and *the steadfast* in time of war; (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:178)

94. And those who persevere in seeking the favour of their Lord, (The Holy Quran, ar-Ra'd 13:23)

95. Those to whom men said, 'People have mustered against you, therefore fear them,' but this *only* increased their faith, and they said, 'Sufficient for us is Allāh, and an excellent Guardian is He.' (The Holy Quran, Āl-e-Imrān 3:174)

96. And be not like those who came forth from their homes boastfully, and to be seen of men, (The Holy Quran, al-Anfāl 8:48)

they contend out of their personal courage against the passions of their selves and overcome them; and sometimes when they feel that it is appropriate to fight against an enemy they issue forth against him, not out of any urge of a roused self but for the support of truth. They do not depend upon their selves but trust in God and behave courageously. They do not issue forth from their homes insolently and to be seen of people. Their only purpose is to win the pleasure of God.

These verses illustrate that true courage derives from steadfastness. To be steadfast against every personal passion or against any calamity that attacks like an enemy and not to run away out of cowardice is true courage. Thus, there is a great difference between human courage and the courage of a wild beast. A wild animal is moved only in one direction when it is roused, but a man who possesses true courage chooses confrontation or non-resistance whichever might be appropriate to the occasion.

Truthfulness

One of the natural qualities of man is truthfulness. Normally, unless a person is moved by some selfish motive, he does not wish to tell a lie. He is averse to falsehood and is reluctant to have recourse to it. He is

displeased with a person who is proved to have told a lie, and looks down upon him. But this natural inclination cannot be accounted a moral quality. Even children and the insane exhibit it. Unless a person discards those purposes which lead him away from telling the truth, he cannot be considered truthful. If a person tells the truth where no personal interest is involved, but is ready to have recourse to a falsehood where his honour or property or life is concerned, and fails to tell the truth, is no better than a child or an insane person. Do not the insane and minors speak such truth? There is scarcely anyone in the world who would tell a lie without any purpose. The truth that might be abandoned in order to escape some loss that threatens is not a moral quality. The proper occasion of telling the truth is when one apprehends loss of life or property or honour. In this context Divine teaching is:

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ⁹⁷

وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا⁹⁸

وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ إِثْمٌ قَلْبُهُ⁹⁹

97. Shun therefore the abomination of idols, and shun all words of untruth, (The Holy Quran, al-Hajj 22:31)

98. And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called. (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:283)

99. And conceal not testimony; and whoever conceals it, his heart is certainly sinful. (The Holy Quran, al-Baqarah 2:284)

وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ 100
 كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ
 وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۗ 101
 وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدُوا ۗ 102
 وَالصُّدُقِیْنَ وَالصُّدُقَاتِ ۗ 103
 وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۗ 104
 لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّوْرَ ۗ 105

Shun the abomination of idols, and shun all words of falsehood. This shows that falsehood is also an idol and he who relies upon it ceases to trust in God. Thus, by uttering a lie one loses God.

He then said that when you are called upon to testify to the truth, do not fail to do so; and do not conceal true testimony, and he who conceals it has a sinful heart.

100. And when you speak, observe justice, even if *the concerned person* be a relative, (The Holy Quran, al-An'ām 6:153)

101. Be strict in observing justice, *and be witnesses* for Allāh, even though it be against yourselves or *against* parents and kindred. (The Holy Quran, an-Nisā' 4:136)

102. And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. (The Holy Quran, al-Mā'idah 5:9)

103. And truthful men and truthful women, (The Holy Quran, al-Aḥzāb 33:36)

104. And exhort one another to *accept* truth, and exhort one another to be steadfast. (The Holy Quran, al-'Aṣr 103:4)

105. Who bear not false witness, (The Holy Quran, al-Furqān 25:73)

When you speak, tell the truth and hold the scales even, though the person concerned be your kinsman.

Be strict in observing justice and bear witness only for the sake of Allah, even if it should occasion loss to you or your parents or your kinsmen or sons, etc. Let not the enmity of a people towards you incite you to injustice or falsehood. Truthful men and truthful women will have a great reward from Allah. They exhort one another to hold fast to the truth. Those who do not keep company with the untruthful.

Steadfastness

One of the natural qualities of man is steadfastness during illness and under afflictions. He has recourse to patience after much complaining and sorrowing. It is natural that a person cries and groans under affliction and in the end, after giving vent to his grievance, he beats a retreat. Both these conditions are natural but are not in any sense part of a moral quality. In this context the relevant moral quality is that when one suffers a loss, one should consider it as rendering back to God that which He had bestowed, and should utter no complaint about it. One should affirm that it was a bounty of God which He has recalled and that one is