



# **Global Ethics Discourse in the Raḍawī Teachings**

**Reza Vatandoust**

Translated by:

**Ahmad Rezwani**

**Islamic Research Foundation**

**Āstān Quds Raḍawī**

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(+98) 5132003938

(+98) 5132003942

(+98) 5132283526

E-mail: [cina@aqr.ir](mailto:cina@aqr.ir)



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## Publisher's Note

Imam Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.) is quoted as saying, "If people know about the beauties of our sayings, they will follow us."<sup>1</sup>

The Sacred Religion of Islam is the last Revealed religion and the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.A.) is the last Messenger of Allah. This truth has been mentioned in a definite and obvious way in the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Infallibles and it is regarded as the essential and evident issues of Islam. The Holy Qur'an says on the finality of religion:

﴿Falsehood cannot approach it, from before it nor from behind it.﴾<sup>2</sup>

It further says:

﴿The word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, A'lami Institute, Beirut, 1st edition, 1404 AH, vol. 1, p. 307.

2 *The Holy Qur'an, with an English Paraphrase*, tr. Sayyid 'Alī Qulī Qarā'ī, the Center for Translation of the Holy Qur'an, Qum, 2003, chapter 41: verse 42.

justice. Nothing can change His words.﴾<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the finality of Prophethood of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.), it says:

﴿But he is the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets.﴾<sup>2</sup>

Since man is in perpetual need of Divine religion and revelation, the finality of the religion of Islam and the Prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.A.) demands that the message of Islam and the Qur'an to be cosmopolitan and concerned with the needs of all human beings in all times and places. This truth is also reflected in the Qur'anic verses:

﴿We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations.﴾<sup>3</sup>

﴿We did not send you ... except to all mankind.﴾<sup>4</sup>

The evident prerequisite and the obvious corollary of what was said is that the message of Islam and the Qur'an's discourse is global. What makes this reality more objective and scholarly is the enjoyment of all human beings – by any race, nationality, language, and ethnicity – from the common and unitary human inner nature (*fitra*).

With scholarly argumentation, we believe that what the

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1 Q. 6: 115.

2 Q. 33: 40.

3 Q. 21: 107.

4 Q. 34: 28.

Holy Qur'an, the Apostle of God (S.A.W.A.), and his Infallible successors have stated are not only compatible with human humankind inner nature, but also a response to real human needs and are quite conforming to his intellect and nature.

Some of these teachings are doctrines that comprehend intellect and inner nature in an independent way and the role of religion is confirming and establishing them; they include: the merit of justice, honesty, trustworthiness, etc., and the evil of injustice, lie, treachery, hypocrisy, etc. The most important and the largest of part of the Islamic and Qur'anic teachings are the instructions that although intellect does not independently grasp them and is not self-sufficient, but whenever they are presented to the intellect and inner nature and expounded, they would accept them thoroughly.

Part of the Islamic teachings is ethic. The Holy Qur'an has in many verses emphasized on justice, honesty and trustworthiness and has enjoined them:

﴿Indeed Allah enjoins justice and kindness and generosity towards relatives, and He forbids indecency, wrong, and aggression.﴾<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, it has commanded to speak kindly to people and loving kindness among all human beings.

﴿And speak kindly to people.﴾<sup>2</sup>

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1 Q. 16: 90.

2 Q. 2: 83.

﴿O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another.﴾<sup>1</sup>

While dealing with the subject and principles of global ethics in Raḍawī teachings, the present book has discussed the precious sayings of the Eighth Infallible Imam, His Holiness Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā the Learned Scholar of the Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.A.) Household on this topic. Nowadays, that the human communities have become closer to one another in light of modern telecommunication technology, fast information exchange, increasing intensity of temporal processes and shortening of ways of correspondence, and are facing such concepts as globalization and global village, the project of "global ethics", which is rooted in human nature and existential structure and is applied to a collection of negative and positive rules common among the cultures and followers of Revealed religions, enjoys special importance. In this line, if the precious words of the Eighth Imam are properly elucidated and published, they will attract people's hearts and in light of putting these teachings into practice, many of the perplexities and problems of human society will be resolved.

Upon the significant cultural event of introducing Mashhad as the "Cultural Capital of the World of Islam

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1 Q. 49: 13.

in 2017", the "Islamic Research Foundation" has undertaken to publish this work written by one of its eminent researchers, Hujjat al-Islam Reza Vatandoust, hoping that it is of benefit to those interested in the beautiful and radiant culture of the benevolent Imam.

**Islamic Research Foundation of Āstān Quds Raḍawī**

## **Introduction**

The rumor of “Globalization” and the “New World Order”, which has prevailed the world over and the great powers are uttering it, is an undeniable reality that if not saying it has already happened, it will sooner or later come to pass. Such a situation is a source of both contentment and concern. There are many who have welcomed it as well as many who have stood up against it. Whatever it may be, globalization is an indisputable event, which cannot be escaped from and take refuge in a distant past; because the modern man is not like the tribes and nations of the past who for a long time lived their lives like individual Islands uninformed of each other. Ours is the age of information, which has left behind the political and cultural borders and made long distances very close, to the extent that any move in one corner of the world can be reflected in far places and it has created the possibility for the citizens of a country to hear their local news from other media from far distances in the world before it is broadcast from the local Media of their own countries. Thus, no longer one can hide anything from others and



keep oneself away from the keen eyes of the world mass media.

Obviously, living in such an atmosphere has its own requirements and exigencies, among which are peaceful and altruistic coexistence far from any deception and excessive demands. However, with the existence of different cultures and sometimes conflicting civilizations, it should be admitted that this kind of coexistence would be very difficult, if not impossible. Thus, living in such a world requires a comprehensive and universal ethic, in which the human beings despite all their different and conflicting tendencies can live along together happily and away from any tension and conflict. Achieving universal ethic, however, requires dialogue of civilizations, elucidation of the principles of universal ethic, and its acceptance by the residents of this global village.

The present work, which talks about the global ethics discourse from the viewpoint of Imam Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.) is a step taken toward this goal. If the practical *sīra* of His Holiness concerning global ethics is properly elucidated and the people are informed about it, they will all welcome it; because he's guidelines, like those of other Islamic leaders, are consistent with the human nature and whatever conforms the human nature will be accepted. That is what the Imam himself stated:

“If people learn about the merits of our teachings, they

would follow us.”<sup>1</sup>

It is worth mentioning that this work, which has been organized for the occasion of the cultural event, "Mashhad 2017", is arranged in three chapters and one epilogue: The first chapter that is called "generalities and concepts" consists of four discourses, in which such discourses as the necessity and importance of the subject, objectives and motivations, and the background of the research are discussed and in conclusion some concepts that need to be defined are explicated.

Second chapter that is dedicated to the "principles and fundamentals of global ethics" includes seven discourses and in each discourse, one of the principles and fundamentals of global ethics is discussed.

Third chapter, which talks about the "Theoretical and Practical Logic of Imam Riḍā (A.S.)", consists of sixteen chapters. In each discourse of this chapter, which is the main and the most important section of the book and comprises the major part of this work, one of Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) doctrines that has a global approach, is elucidated.

The last part of this work is the epilogue, in which some of the ethical doctrines of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) that has a global approach are summed up, arranged, and presented in 30 paragraphs in the form of a Global Ethics Charter from the viewpoint of the Holy Imam.

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Ma‘ānī al-Akhhbār*, p. 180.

It is hoped that with the assistance of the Beneficent God and with the help of this gracious Imam we would be able to accomplish this work and by elucidating a tiny part of Raḍawī doctrinal knowledge to be included in the supplication of the gentle Imam, who said, "May Allah have mercy on the one who revives our directives."

Islam is a global religion. Thereby God has both introduced the Qur'an as a reminder for all the nations: ﴿It is just a reminder for all the nations﴾ and called His Prophet a mercy to all the nations: ﴿We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations.﴾



## **Chapter One:**

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# **Generalities and Concepts**

Although the topic of discussion in this work is the ethical doctrines of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) with a global approach, it is necessary to elucidate in advance some subjects by way of some discourses in the first chapter of this work.

### **First Discourse: Necessity and Importance**

Since man is a civil creature, he has turned to social life and practically actualized it. The globalization of human life, which is on everybody's lips these days and is practically happening, is part of this discourse. It is obvious that in such a great system, there are collections of beliefs, attitudes, and values, according to which certain reciprocal functions take place on various levels of life, but the question is whether in these functions the ethical principles and common human norms, which are among the most pivotal elements of society, observed or not.

To answer this question, one must admit that the bad-temperedness that has overtaken the small and large modern communities is not only a theory but also an undeniable reality. Accordingly, we must admit that dealing with such a topic as Global Ethics is a necessity, because ethic, that has a global value in an extensive scale, has an effective and alchemic role that can solve many of the complexities of society.

Referring to the necessity of Global Ethics in human society, Will Durant says, “Our untempered lives cry out now for a new ethic, based in the nature of men and the values of this life, to salvage a civilization left to shift for itself by the sudden flight of the gods.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Necessity of Proposing Global Ethic from Imam Riḍā’s (A.S.) Perspective**

Drawing the attention of human community to common and accepted values of human societies is a necessity that requires elucidation and provision of Islamic and human value models. Given the declaration of Mashhad as the Islamic Culture Capital in 2017 by the International Islamic Organization of ISESCO, a suitable ground has been provided for the promotion of Raḍawī culture to maintain a relationship with the internal and foreign guests of this cultural event through multilingual

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1 Durant, Will, *The Pleasures of Philosophy*, translated by Abbas Zaryab, Tehran, Markaz Ingelab Islami, 1371, p. 85.

works and writings.

Representing the values common between Revealed religions and other renowned human cultures, this work tries to elucidate these values with the global ethics approach centered on Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) doctrines and present it to the guests of the holy city of Mashhad who are invited to this city on the occasion of Mashhad 2017.

## **Second Discourse: Objectives and Motivations**

The purpose for provision of this work, which is about Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) global ethics, is not simple explanation and quotation of some ethical examples of the behavior of His Holiness; rather, it is meant to represent the Imam's global ethics and to elucidate and analyze his constructive ideas on ethic in human society while relating some examples of his theoretical and practical logic.

If we want to express in details our objective of compilation of this work, we can point out the following in a more evidential and detailed:

### **1.Comparison of Islamic Instructions with Global Ethics**

One of the objectives of this research is to be able to take the opportunity provided in Mashhad 2017 for the declaration of this city as the Cultural Capital of the World of Islam somehow to present the religion of Islam and the Raḍawī culture in the form of global ethics to the

modern human society, which is indispensable to it; because the religion of Islam is a global faith and can have a message for all the nations. Isn't it true that the Almighty Allah has proclaimed the Qur'an a reminder to the nations, ﴿It is just a reminder for all the nations﴾<sup>1</sup> and called His Prophet a mercy to all the nations: ﴿We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations.﴾<sup>2</sup>

Given the universality of the teachings of Islam, if in one instance the instructions of this doctrine are not compatible to the world ethic, one should admit that our interpretation of religion has not been true. Thus, if we ignore the principles of global ethics in our interpretation, our interpretation will be invalidated.

## **2. Reappraisal of the Universal Personality of Imam Riḍā (A.S.)**

Familiarity with the *sīra* and the social and individual life of any of the religious leaders would help us both to understand and reappraise and to uncover the principles and rules governing their thoughts in various areas of life, as everyone's behavior is a reflection of his thoughts.

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) is among these religious leaders who enjoys a comprehensive personality and has a constructive message in every aspect of life for the global community. Thus, one should undertake to study the personality of

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1 Q. 81: 27.

2 Q. 21: 107.



His Holiness and by reviewing his practical *sīra* in various areas of life obtain the messages and principles governing his thought and present them to the global community.

### 3. Modeling from Others and Growability

One of the human features is modeling from others. If one models from other perfect and superior human beings, one would grow and become exalted and if one models from the degenerate people, one's personality will ruin and decline. When the Holy Qur'an reminds us of the necessity of modeling from superior people, it considers growth a byproduct of modeling from them. This Revealed Book has mentioned in the story of the Prophet Moses (A.S.) and a great man who enjoyed divine knowledge that His Holiness asked that man to let him to learn what is in his interest and a source of growth by keeping his company, ﴿May I follow you for the purpose that you teach me some of the right conduct you have been taught?﴾<sup>1</sup>

As keeping company of the developed models is a source of development and exaltedness, so also is keeping company of the degenerated models an element of degeneration of one's personality. The Qur'an says about following such a person as Pharaoh, ﴿But they did follow the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh

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1 Q. 18: 66.

was no right guide.<sup>1</sup>

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who in terms of spiritual personality and social and individual morality is of a perfect and superior character can be a paradigm for whole people. Fathers can take him as an example of morality in family; and the statesmen and politicians can also use his political *sīra*, which has been accompanied by clemency, justice, humility, and tolerance, as a model to emulate. Therefore, recognition of theoretical and practical logic of His Holiness would not only make the people of the world familiar with the high personality of that Imam, but it also has its practical application as a real necessity in the individual and social living condition of human beings. Thus, it is necessary to elucidate the behavioral *sīra* of the Imam and present to the people of the world so that they can conform their social and individual life with the life of that Holy Imam, which is a proper example for all.

#### **4. Manifestation of Religious Culture**

The behavioral *sīra* of the Muslim religious leaders is a kind of manifestation of the pure Islamic culture and doctrinal knowledge; because the *sīra* of these eminent figures has saved a great part of the Islamic thinking and culture in them. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) is one of these leaders, in whom the Islamic knowledge has been manifested. Therefore, getting to know the Imam and getting familiar

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1 Q. 11: 97.

with his behavioral *sīra* is essential, because awareness of the *sīra* of His Holiness would make one familiar with the part of the pure Islamic culture and doctrinal knowledge.

### 5. Gaining Experience and Learning a Lesson

Although man enjoys a short life, the one who is familiar with the history and the story of the ancients is very experienced; in fact he is like the one who is enjoying a long life. Studying the *sīra* of religious leaders, especially that of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) is among the factors that help man to acquire experience from the life of the ancients, because this leads man to the depths of history and elongates human life till a long time in the past and down into deep history. The wise saying of Imam Ali (A.S.) is evident attestation to this reality when he said:

O my son! It is true that I did not live as long as the ancients, but I looked into their conduct and deliberated on the traditions and reviewed the works to the extent that it seemed I was one of them; rather, by studying their history, it seemed that I have been with them from the beginning to the end of their lives. Then, I distinguished the sweet parts of their life from the dark periods of it.<sup>1</sup>

### Third Discourse: Background

It seems we need to talk in this discourse both about

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1 Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. 'Alī, *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, Jammi'a Mudarrisīn Qum, 1363 sh., p. 70.

the background of the global ethics and inquire whether any research has so far been made in the field of global ethics from the perspective of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) or not.

### A. Background of Global Ethics

We believe that the instructions of the sacred sharia of Islam, including its ethical teachings, are universal and encompass all the people. It is the words of the Lord of all the nations, who in the Holy Qur'an introduces His Prophet, Muhammad b. 'Abd Allāh, the revealer of Islam who was sent to humankind in order to promote morality,<sup>1</sup> as universal and says to him, ﴿We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations.﴾<sup>2</sup>

God has not only introduced His Prophet as universal, but He has also commanded him to introduce himself universal in terms of propagation and delivering the message. Thereby He says, ﴿Say, "O mankind! I am the Apostle of Allah to you all".﴾<sup>3</sup>

As the teachings of the school of Islam are universal, the Holy Qur'an, and followed by that, Amīr al-Mu'minīn Ali b. Abī Ṭālib (A.S.) in his noble book *Nahj al-Balāgha*, and Ali b. Husayn, the fourth Imam of Shi'ism, in the law treatise of his exquisite *Ṣaḥīfat al-*

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1 Ghazālī, Muhammad, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Beirut, Dār Iḥyā' Turāth al-'Arabī, n. d., vol. 7, p. 98.

2 Q. 21: 107.

3 Q. 7: 158.

*Sajjādiyya* bring to light a considerable collection of cosmopolitan values and moral do's and don'ts effective in these values. Such affairs as recommendation on truth-seeking, truth-centeredness, legalism, counter-injustice, observing equity and justice, benevolence and doing good to others, peaceful coexistence, unity and solidarity among humankind, honesty and truthfulness, respecting others' rights, trustworthiness, tolerance towards people, acceptance of responsibility and commitment, self-sacrifice, affection and compassion towards the subordinates, and avoidance of unduly behavior and indecencies are among these cosmopolitan values and counter values, on which the holy Qur'an has emphasized over 1400 years ago.

Thus, "universal ethics" is as old as history of Islam and if some people have so far talked or presented a project about universal ethic, they have knowingly or unknowingly emphasized the teachings of Islam. The statements of such figures as Hans Küng, Swidler-Leonard, the Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the statement of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago (1993) and Declaration of Islamic Human Rights (1411 AH) are among the statements and declarations that have either specifically and directly or indirectly talked about universal ethic.

1. Having been born in Switzerland, Hans Küng who is regarded as one of the greatest Christian metaphysicians

of the West was invited to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1992 to prepare a draft for the "Statement of International Ethic." He finished composition of this draft with the help of some others in September 1993.<sup>1</sup>

Before being invited to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago and arrange a draft for this statement, Küng had written some books on global ethics, common features of religions, and the necessity of dialogue among them. Included in these books are: *Spirituality in World's Religion*, *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View* (1990), *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (1991).

2. Another person who has presented the idea of global ethics is someone named Swidler, who undertook to publish a statement with the subject of world ethic five years after Küng's statement in 1998. His statement, which like Küng's statement had been arranged on the basis of western thinking and from a religious position, began on the basis of religious teachings and ancient ethical traditions and established on the famous fundamental rule known as the golden rule of "be careful what you wish for, you might just get it," and compiled accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *Rūznāma-yi Irān* (Iran Daily), 5 and 6/10/1383.

2 Faramarz Qaramaleli, Aḥad, "Ta'ammulī dar Akhlāq-i Jahānī bā Ta'kid bar Bayānīyahā-yi Swidler and Hans Küng" ("A Deliberation on World Ethic with reliance of the Statements of Swidler and

3. Although in many of the international documents related to human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Right, nothing has been mentioned about global ethics and no attention has been paid to religious rights, the content and themes of the paragraphs included in this declaration signify global ethics in terms of fundamentals, territory, objectives, and some other features; because the other side of the human rights is the the human morality and responsibility towards others, which are mentioned indirectly in this declaration.

4. The Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago issued a statement concerning global ethics after discussions and dialogues about various global problems in its first international summit convened in 1993 with the participation of more than 200 thinkers representing the world religions. A part of the principles mentioned in this declaration is as follows:

We are women and men who have embraced the precepts and practices of the world's religions. We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic. We affirm that this truth is already known, but yet to be lived in heart and action. We affirm that there is an irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations, and religions.

There already exist ancient guidelines for human behavior which are found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the condition for a sustainable world order... We must treat others as we wish others to treat us.

We make a commitment to respect life and dignity, individuality and diversity, so that every person is treated humanely, without exception. We must have patience and acceptance. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past but never allowing ourselves to be enslaved by memories of hate. Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of the world community, practicing a culture of solidarity and relatedness.

We consider humankind our family. We must strive to be kind and generous. We must not live for ourselves alone, but should also serve others, never forgetting the children, the aged, the poor, the suffering, the disabled, the refugees, and the lonely. No person should ever be considered or treated as a second-class citizen, or be exploited in any way whatsoever.

We commit ourselves to a culture of non-violence, respect, justice, and peace. We shall not oppress, injure, torture, or kill other human beings, forsaking violence as a means of settling differences. We must strive for a just social and economic order, in which everyone has an equal chance to reach full potential as a human being. We must speak and act truthfully and with compassion, dealing



fairly with all, and avoiding prejudice and hatred. We must not steal. We must move beyond the dominance of greed for power, prestige, money, and consumption to make a just and peaceful world.

We pledge to increase our awareness by disciplining our minds, by meditation, by prayer, or by positive thinking. Without risk and a readiness to sacrifice there can be no fundamental change in our situation. Therefore we commit ourselves to this global ethics, to understanding one another, and to socially beneficial, peace-fostering, and nature-friendly ways of life. We invite all people, whether religious or not, to do the same.<sup>1</sup>

5. In the Declaration of Islamic Human Rights, approved by ministers of Islamic countries in Cairo on Muharram 14, 1411 AH (August, 6, 1990), the first article, inspired by sublime Islamic teachings, is as follows:

All human beings form one family whose members are united by their subordination to Allah and descent from Adam. All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, color, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations.

6. ISESCO, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization affiliated to the Organization of

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1 Faramarz Qaramaleli, Aḥad, “Bi Sū-yi Akhlāq-i Jahānī” (“Toward Global Ethic”), *Kitāb-i Naqd*, No. 3, 1383 sh., p. 60.

Islamic Cooperation has considered promotion of and invitation to observing universal ethical values as a part of its global objectives and emphasized the necessity of various human cultures in codification of this global ethical system. It is quoted in article 1 of the statement of this organization:

Today more than any time in the past, the world's religions and cultures are called upon to sustain joint efforts directed towards furthering dialogue and strengthening coexistence in such a way that may benefit one another; while casting away the causes of discord and disdain, on the basis of the universal values and principles of love, brotherhood, tolerance, mutual respect, solidarity and justice. It is these universal virtues and principles, which all religions share that should be sublimated and instilled in the minds and behaviors, as a common heritage of humanity, through a true dialogue among cultures and religions.

It is said under article 2 concerning its objectives:

Using the moral values of the different cultures in drawing up and working out a global system of ethics, and recognizing the diverse sources of knowledge and cultural diversity as basic characteristics of human society and as an asset indispensable to the progress of humanity is among the objectives and principles emphasized by this

Organization.<sup>1</sup>

7. UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has undertaken the outlining of a global ethics system and the study of the role of culture in this respect as one of its organizational duties in its World Commission on Culture and Development. Although it has scarcely acted to its slogans, this organization has with an emphasis on common and universal principles, promised the actualization of a kind of global ethics. Such principles as observing human rights, overall peace, peaceful solution of conflicts, recommendation of governments to activities on the basis of moral principles instead of international relations, protection of individuals' physical and emotional integrity against social aggression, provision of the least social and economic conditions required for a decent life, possibility of equal access to the mechanisms for remedying injustices, the necessity of fair treatment of human beings by security and police forces, not imposing values of one group on another etc. are a part of these undertakings.

This organization has also written in the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development concerning global ethics:

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1 Aminian, Hasan, Bayāniya-yi Islāmī Tanawwu' Farhangī ISESCO (ISESCO's Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity), *Cheshmandāz-i Irtibāṭ-i Farhangī*, No. 25, Mordad 1385 sh. Pp. 41-42.

It is important to promote cultural conviviality, through new socio-political agreement that should be negotiated in the framework of a global ethics. Cooperation between different peoples the different interests and from different cultures mainly facilitated and Conflict kept within acceptable and even constructive limits, if participants can see themselves as being bound and motivated by shared commitment. It therefore it is imperative to look for a call of shared ethical values and principles... The Commission considers it as one of its tasks to sketch the contours of a global ethics and to examine what contribution culture can make.

... We should develop a global ethics that applies equally to all those involved in world affairs. Its efficacy you depend on the ability of people and governments to transcend narrow self-interest and agree that the interests of humanity as a whole will be best served by acceptance of a set of common rights and responsibilities...

... The values and principles of global ethics should be the shared points of reference, providing the minimal moral guidance the word must heed in its manifold efforts to tackle the global issues outlined above... Moreover, any attempt to formulate a global ethics must for its inspiration draw on cultural resources, on people's intelligence, and their emotional experiences, their historical memories and the spiritual orientations... There

are some current themes that appear in nearly all cultural traditions. They can serve as an inspiration for a global ethics.

... Proposing a new global ethics must not be a political vehicle designed to patronize certain regions and demean the cultural traditions and values.<sup>1</sup>

The report goes on to mention the main components of this global ethics in the form of following the principles:

**1. Human Rights and Responsibilities:** Protecting individual physical and emotional integrity against intrusions from society, providing the minimal social and economic conditions for a decent life, fair treatment and equal access to the mechanisms for remedying injustices are key concerns a global ethics must make its cause... These rights may better be seen as general principles denoting the fundamental moral concern that in a social and political community ought to find adequate reflection.

**2. Democracy and the Civil Society:** There is an intimate connection between democracy and human rights. Democracy provides an important basis for safeguarding the fundamental rights of citizens... There is also a complex link between democracy and peace.

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1 Perez De Cuellar, Javier, *Tanawwu' Khallāq- mā* (Our Creative Diversity), trans. Group of Translators, Iranian National Commission for UNESCO Publications Center, 1377 sh. Pp. 38-46. [see: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001016/101651Eb.pdf>]

Democracy can be an important stabilizing factor internationally as democracies are less likely to go to war against each other.

**3. The Protection of Minorities:** Members belonging to the minorities must enjoy the same basic rights and freedoms, and the same constitutional safeguards granted to all citizens.

**4. Commitment to Peaceful Conflict-resolution and Fair Negotiation:** The principles and values embodied in a global ethics must be seen as a moral minimum to be observed by all without qualification... It imperative for a global ethics to include a strong commitment to peaceful conflict-resolution and fair negotiation.

**5. Equity within and between Generations:** Universalism is the fundamental principle of a global ethics. The ethos of universal human rights proclaims that all human beings are born equal and that they enjoy these rights irrespective of class, gender, race, community or generation. This implies that the basic necessities for a decent life must be the foremost concern of humanity... The present generations must take care of and use the environment and cultural and natural resources for the benefit of all members of present and future generations. Each generation is a user, a custodian and a potential enhancer of humanity's common natural, genetic and cultural heritage and must therefore leave for future generations at

least the same opportunities that it enjoyed.<sup>1</sup>

As it is noticed, the above-mentioned principle is presented ideally, but unfortunately it is not carried out as it should and sometimes myriads of immoral acts are perpetrated by superpowers misusing such value-concepts as human rights, democracy, civil society, etc.

### **B. Proposing Research Concerning Global Ethics from the Viewpoint of Imam Riḍā (A.S.)**

Upon coming to Iran and accepting the responsibility of heir apparenacy, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) turned into a universally political figure besides his scholarly and spiritual dimension. Meeting with the ambassadors and representatives of other countries, civilizational dialogues with schools and followers of other Reveled religions, and his humanitarian Islamic conduct toward religious minorities all attest to the universality of his personality. Thus, it is befitting to elucidate the personality of His Holiness from different angles and make the people of the world benefit from his ideas. Global ethics in Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) teachings is one dimension of His Holiness' personality, which deserves to be studied and introduced to the people of the world.

Although ethical issues with Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) global approach are scattered among the hadith sources and the works attributed to His Holiness, so far as the writer

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1 Ibid. pp. 46-53.

knows no independent and comprehensive research has been done in this respect.

We are pleased to announce that following declaration of the holy city of Mashhad as the cultural capital of the world of Islam and due to the visitation of foreign guests to this city, an opportunity opened up to explore into the ethical personality of His Holiness and to elucidate some samples of his moral behavior and global guidelines and if possible to translate them into several languages and present them to the visitors of this city.

#### **Fourth Discourse**

Given the addressees of this research, who will partly be the foreign guests, and before elucidating Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) global ethics and mentioning its examples, it is necessary to explain some of the frequently used concepts in this work and briefly outline the life story of that kind-hearted Imam to further familiarize with His Holiness.

#### **Ethics**

*Akhlāq* (ethics) is the plural form of *khulq* and *khuluq* meaning disposition, temperament, nature, and the like and is used for the man's psychic and innate states; in contrast, *khalq*, which refers to man's physical form that is visible by eyes.<sup>1</sup> In the thinkers' terminology, it is a

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1 Zubaydī, Muhammad Murtaḍā, *Tāj al-'Arūs*, n. d. Vol. 6, p. 337; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 4, p. 194.



psychic quality in man that without needing to think, actions proportionate to that innate property would be taken by man.<sup>1</sup>

The sum of this innate state and the actions taken by man with reliance on that state is sometimes known as virtue and sometimes vice. It is in this sense that ethics is divided into virtuous and vice, although it is often refers to as virtuous ethics in common parlance.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, ethics applies to a collection of values and norms or a list of approved do's and don'ts and possessing general validity.

### **Global Ethics**

Organizing man's social behavior, global ethics is a collection of common principles and procedures agreed upon by religions, cultures, collective rationality, and public expectations. The most evident example of this ethic, which is apt to be brought up at a global level, is an ethic that besides practicable individual relations, it is applicable in the interactions of national, regional, and international institutions and organizations as well as governments.

As to the fact that global ethics is a comprehensive matter and has nothing to do with a specific religion and

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1 See: Miskiway, Ahmad b. Muhammad, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, p. 51; Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 67, chapter 59, p. 372.

2 Mişbāḥ Yazdī, Muhammad Taqī, *Durūs- Falsafa Akhlāq*, Tehran, *Iṭṭilā'āt*, 1374 sh. P. 9.

culture, it should be emphasized that global ethics neither means a cosmopolitan religion and domination of one religion over other religions, nor creation of a new global ideology; rather, global ethics means a universal consensus over the values accepted by all people, which can be confirmed by all revealed religions and modern human cultures as well as by all states and governments.

In other words, global ethics is a collection of positive and negative norms shared among human cultures and communities and the followers of all religions, which is rooted in human nature and existential structure, as well as in the common capacities and collective necessities. Therefore, global ethics, which is dependent upon human principles is neither a substitute for Revealed Books such as the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an nor a substitute for the cultural products of modern human cultures such as discourses of Buddha and Teachings of Confucius.

Thus, it should be said that global ethics, which organizes human social behavior, is a collection of minimal norms common among all religions, cultures, communities, and various human groups and its subject matter is human being irrespective of any cultural, racial, religious, lingual and geographical affiliation or attachment.<sup>1</sup>

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1 See: Holmes, Robert, *Mabānī Falsafā Akhlāq (Basic Moral Philosophy)*, trans. Masoud Olya, Ququnus, Tehran, 1385 sh. p. 361.

## The Origin of Global Ethics

Although there are various viewpoints about the origin of ethics in general and global ethics in particular, it should be admitted that all human beings enjoy a common nature and deposition and that it is this common nature that can be regarded as the origin of ethics as well as global ethics; because it is duly proved and self-evident that human beings have the same nature and essence and for this reason they enjoy a series of constant and common attributes, states, and characteristics that can be the origin of a comprehensive value system and valid and generalizable norms.<sup>1</sup>

Some have called this very origin as human genuine tendencies or basic inclinations; because, besides instinctive desires common between man and animal, human beings enjoy specific original tendencies, too. Tendency toward God, social life, beauty, excellence, and moral values are among the most significant tendencies common among human beings.<sup>2</sup>

To put it more clearly, human values can be divided into two categories of constant and absolute values and

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1 See: Mişbâh Yazdî, Muhammad Taqî, *Jâmi'a and Târikh az Didgâha Qur'an (Society and History from the Qur'an's Perspective)*, pp. 147-149; Jawâdî Âmulî, 'Abd Allâh, *Mabâdî-yi Akhlâq dar Qur'an (Principles of Ethics in the Qur'an)*, Isrâ', 2nd edition, Qum, 1378 sh. pp. 29 and 125.

2 Hâwza and University Cooperation Office, *Falsafa-yi Ta'lim wa Tarbiyat*, p 437.

varied and relative values in a general categorization. The origin of absolute values is the human nature and disposition and the origin of varied and relative values is *ad hoc* needs, social demands, and varied necessities and conditions of life. Thus, there may be a series of ethical and social values that are general, absolute, constant, applicable, and transferrable to all communities. These values are the same values that have originated from the evolutionary aspects common to all human beings.<sup>1</sup>

Given the fact that the origin of ethics is the human beings' common tendencies, some consider ethics to be transreligious and believe that ethical do's and don'ts are original and have an identity independent for religion; and if recommendation is made in this respect by religion, it is a guidance toward humankind's rational and intellectual perceptions.<sup>2</sup>

Although this is to some extent acceptable, the role of religion in strengthening ethics cannot be ignored; as religion and its teachings play an unparalleled role in making human beings, especially the faithful. More importantly, the matchless role of religion in upgrading the guarantee of the execution of moralities and

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1 Mişbāh Yazdī, Muhammad Taqī, *Jāmi'a and Ta'rikh az Dīdgāha Qur'an*, pp. 147-149; Ja'farī, Muhammad Taqī, *Tarjuma wa Tafsi'r-Nahj al-Balāgha*, Daftar- Nashr- Farhang- Islāmī, Tehran, 2nd edition, 1374 sh. Vol. 22, pp. 291 onward.

2 Fanā'ī, Abū al-Qāsim, *Dīn dar Tarāzū-yi Akhlāq (Religion in the Scale of Ethics)*, Serat Cultural Institute, Tehran, 1384, p. 168.

strengthening them is the reality that is drawn attention to religious sources.

### **Globalization**

It is undeniable that there are extensive developments taking place throughout the world, which have crossed borders and made the whole world interconnected. These changes that are increasingly developing and expanding are referred to as globalization.

The concept of globalization, which is called *al-‘awlama* in Arabic, is the process of integration of the people of the world and intensification of social relations in the present world, in such a way that no event in any part of the planet Earth could not be considered as local and native and be hidden from other people's eyes.

It is natural that in this phenomenon, time and place become intensified and the distance between states and nations is meaningfully removed and every tragic incident that happens anywhere in the world spreads around the globe in the shortest time possible. Having already taken place or it is taking place now, this phenomenon is not restricted to a specific subject; rather, it crashes into various borders of life such as political, economic, and even cultural and ideological arenas and makes them fully penetrable.

Given the widespread meaning of globalization, one can define this phenomenon as follows: globalization

applies to a multidimensional complex of social changes that increasingly expands social relationships.

### **Globalization, Threat or Opportunity**

There is no doubt that globalization has already started to happen and develop; however, whether this phenomenon is regarded as a threat or an opportunity is an alternative discourse, and depending upon what attitude people have toward this concept, viewpoints would be different, as well. Some have an optimistic perspective and some others have a pessimistic one.

The first group believe that globalization intensifies relationships between human beings and improves the relation among nations. They believe that globalization is a process and the process is a natural trend that automatically goes on; just like a seed that after being planted starts growing and fulfilling its process until being ready for consumption. Therefore, from the viewpoint of those who have an optimistic prospective, globalization is neither considered a threat nor interpreted as cultural invasion.

The second group, who have a pessimistic outlook toward the concept of globalization, do not consider this phenomenon as a process; rather, they view it as a calculated colonial project created by superpowers. They believe that superpowers have figured out this reality that in the future they will encounter with a shortage of

energy and will need other countries' energy sources. In order to have access to other countries sources and take possession of it, they talk of globalization and promote it.<sup>1</sup>

The reality is that the development we have witnessed in the recent decades confirms the pessimistic outlook toward globalization; because the world has been afflicted with intense crises in the last several decades and encountered with terrible perplexities. Crisis in politics, economy, and environment; increase of poverty and hunger; the pitiable situation of children; disintegration of families; the insecure condition that people are in many countries of the world, etc. are among the potential and practical threats that have left the life of the people of the world with serious problems.

Therefore, since globalization as a phenomenon is in some respects considered a threat, one cannot fail to ignore and neglect it; rather, it is necessary to do something serious to reduce its harms and the Muslims and Islamic countries are to take urgent and effective measures in a consistent and coordinated way. Presenting global ethics adopted from Islamic doctrines is a step taken in this direction.

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1 See: Faramarz Qaramaleli, Aḥad, "Ta'ammulī dar Akhlāq-i Jahānī bā Ta'kid bar Bayāniyyahā-yi Swidler and Hans Küng", *Pazhūhishnāma-yi Falsafa-yi Dīn*, No. 1, 1382 sh.

### **Fifth Discourse: a Look at the Life of Imam Riḍā (A.S.)**

Although Imam Riḍā (A.S.) is a global personality and does not need introduction, but given the addresses of this work, it sounds necessary to take a short look at the life of His Holiness. Following is a brief look at the Imam's life:

#### **Name and the Nicknames**

This Imam has only one name and that is the blessed name Ali; historians, however, have enumerated many nicknames for him, the most important ones are Riḍā, Ra'ūf, Thāmin al-A'imma, 'Ālim-i Āl-i Muhammad, Gharīb al-Ghurabā, and Mu'īn al-Ḍu'afā.

Each of the nicknames of His Holiness has a denomination of its own, but here we will suffice to give the meaning of the name "Riḍā" which is one of his most famous nicknames quoted by his son Imam Jawād (A.S.). Concerning the denomination of Riḍā to his father, he said, "Since the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and other Imams (A.S.) are pleased with my father, God named my father as Riḍā." The narrator asked, "Weren't the other Imams like this?" Imam Jawād (A.S.) said, "Yes. But my father had another characteristic and that was even his opponents were pleased with him, too."<sup>1</sup>

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1 See: Sharīf Qurshī, Bāqir, *Pazhūhishī Daqīq dar Zindigī-yi Imam Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā*. Trans. Sayyid Muhammad Ṣāliḥī, Tehran, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiya, 1382 sh. Vol. 1, pp. 43-45; Rajabī, Muḥsin, *Āyīna-yi Mehr (Niḡāhī bi Alqāb- Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā)* ( A Look at



## Title of Honor

It is common among Arabic speaking people to give a certain title of honor to people, by which to be called. The title of honor begins with *ab* for men and *umm* for women. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has two titles of honor; one is common and the other one is a specific. The first one, which is popular among people and everybody knows him by that name, is Abū al-Ḥasan, and second one, by which only the elite know him, is Abū Muhammad.<sup>1</sup>

The interesting point about Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) title of honor is that sometimes he was called "Abū al-Ḥasan al-Thānī". This appellation is because the title of honor of that Holy Imam is the same as that of some other Imams such as Imam Ali, Imam Kāẓim, and Imam Hādī (peace be upon them). In order to realize which of the four Imams is meant when addressed by the name Abū al-Ḥasan, Imam Ali's (A.S.) title of honor was used without any suffix, that of Imam Kāẓim was used with the suffix *al-Awwal*, and that of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) with *al-Thānī*, and that of Imam Hādī with the suffix *al-Thālith*.

On the other hand, given the fact that Imam Riḍā (A.S.) was contemporary with Imam Kāẓim (A.S.) and there has not been much distance between them, Imam Kāẓim (A.S.) was named "Abū al-Ḥasan *al-Māḍī*" and

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the Nicknames of Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā).

1 Ṭabarī, Muhammad b. Jurayr, *Dalā'il al-Imāma* (Reasons for Imamate), Mu'assisa-yi Bi'that, Qum, 1413 AH. p. 359.

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) was called Imam Riḍā (A.S.).

### Parents

Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) father was Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (A.S.), the seventh Shi'ite Imam and his mother was a chaste and wise lady called Tuktam, from Nubia in North of Africa. Upon getting married to Imam Kāẓim (A.S.) and finding her way into that Holy Imam's house, was called Najma because of her luminosity.<sup>1</sup>

It is worth mentioning that Tuktam was a handmaiden working at the house of Ḥamīda, Imam Kāẓim's (A.S.) wife; but it didn't take long when Ḥamīda saw the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.) in a dream, who told her:

O Ḥamīda! Bestow Najma upon your son Mūsā because soon she will give birth to a child who will become the best of the people on the face of the Earth.<sup>2</sup>

Ḥamīda, too, proposed her marriage to her son Mūsā as per the Apostle of Allah's (A.S.) command. It is related in *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* that when Ḥamīda married her to her son Mūsā, she advised him concerning Tuktam:

O my son! Tuktam is the handmaiden they have never seen one better than here. I bestow her upon you recommend you to treat her kindly.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Mufīd, Muhammad b. Muhammad, *Al-Ikhtisās*, Dār al-Mufīd, Beirut, 1414 AH, p. 169.

2 Qummī, Abbās, *Al-Anwār al-Bihīyya*, Jāmi'a Mudarrisīn, Qum, 1417 AH, p. 120.

3 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *'Uyūn*

## Birth

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) was born in the house of Imam Mūsā b. Ja‘far (A.S.) in Medina on Thursday or Friday eleventh of Dhu’l-Qa‘da, 11<sup>th</sup>, 148 and, delighting the eyes of his father and the Banī Hāshim.

## The Period of Imamate

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) lived 55 years, which can be divided into three periods:

- A. 35 years before his Imamate;
- B. 17 years of his Imamate before migration to Iran;
- C. 3 years of Imamate after migration to Iran.

10 years of his 20 years of his Imamate coincided with the caliphate of Hārūn and ten years with the caliphate of his sons Amīn and Ma’mūn.

## Martyrdom and his Burial Place

After 55 years of living, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) was martyred with the poison fed to him by the order of Ma’mūn on the last day of Safar 203. His Holiness frequently would inform of the way he was martyred and his burial place. The narrator says, “After Ma’mūn’s invitation of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), His Holiness went to the Prophet’s Shrine to visit the tomb of Prophet and bid farewell to the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.). When he wanted to leave the Shrine, he turned back toward the tomb and wept in a loud voice.

At this moment, I went to the presence of His Holiness, said hello to him, consoled him, and asked him the reason for his disturbance; the Imam said, “Why should I not be disturbed as I am being forced to go away from the side of the tomb of my grandfather, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.) and being killed as martyr in a strange land.”<sup>1</sup>

It is related from Abā Ṣalt Hirawī who said he heard from Imam Riḍā (A.S.) saying:

“By Allah! There is none of us who is not killed as martyr.” They asked: ‘Who will kill you?’ The Imam answered, “The worst of Allah’s creatures in my time. He will kill me with poison and then will bury me in a small house in the strange land.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Mashhad, the Burial Place of Imam Riḍā (A.S.)**

Mashhad is a metropolis on the north east of Khorasan and now is the center of Khorasan Raḍawī Province. On an area of 328 square kilometers and with a population of about 3 million, this city is the largest and most populated city after Tehran.

Before the martyrdom of Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.) in 203, this city was named Sanābād, but after his martyrdom, it changed to “Mashhad al-Riḍā”, that is, the

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1 ‘Uṭārudī, ‘Azīz Allāh, *Āthār wa Akhbār Ḥadrat Imām Riḍā*, Sadra Library, Tehran, n. d., p. 77.

2 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 278.

place of Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) martyrdom and over time it became renowned as Mashhad.

The holy city of Mashhad is a great historical city, which has provided great and universal figures to human society; at present some of those noble figures are buried there. Ḥakīm Abū al-Qāsim Firdawsī, the Persian poet and the author of *Shāhnāma* (411 AH), Abū Ḥāmid Muhammad b. Ghazālī (505 AH), Amīn al-Islām Faḍl b. Ḥasan Ṭabrisī, the author of the dignified work *Majma' al-Bayān* (548 AH), Bahā al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ḥusayn, also known as Shaykh Bahā'ī (1031 AH), Muhammad b. Ḥasan Shaykh Ḥurr 'Āmilī, the author of *Wasā'il al-Shī'a* (1104 AH), and many other scholars and elites are among these noble figures. However, Imam Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.), the Eighth Imam of the World's Shi'ites who is buried in this city, enjoys a specific spirituality and status in comparison to other great global personalities. If today Mashhad is called the Capital of the World of Islam, it is because of the existence of the resplendent sanctuary of that Holy Imam in this city.

Having acquired its sacredness from the Heavenly Threshold of the Eighth Imam of the World's Shi'ites, the holy city of Mashhad receives over 27 million Iranian pilgrims from within the country and 2 million pilgrimages from abroad.

## **Chapter Two:**

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### **Principles of Global Ethics**

When we talk about global ethics and moral behavior in the realm of life without border, we should admit that this issue is not efficient and effective enough without paying attention to the necessary principles and fundamental proposition. Thus, before giving some examples of global ethics, it is befitting to elucidate some of the topics that are effective in fulfilling this issue through several discourses and to give some explanation about each one of them.

#### **First Discourse: Human Beings and the Necessity of being Dignity-oriented**

Contrary to some intellectual trends such as Fascism, Nazism legal positivism, and other philosophical schools, which consider man as lacking intrinsic dignity, and also the followers of these trends, restrict the origin of human dignity to such affairs as his dependence upon a specific government, race, ideology, and religion, life-bestowing

school of Islam maintains essential dignity for man and introduces it as the basis for justice, freedom, and peace in the world. This dignity, which is called human intrinsic prestige, is a blessing that has been dedicated to man from among all creatures and no other creature is regarded as possessing this honor. This is what the Architect of Creation has explicitly stated in the Holy Qur'an:

﴿Certainly We have bestowed dignity upon Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and given them an advantage over many of those We have created with a complete preference.﴾<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, what is meant by dignity mentioned in the verse as a great index and advantage for human beings is his innate dignity, rather than an acquired dignity, which fluctuates and the more one is successfully in acquiring dignity, he is more dignified. This dignity of man is due to having the ability for reasoning, thinking, freedom, will, decision, naturally and instinctively enjoy it. The dignity mentioned in the above verse is absolute and encompasses all people, without culture, language; race, gender, and social, political, and economic status interfering in it.

Similarly, the famous saying of the Commander of the Faithful and the master of the Monotheists, Imam Ali (A.S.) as mentioned in the historical charter of justice and

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1 Q. 17: 70.

command to Mālik Ashtar, refers to the innate dignity of man, recommending the necessity of kindness to all human beings. He said:

Take kindness to people as a mantle to your heart and treat all people with affection and leniency. May it never happen that you be like a beast of prey, taking advantage of an opportunity to devour them.<sup>1</sup>

Then, he states the reason for leniency toward all people, saying:

People are of two types: they are either your religious brothers or your equals in creation.

Directly to Iranian poet, Saudi has composed this reality in his universal poem saying:

The children of Adam are limbs of a whole  
Having been created of one essence.

When the calamity of time afflicts one limb

The other limbs cannot remain at rest.

If you have no sympathy for the troubles of others

You are not worthy to be called by the name of  
“man”.<sup>2</sup>

Having been prospered spiritually in the Islamic culture, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) not only had a descent and dignified conduct toward non-Muslim dignitaries and elites, but he treated the common people similarly, as well.

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1 Fayḍ al-Islām, Ali Naqī, *Tarjuma wa Sharḥ- Nahj al-Balāgha*, n. p., n. d., letter 53, p.993.

2 Sa‘dī, *Guliustān*, Chapter 1, Story No. 10, p. 39.



The narrator says he asked Imam Riḍā (A.S.), “Although my parents did not recognize the rights of the Imams and the household of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.), can I pray for them?” The Imam answered, “Pray for and give alms for them and if they are still alive, treat them with tolerance.”<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion, his Holiness said, “Doing benevolence to parents is obligatory, even though they are polytheists.”<sup>2</sup>

### Human Enjoyment of Divine Knowledge

Apart from the verse, ﴿Certainly We have bestowed dignity upon Children of Adam...﴾, which explicitly expresses human dignity, there are many other verses in the Qur’an, each one of which has expressed a part of the indices of human dignity. One of these verses is ﴿And He taught Adam the names, all of them.﴾<sup>3</sup> Denoting man’s dignity, this verse proves his superiority over other creatures. Referring to this human feature and its important in comparison to his other features, Imam Khomeini says:

Teaching the Divine names to man is more excellent than all excellences... It is this teaching Divine names that has caused man to find superiority over other species of

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1 Ibn Shu‘ba Ḥarrānī, *Tuḥaf al-Uqūl*, p. 426.

2 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 124.

3 Q. 2: 31.

angels and his superiority over angelic bodies.<sup>1</sup>

Some points, briefly listed below, can be implied from this verse:

1. Although the name of Prophet Adam is not mentioned in this verse, teaching Divine names is not restricted to person and mentioning his name is just an example; that is, the very prestige of the man who has been chosen as God's vicegerent has been given to him as special Divine training. Other verses can also be given as evidence to confirm this issue: ﴿...who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know.﴾<sup>2</sup>

2. This dignity that God has bestowed upon man is innate and is not something that is removed by human mistake. That in some Qur'anic verses some wrongdoing human beings are likened to beasts, does not mean removals of the feature of innate human dignity; rather, it is due to the misdemeanor that this group of people perpetrate.

3. We know well that man is the most precious creature that is honored with Divine spirit and that all the terrestrial and celestial realities as well as all Divine names are instructed to him. If the personality of this man, who is the treasure of the Most Beautiful Names of God and

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1 Khomeini, Rūhullāh, *Sharḥ-i Ḥadīth-i Nūr wa 'Aql*, Mu'assisa-yi Tanzīm wa Nashr-i Āthār-i Imam (The Institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Work), p. 263.

2 Q. 96: 4-5.

the mirror of the Truth, is unduly damaged or killed, in fact the treasure of the Most Beautiful Names is broken and the rays of God are hindered. Today as the super powers have launched such brutal genocides throughout the world, they should know that every innocent man that they kill, in fact they break one of the mirrors of Divine Beauty and Majesty. At the same time, to preserve the life of this Godlike creature, the Holy Qur'an has considered the life of one human being as equal to the life of all the mankind. God says:

﴿Whoever kills a soul for other than manslaughter or corruption on the Earth, is as though he had killed all mankind.﴾<sup>1</sup>

### **Being Prostrated by Angels**

The angels' humility toward and prostration to man after being instructed the creation mysteries, is the second blessing that God has granted to man as indication of dignity and thereby has flaunted his superiority to the angels. In the following verse, God has commanded the angels to fall face down on the ground before man and prostrate to him, ﴿And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis. He showed reluctance through pride, and so became a disbeliever...﴾<sup>2</sup>

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1 Q. 5: 32.

2 Q. 2: 34.

As it goes without saying this verse, besides expressing human values and his sublime status, proves the superiority of man over angels, because if man was not superior over angels, it would not be appropriate for God to oblige a perfect being to fall to the ground and prostrate before an imperfect being.

The other point that sounds interesting in this verse is that in the story of the angels' prostration before the Prophet Adam, the very person of that Holy Prophet does not have a particular feature so that the angels' prostration to be exclusively dedicated to him; rather, what it means is the reality of human being and the Prophet Adam is a true example of that reality because as appointing man as a vicegerent on the Earth and teaching him the Most Beautiful Names of God concerns man's humanness, so also prostration to man concerns the same reality, especially as in some verses of the Qur'an, like the following one, prostration to man was brought up only after God had addressed all human beings with the following:

﴿ Certainly We created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam." So they [all] prostrated, but not Iblis.﴾<sup>1</sup>

In the end, it is worth mentioning that the angels did not prostrate before man as worship to him, because

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1Q. 7: 11.

prostration as worship is only for God. Their prostrating to man meant the angels' dignifying man's status, which took place as obedience to God's command; just like what Qur'an reported about the parents of Prophet Joseph (A.S.) to him, ﴿and they fell down prostrate before him.﴾<sup>1</sup>

### **Honored by Accepting Divine Trust**

The Holy Qur'an considers one of human characteristics to be having the ability to accept Divine Trust and states as an introduction that the Lord of the people of the world presented His Trust to the heavens and the Earth and the mountains but they refused to accept the Divine Trust, but man, this dutiful creature, obeyed God's command and undertook to bear it despite his meager stature:

﴿Indeed We presented the Trust to the heavens and the Earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were apprehensive of it; but man undertook it.﴾<sup>2</sup>

What is meant by presenting Divine Trust to man is placing it in man's innermost nature, which can structurally prove man's superiority over other creatures, because this verse undertakes to evaluate man and to express his advantage in comparison to other creatures. Since man possesses such advantages as intellect, free will, and volition, he has been able to accept

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1 Q. 12: 100.

2 Q. 33: 72.

the Divine Trust and prove his superiority over other creatures.

### **Disposing Creatures for Man's Benefit**

Man is enjoying such a sublime status that other creatures are by the command of the Beneficent God at his disposal.

This indisputable reality is because the Lord of the two worlds has created man's inner capacity in such a way that he can utilize other creatures to his own benefit. In this regard, let's hear from the Qur'an telling us about disposing the Earth, seas, rivers, nights and days, even the sun, moon, and the heaven and whatever there are in them for man's benefit.

﴿It is He who disposed the sea] for your benefit [that you may eat from it fresh meat.﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿And He disposed the ships for your [benefit] so that they may sail at sea by His command, and He disposed the rivers for you.﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿Do you not see that Allah has disposed for you whatever there is in the heavens and whatever there is in the Earth and He has showered upon you His blessings, the outward and the inward?﴾<sup>3</sup>

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1 Q. 16: 14.

2 Q. 14: 32.

3 Q. 31: 20.

﴿It is He who created for you all that is in the Earth.﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿He disposed the Sun and the Moon for you, constant in their courses, and He disposed the night and the day.﴾<sup>2</sup>

These verses and other similar verses indicate that man is a creature that other creatures of the world of being such as the heaven and Earth, the Sun and the Moon, the night and the day, and the seas and rivers have been left at his disposal and God has created these creatures in such a way that man can employ them to his benefit.

This issue will become clearer if the following Divine tradition (*ḥadīth Qudsī*) is interpreted and analyzed along with the above-mentioned versus:

O Son of Adam! I created all things for you and created you for Myself.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, disposing the creatures of the world of being for man indicates his innate position and shows that this creature must be an exceptional one, as the Holy Qur'an in stating the Divine blessings and the objective of creation, proclaimed that God has disposed creatures as a means for man's livelihood and sustenance:

﴿He who made the Earth a place of repose for you, and the sky a canopy, and He sends down water from the sky,

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1 Q. 2: 29.

2 Q. 14: 33.

3 Ḥurr 'Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *al-Jawāhir al-Sanyya*, al-Nu'mān, Najaf Ashraf, 1348 AH, p. 361.

and with it He brings forth crops for your sustenance.<sup>1</sup>

## **Second Discourse: Acceptance of Responsibility and Altruism**

One of the propositions that has an impressive role in realization of global ethics, is responsiveness and altruism. This altruism has many examples, some of which are mentioned as follows:

### **Social Responsiveness**

In the ideological system of Islam, man is not an independent and separate component of the society; rather, he has a collective life and social existence. Thus, besides being responsible before God and his own conscience, any individual is responsible before others and society, as well.

The school of Islam, which considers society as an integrated center, has required its members to become aware of their social responsibilities and duties and do not restrict their responsibilities to individual ones, since it is a kind of deviation from the social system of Islam.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.), who himself is a paradigm in this respect, has prevented his followers from negligence in fulfilling social responsibilities to the extent that he has considered it treachery to himself and to God, and says:

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1 Q. 2: 22.



The one who tries to fulfill the needs of his brother in faith but does not do benevolence to him, has deed committed God and His apostle.<sup>1</sup>

Although there exists a Declaration of Human Rights today, unfortunately one should admit that only one aspect of human rights has been paid attention to in this declaration and the other aspect that is the responsibility of human beings and governments has been neglected. Therefore, if one day the Declaration of Human Rights is to be revised, a new declaration entitled “Declaration of Human Responsibilities” has to be arranged and combined with the present Declaration of Human Rights, because as you have noticed so far the human beings and governments refer to this declaration as argument for their own rights without paying attention to their own duties and responsibilities in relation to others.

### **Pervasive Law-orientedness**

Law and law-orientedness are among historical concepts that have attracted much attention since early days of man’s social life, because if law is enforced in society and the people view themselves as obliged to abide by it, the society would revive and sustain eternally and would enjoy sublimity and perfection.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.), who founded a great culture with his mission, was well aware that

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1 Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā’il al-Shī’a*, vol. 16, p. 383.

implementation of law would end up to the sublimation of the society and magnificence of Islamic culture and civilization, because he knew quite well that failing to implement law would end up in the corruption and downfall of society. Thus, His Holiness himself would abide by law and recommended his followers to abide by it, too. The following historical event denoting the Prophet's behavior is evidence to this issue:

In the conquest of Mecca, one of the nobles of Quraysh committed a theft. When his theft was verified, the Apostle of God (S.A.W.A.) ordered the Divine to be administered on him. Having regarded this verdict as offensive to themselves, the nobles of Mecca sent someone who was trusted by the Prophet to him to intercede with him to reduce or waive the penalty. As soon as the Prophet found out his intention, his face paled with anger and retorted, "Never intercede for implementing Divine punishments", and then asserted that the punishment be carried out about the criminal the same day. Upon execution of the Divine punishment that evening, His Holiness delivered a speech and said in a part of his speech:

The folks who existed before you perished for such acts as performing Divine punishments only on the poor and left the rich and the noble on their own. That was why they were perished.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 18, p. 7.

### Competence and Meritocracy in the Statesmen

Meritocracy in state positions is an essential principle that Islam, as a political school, has insisted on it. Thus both those who stand as candidates for state positions should acquire the competence before accepting that position and those who have the right of appointment to put somebody in a position should ascertain the competence of the person they appoint.

The necessity of attaining the required merit and competence for accepting a state position is because in case of incompetence, he would do injustice both to himself and the society. It is injustice to oneself because by accepting a position, he would ruin his reputation; Dāwūd Riqqī said, “I heard Imam Ṣādiq saying:

“It does not behoove a believer to humiliate his soul.” He was asked, “How does one humiliate his soul?” The Imam said, “By taking up a position that he is not competent for.”<sup>1</sup>

It is injustice to the society because he is unable to stand the heavy burden of responsibility, which would result in violating people’s rights. Warning such people, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said:

Statesmanship is not advisable except for the competent. Whoever calls people to himself while there is someone wiser and more competent than him among

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1 Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā’il al-Shī’a*, vol. 11, p. 425.

them, God would not look at him with mercy on the Resurrection Day.<sup>1</sup>

Imam Ṣādiq said on the same issue:

Whoever calls people to himself while there is a more learned person among them, is an innovator and perverse.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the necessity to ascertain the competence and merit of those who are appointed to a state position by those who are entitled to appoint them, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) said:

Whoever employs a Muslim (for a state position) while knowing that there are people who are more competent and informed than him in the Book of Allah and the tradition of His Prophet among the Muslims, has betrayed Allah, His Prophet, and the people.<sup>3</sup>

In a part of his letter to Mālīk Ashtar on the necessity of being careful in appointment of state officers, Imam Ali said:

While selecting your officers take care to select experienced and honorable persons, members of respectable families who had served Islam during its early days because these are usually of noble character and good repute. They are not greedy and cannot be easily bribed.

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1 Mufīd, Muhammad b. Muhammad, *Al-Ikhtiṣāṣ*, p. 251.

2 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol.11, p. 30; Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, chapter 308.

3 Amīnī, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 8, p. 291.

They mostly have before them the ultimate result of their thoughts and their deeds.<sup>1</sup>

### **Equitable Behavior**

Behaving honestly and equitably by all people, especially by the statements and officials is among the principles that are effective in creating and establishing global ethics; because honesty, truthfulness, and dispensing justice are befitting and necessary for all people and in all occupations. Thus, statesmen, politicians, and those in charge of political parties should not lie to their own people, manipulate facts, take bribes, and promote brutality in internal and foreign affairs, in which case they would both lose their own people's trust and confidence in them that would result in diminution of their popularity and would prompt outrage and dispute in society.

It is also necessary for the media officials to have honesty and equity and to observe and respect human dignity in their transmission of news and reports. They do not have the right to violate people's privacy, manipulate the existing realities, or instigate public opinions. Artists, writers, and scholars are not exempt of observing ethical requisites and are obliged to practice honesty and truthfulness.

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1 Fayḍ al-Islām, Ali Naqī, *Tarjuma wa Sharḥ- Nahj al-Balāgha*, n. p., n. d., letter 53, p. 1011.

### **Third Discourse: Abiding by Common Principles of Global Ethics**

The various schools, different ethical orders, and inconsistent theories, which are obviously and indisputably pervasive both in the West and the East and no one can deny their vast difference have some common ground with one another. Now that there are discussions about psychology of ethics, sociology of ethics, and the like, and some people are pursuing their studies on these topics, attests to this very reality. Indeed, one can say all those who talk about global ethics are indirectly trying to say that there are also common grounds among the great number of various thoughts and schools.

Global ethics is the common ground of all ethical thoughts existing in humankind history and in some way a unifying element of the human beings who possess different thoughts and views. Abiding by the principles of global ethics that needs receiving utmost attention in our interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, is observed quite well in Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) teachings, denoting the great concern of His Holiness for the principles of global ethics.

### **Fourth Discourse: Attempting to Solve the Existing Disputes**

It is not to be denied that human life in all its modes has been delineated with a kind of plurality in thoughts and diversity in ideas and that these differences and

diversities are unavoidable like people's characters and appearances because there are no two human beings that are alike in all their opinions, volitions, emotions; and it is these very differences that would turn into a source of ideological and emotional disagreements. Thus, one has to accept diversity and plurality in the field of humankind's social life and to cope with various ethnicities and perspective as a social trait.

Referring to this unavoidable reality, Muraḍā Muṭahharī, the great Iranian thinker considers man himself as a factor of difference and answers as to why it is so, "Every person is after securing his personal benefits and fending off losses according to the dictates of his instincts and disposition, and this a factor of conflicts and disputes among people."<sup>1</sup>

What is interesting here is that the Holy Qur'an has informed about the existence of this diversity and plurality and has considered it as natural in human societies:

﴿... and [We] made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another.﴾<sup>2</sup> And it has viewed it as dependent upon God's will and said:

﴿Had your Lord wished, He would have made mankind one community; but they continue to differ.﴾<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the fact that the existence of difference in

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1 See: Muṭahharī, Murtaḍā, *Āshnā'ī bā Qur'an*, p. 17.

2 Q. 49: 13.

3 Q. 11: 118.

society is natural, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) has said:

God has allowed variety and difference in this *umma*. If he wished, He would have guided people in such a way that even two persons from among His servants would not dispute on any issue with each other and a mean person would not repudiate the excellences of a virtuous person.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Ali b. Abī Ṭālib (A.S.) has referred to the existence of difference in society in one of his wise sayings, which in itself is an instructive lesson to the Muslim community. One of the Jews said to His Holiness, “No sooner you had buried your Prophet that difference arose among you.” While approving the Muslims’ slight difference, he answered him, “Our difference is on what has left behind by him, not on him.”<sup>2</sup>

What sounds interesting in this saying is accepting the existence of difference in society, which while accepting it, the Imam most delicately set it on the right track and by answering the wrong impression of the aliens, he both dignified the Muslim community and recommended the necessity for tolerance of various beliefs and thoughts in society. Most importantly, the Imam pointed out that what is the subject of difference is not the person of the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and his doctrine; rather, the difference is on some of the rulings and branches that have been left behind

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1 Hilālī Kūfī, Salīm b. Qays, *Kitāb Salīm b. Qays al-Hilālī*, 137.

2 Fayḍ al-Islām, Ali Naqī, *Tarjuma wa Sharḥ- Nahj al-Balāgha*, n. p., n. d., wise saying 53, p. 1236.



from him.

As Samuel Huntington, the famous American political scientist has put it, “In a multi-civilizational world, the constructive course is to renounce universalism, accept diversity, and seek commonalities.”<sup>1</sup>

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**Imam Riḍā (A.S.):**  
**Friendship with people is half wisdom.**

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<sup>1</sup> Huntington, Samuel, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, trans. Muhammad Ali Hamid Rafīʿī, p. 511.

## **Chapter Three:**

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### **Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) Theoretical and Practical Logic with a Global Approach**

Divine hand of creation has created man in such a way that it sounds as if modeling from others is incorporated in his nature. He is impressed by others' personalities; dresses, talks, and walks as others do, and adopts other people's temperament and traits.

Given this psychological human state, the holy sharia of Islam has enjoined all to take the great men of God as their exemplar and to behave like them, because modeling after them would cause them to identify with them and is followed by human happiness. Regarding the necessity of following superior personalities as models, the Holy Qur'an has sometimes introduced the Prophet Abraham (A.S.) an exemplar for humanity:

﴿There is certainly a good exemplar for you in Abraham.﴾<sup>1</sup>

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1 Q. 60: 4.

And sometimes, it has introduced the Noble Apostle of Islam (S.A.) as an exemplar and wanted all to model after him:

﴿In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly for you a good exemplar﴾<sup>1</sup>

Interestingly enough, when the Holy Qur'an talks about the necessity of following superior personalities, it considers sublimation and growth as a natural matter, which is achieved by taking such superior people as exemplar. As it is reported in the story of the Prophet Moses meeting with a great man who was endowed with Divine knowledge,<sup>2</sup> this Divine Prophet asked that great teacher to let him accompany him and learn from him what is the source of growth:

﴿Moses said to him, "May I follow you for the purpose that you teach me some of the probity you have been taught?"﴾<sup>3</sup>

As the great divine Prophets were and are exemplars for the common people in general and for the God worshippers in particular, so also other infallible leaders (A.S.) were exemplars. Therefore, whoever wants to achieve perfection and to enjoy the healthy life should take

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1 Q. 33: 21.

2 See: ﴿they found one of Our servants whom We had granted a mercy from Ourselves, and taught him a knowledge from Our own.﴾ Q. 18: 65.

3 Q. 18: 66.

this household as exemplar and follow in their steps. The great leader, Imam Ali (A.S.) said about the necessity of taking the household of the Prophet as exemplars:

Look at the people of the Prophet's family. Adhere to their direction. Follow their footsteps because they would never let you out of guidance, and never throw you into destruction. If they stand up, you stand up, and if they rise up you rise up. Do not go ahead of them, as you would thereby go astray and do not lag behind them as you would thereby be ruined.<sup>1</sup>

Imam Reza (A.S.), who belongs to the purified household of the Prophet has, in different fields of life, particularly in his interaction with the people of society from various walks of life, left behind some behavioral patterns and promising guidelines that if one becomes familiar with and practice them, one would receive personal growth and help to create prosperity in society. Tolerance for fellow creatures, good relation with the poor, helping the needy and the subordinates, solidarity and synergy in a monotheistic community, removing discrimination from human society, equitable dialogue among civilizations, morality-orientedness in society and family and even good relation with nature and our environment are all from among behavioral patterns of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), which we will

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1 Fayḍ al-Islām, Ali Naqī, *Tarjuma wa Sharḥ- Nahj al-Balāgha*, n. p., n. d., sermon 96, p. 286.

become familiar with through several discourses in this chapter.

### **First Discourse: Man and Sociability**

One of the human characteristics is his sociability and communal living. Sociability is a process in which man becomes familiar with the norms of society and learns them and puts them into operation so that he can go on living proportionate to the norms of society where he lives. It is exactly for this reason that a sociable person is defined as, "One who accepts group duties due to becoming coordinated with the norms of that group and identifies the ways to cooperate with other members of society and for this reason he acquires conducts desirable to the group."<sup>1</sup>

In order to institutionalize sociability in society, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has both recommended the factors that fortify society and create friendship relations among people from different walks of life - every one of which has a psychological and sociological message - and warns all people against the factors that cause breaking norms and weakening asocial relations.

#### **A. Factors of Sociability**

One of the manifestations of sociability is altruism and tolerance toward other members of society; because

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1 Wuthūqī, Maṅṣūr, *Mabnāy-i Jāmi'ashināsī*, p. 124-125.

tolerance toward others would result in strengthening social bounds. Referring to this issues, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has interpreted wisdom and rationality as tolerance and altruism; and in response to the question, “What is wisdom?”, He has said, “Wisdom means tolerance toward friends.”<sup>1</sup>

Somewhere else, he has said, “Friendship with people is half wisdom,”<sup>2</sup> just as he has viewed friendly relationship with people from all walks of life as necessary:

Visit one another so that you would love one another and shake hands and do not infuriate each other.<sup>3</sup>

### **B. Barriers to Sociability**

Among the things that threatens man’s sociability and seriously jeopardizes it is seclusion and unsociability. In expressing his discontent about unsociability, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said:

The worst of people is he who withholds his assistance from people and engages in eating alone.<sup>4</sup>

Referring to the indecency of iconoclasm in society, His Holiness has warned against open iconoclasm, which weakens the social bonds and takes society to the verge of

1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Amālī*, pp.124-125.

2 Ibn Shu‘ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl*, p. 443.

3 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq’s father), *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 338.

4 Ibn Shu‘ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl*, p. 448.

collapse:

Whoever openly does something indecent would become disgraced and whoever conceals it would be forgiven.<sup>1</sup>

Another phenomenon that threatens society is violation of security. Referring to the necessity of all people's abiding by protecting security of others, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said:

A Muslim's intellect is not complete unless he has ten traits: ... there is hope for his benevolence and others be secure from his evils.<sup>2</sup>

## **Second Discourse: Necessity of Orderliness and Desirable Management**

As no nation can be found throughout human history that has not lived without a guardian, so also it cannot be imagined that this necessity has been ignored in God's wise order in creation and that the human beings have been left without a learned and experienced leader; rather, the society is in dire need for a leader competent in managing the society, because the presence of a leader would result in stability of society and his fighting against the oppressors would remove the ominous shadow of oppression from the oppressed. Referring to this issue, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has considered a society without

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1 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya'qūb, *Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 428.

2 Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. 'Alī, *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, p. 443.

existence of a rule and a ruler as far from the wisdom of the All-wise God and said:

Since it is inevitable for people to enjoy the presence of a ruler and guardian in their religious and worldly affairs, it is not deemed right in the wisdom of the All-wise God to leave people on their own and without a leader, whereas a society would not prosper without a leader.<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion and with reference to human history, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said:

I don't know any sect or nation that has survived and continued to live without a chieftain; because it is inevitable for them to have such a person to run their religious and worldly affairs.<sup>2</sup>

He continued to refer to the benefits of the existence of a ruler for society and said:

A ruler is someone, with whose guidance people would fight against the enemies, divide national incomes, and prevent the injustice of the tyrants to the oppressed.

This saying by Imam Riḍā (A.S.) is similar in context to Imam Ali's (A.S.) famous saying:

The position of the guardian is that of the thread for beads, as it connects them and keeps them together. If the thread is broken, they will disperse and be lost, and will

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1 Ḥakīmī, Muhammad Riḍā and brothers, *al-Ḥayāt*, trans. Ahmad Aram, vol. 2, p. 624.

2 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Ilal al-Sharāyi'*, vol. 1, p. 253



never come together again.<sup>1</sup>

It should be reminded that in Islam statesmanship and ruling over people have their own principles and preconditions. Meritocracy, equitable behavior, and coordination of religious and political leadership are among these principles. Due to the importance that these principles have on governance, Imam Riḍā (A.S.), like other infallible Imams, has been concerned with this issue and has given applicable guidelines:

### **1. Meritocracy**

In Islam's managing system, if someone is going to be appointed to a post he should measure his own ability and expertise to see whether he can manage that post competently or not and also the one who is in charge of imparting the responsibility to that other person should take utmost care to see whether the person being appointed has the management capabilities required in that position far from any self-interests, nepotism and party inclinations. Obviously, if people accept a post without having the required expertise and commitment for that post, the management would not yield any efficiency and the works would be disrupted; moreover, experience has shown that the disruptions would increase and society would run into adversity.

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1 Fayḍ al-Islām, Ali Naqī, *Tarjuma wa Sharḥ- Nahj al-Balāgha*, n. p., n. d., sermon 146, p. 442.

Due to the importance that competence and meritocracy have in the state positions, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has strongly enjoined both those who accept such positions and those who have the right to appoint them to these positions to distribute the posts properly. About the necessity of meritocracy in the former case, His Holiness says:

Whoever is after chairmanship for himself would be perished, because chairmanship is befitting the people who are capable of it.<sup>1</sup>

The holy Prophets (S.A.W.A.) also said in this respect:

Whoever undertakes the leadership of a group while someone better than him is among them, the situation of that group would keep falling down into misery till the Day of Resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

Criticizing the procedure in which the merits of people are not observed when distributing responsibilities, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said:

There will come a time when criminals will take lead and the good people are forgotten.<sup>3</sup>

In a letter known as *Maḥḍ al-Islām*, in which a summary of true rulings of Islam had been compiled,

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq’s father), *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 384.

2 Ḥakīmī, Muhammad Riḍā and brothers, *al-Ḥayāt*, trans. Ahmad Aram, vol. 2, p. 586.

3 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 25.

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) introduced the necessity of including meritocracy, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) introduced the necessity of including meritocracy Ma'mūn's had ordered as one of these rulings and expressed his aversion of those who drive the good people to margins and employ the unwise:

Aversion of those who have send the good people on exile, give shelter to those who are supposed to be driven away and cursed, leave the public treasury at the disposal of the rich, and hire the fool.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Evenhandedness

Justice is a precious concept that if it is established in any society, it would bring delight, joy, and hopes in life for all people and would considerably help strengthen and develop the society. This justice would develop in case the statesman abide by this important task before and more than people because they are considered as exemplar for people and according to the verse, ﴿people follow the religion of their kings﴾ they behave like their statesmen.

With reference to the sayings of the Infallible Imams, the necessity for justice-orientedness in the conducts of the rulers and statesmen become obvious. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has emphasized this important task and has regarded it as superior to everything else:

What is expected from the leader of society, is his equality and justice; you should tell the truth when he

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1 Ibid, p. 133.

says something and acts equitably when he judges; and when he promises something he should try to fulfill it.<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion, His Holiness has regarded evenhandedness as a factor for the stability of states:

Doing justice and benevolence are factors of stability.<sup>2</sup>

This is what Imam Ali (A.S.) said, “Justice is the shield of states.”<sup>3</sup>

Although evenhandedness comprises many tasks, it is centered on three fields, which is related from Imam Riḍā (A.S.) on the authority of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.A.):

Whoever does not do injustice to people while interacting with them, does not tell them lies, and beware of perfidy, and is among the people whose chivalry has reached perfection and their justice has manifested.<sup>4</sup>

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) not only recommended the ruler’s justice but he also regarded justice as necessary in any field, including judgment.

Referring to the duties of a judge, His Holiness said:

Know that it is incumbent upon you to judge equitably between two opponents even when you look at them, your

1 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 49, p. 276; ‘Uṭārudī, ‘Azīz Allāh *Musnad al-Imam al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 304.

2 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 33.

3 Ḥakīmī, Muhammad Riḍā and brothers, *al-Ḥayāt*, trans. Ahmad Aram, vol. 6, p. 498.

4 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 33.

glance at one should not be longer than the other.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Synergy of Religious and Political Leadership

Since long ago the question has been raised among theoreticians of various political and religious schools concerning the relation between religion and politics as to whether there exists a kind of conflict between them or one may enforce a kind of conformity. Followed by that is the question as to whether it is possible to have religious politicians and political religionists or not.

Obviously, everyone has given an answer to this question according to his capacity. Some, who have been entrapped in the snare of secularism, have delineated a border between religion and politics and have restricted each to specific fields<sup>2</sup> and some have gone so far as to create enmity between religion and politics, calling religion as the opium of society and nations.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the theory of separation of religion from politics, the history of the Prophets and the function of the Muslim politicians who have been fostered in the pure

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1 Narāqī, Ahmad b. Muhammad, *Mustanad al-Shī'a* vol. 17, p. 112.

2 See: Farāsatrkhāh, Maqṣūd, *Sar Āghāz- Nowandishī Mu'āshir*, pp. 220-228; 'Abd al-Razzāq., Ali, *Al-Islām was Uṣūl al-Hikam*, p. 173; Lārijānī Ṣādiq, "Dīn wa Dunyā", *Hukūmat Islāmī*, year 2, Issue. 4, pp. 52-54; Bashīriyya, Ḥasan, "Dīn, Sīyasat, wa Towsī'a", *Rāhī Naw*, year 1, 1377, issue 11, p. 10.

3 See: Mīr, Īraj, *Rābīta-yi Dīn wa Sīyasat*, p. 137-156; Rādmanīsh, 'Izzatullāh, *Qur'an Jāmi'ashināsī-yi Utopia*, p 323.

Islamic culture, suggests the compatibility of religion with politics. The proponents of this theory have considered politics as tantamount to religion and have viewed the belief that religion is separate from politics as a false theory.<sup>1</sup> This indisputable reality that religion and politics are compatible is manifested in Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) political *sīra*.

In order to reject the idea that only the oppressors have the power for ruling and that the great men of God avoid from taking charge of political power, His Holiness entered the caliphate system upon arriving in Iran and began his cooperation in the form of the heir apparenancy of the Abbasid caliph of the time and corrected this wrong mindset, proving that religion and the religious leaders can take over the political leadership of the society and by employing justice and equity can manage the society and follow the ruling method of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Ali b. Abi Ṭālib (A.S.).<sup>2</sup>

### **Third Discourse: Dialogue among Civilizations**

The dialogue among civilization, which has been brought up these days following the "globalization" or

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1 See: Yūsuf Mūsā, Muhammad, *Nizām al-Ḥikam fī al-Islām*, pp. 15-18; Qablān, Hishām, *Ma'a al-Qur'an fī Dīn wa al-Dawla*, p. 133; Muṭahharī, Murtaḍā, *Imāmat wa Rahbarī*, p. 31.

2 See: Vatandoust, Reza, *Dīn wa Siyasat az Manẓar-i Imām Riḍā*, pp. 68-84.

“new world order” thesis, has its own conditions that have to be observed in any dialogue; because it would be effective in international communication arena only in case all its manners and obligations are observed.

The holy sharia of Islam, which has enjoined dialogue, has determined the right manners and course of bilateral or multilateral dialogue, as well. In this respect, we would set as a criterion the standard which Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has employed in his scholarly dialogue with representatives of other religions and traditions and we would accordingly mention some instances.

### **1. Necessity for Application of Reason**

Reason is the God-given argument which all human beings, regardless of their religion and doctrine, accept and respect its data, because employing reason alongside knowledge would reduce error rate and facilitate achievement of goals. Therefore, in any dialogue, particularly in dialogue among civilizations and religions, one should set reason and collective wisdom as a criterion and avoid bullying and sophistry. We should learn this lesson from Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who would employ reason in his scholarly dialogues with those who did not believe in God or in any Revealed book and by using theological reasoning, he would refer the theoretical matters to evidential ones and make it understandable to the other party.

## 2. Relying on Common Principles

What is necessary in dialogue among civilizations is the achievement of common principles and using them in dialogues, because dialogue without having a common language is like two blind and dumb persons trying to make a conversation. One does not see the mimics of the dumb person and the other one, who is deaf and dumb himself, does not hear what the blind person says. The story of these four persons, who lacked a common language and Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi has versified in his *Mathnawī* denotes the necessity of achieving common principles:

A certain man gave a dirham to four persons: one of them (a Persian) said, “I will spend this on *angūr*.”

The second one was an Arab: he said, “No, I want *‘inab*, not *angūr*, O rascal!”

The third was a Turk; and he said, “This (money) is mine:

I don’t want *‘inab*, I want *uzum*.”

The fourth, a Greek, said, “Stop this talk: I want *istāfil*.”<sup>1</sup>

Although all the four had one wish and were looking for a common fruit called grapes, due to lack of common language a disagreement broke out among them and they got involved in a silly argument.

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1 Rūmī, Jalā al-Dīn Muhammad, *Mathnawī Mā’ nawī*, ed. and trans. R. A. Nicholson, London: Luzac, 1925–40, Book II, couplets 3680-85.



On the necessity of using commonalities, the Holy Qur'an says:

Say, ﴿O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allah.﴾

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who was especially in favor of this issue, would use common principles among the People of Scriptures, such as God, Return, mission of the Prophets, infallibility of the Prophets, Descent of Divine Books, and the like in his civilizational dialogues with others. His dialogue with one of the Christians, who considered Jesus son of Mary as son of God, is an example of these dialogues. Focusing on God as a common principle among the followers of Revealed religions, His Holiness carried out the dialogues and said to that Christian man:

O Man of Nazarene! We believe in the Prophet Jesus (A.S.), who believed in the Prophet of Islam and do not raise any objection against him, except that he would pray little and his fasting was also too little. When the Christian man heard these words from the Imam he got disturbed and said, "I swear by God that so far I thought you are the wisest of the Muslims, but with these words you ruined your knowledge and weakened your work."

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1 Q. 3: 64.

The Imam asked, “What for?” The man said, “Your words are against devotional procedure of the Prophet Jesus; because he was on fasting all his life and kept night vigil every night.” The Imam asked, “Who did your Jesus fast for and perform prayer?” Having found out the Imam’s intention, the Nazarene kept silent and talked no more?<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Honorable Treatment of the other Party

Although dialogues in some cases demands confrontation and critique and even rejection of the other party's viewpoints, it does not mean that in dialogues one can offend the other party, because if courtesy is eliminated from the dialogues and insulting the other party becomes permissible, documents would lose their strength and gradually arguments and proofs would be replaced with ignorance and violence and the two parties would violate the indisputable rights of the other party to prove their own possible rightfulness. According to Sa‘dī, the renowned poet from Shiraz, it, behooves in civilization dialogues that:

The reasons must be firm and spiritual;

Not to protrude the veins of the neck to prove it.<sup>2</sup>

Dialogues along with insult is impermissible everywhere, and in the scholarly and civilization dialogues,

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Tawḥīd*, p. 422.

2 Sa‘dī, Muṣliḥ al-Dīn, *Būstān* ed. Ghulām Ḥusayn Yūsifī, p 119.

whose objective is to achieve acceptable common truths, is even more impermissible; because whenever offensive utterances are involved and veins of prejudice protrude, the truth will be concealed. In this case, obviously, whimsical desires and tendency for dominance over other opponents would hinder the way to truth-finding to man. How beautifully Sa'dī has put it as follows:

True facts are like an adorned house;  
The whims are like the dust in the air.  
Don't you see when dust rises in the air,  
The eyes do not see, even if the man has vision?<sup>1</sup>

In this respect it is good to learn from Imam Riḍā (A.S.) how to conduct a dialogue, as respecting the other party was one of his ways. He not only would not humiliate the other party, but if any of his companions or the onlookers ridicule that person, he would treat him harshly and call them to be the lenient. The story that happened in the dispute of his holiness with Sulaymān Marwazī, is an example of this reality. When the Imam closed all the ways for Sulaymān to answer and the latter got involved in contradictory statements, those present laughed at him, but the Imam prohibited them from this offensive treatment and told them to treat Sulaymān respectfully.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Ibid, p. 108.

2 Najafi, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Shams al-Dīn, *Munāẓarāt-i Sitāra-yi Hashtum*

#### 4. Tolerating Insult in Dialogues

Not only taking precedence in humiliating the other party in dialogue is impermissible, even recompensing is immoral; that is, one should not respond to ugliness by ugliness and indecency by indecency; because in a conversation concerning civilization and truth-seeking, there is no place for insulting and imprecation. One should make use of his scholarly power in scholarly debates and express whatever he has at his disposal, rather than what the other party wants: ﴿Say, "Everyone acts according to his character.﴾<sup>1</sup> How beautifully Mawlawī has expressed it:

The moon sheds light and the dog barks:

Every one proceeds according to his nature.<sup>2</sup>

A story has been told about Jesus Christ, which is an interpretation of this issue. It is told that someday His Holiness was passing by a group of Jews. They told untrue things about him. But he didn't say anything except praise and words of kindness. He was asked, "O Prophet of God! Why did you respond to their indecent words with praise and kindness?"<sup>3</sup>

*Wilāyat Ḥaḍrat-i 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā*, pp110-143.

1 Q. 17: 84.

2 Rūmī, Jalā al-Dīn Muhammad, *Mathnawī Mā nawī*, Book VI, couplet 14.

3 'Awfī, Saḍīd al-Dīn Muhammad, *Jawāmi' al-Hikāyāt wa Lawāmi' al-Riwāyāt*, vol. 71, p. 392; 'Uṭārudī, 'Azīz Allāh *Musnad al-Imam al-Riḍā* vol. 1, p. 4.

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who had been reared in the authentic school of Islam, and himself was an executor of the constructive instructions of this doctrine, his sayings and conducts are an ethical source for all of us. He not only considered friendship with people and goodness to any good and evil person as the pinnacle of wisdom, but also his nice treatment of others was proverbial among all. His conduct toward a tough and spiteful person such as 'Īsā b. Yazīd Jallūdī, is an example of the noble treatment of others by His Holiness.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, forgiving the wrongdoers is a great heroic act that only the great men such as the clement Imam are capable of, because decent treatment of indecent people is a very hard task, which not everyone is able to undertake. It reminds one of Sa'dī who said:

It is easy to retaliate evil by evil;

If you are manly, "Do well to the one who does evil."<sup>2</sup>

## **5. Making Reference to the Sources Accepted by the Opponent**

One of the manners of dialogue among civilization is that each one of the two sides of dialogue must be aware of the ideological principles of the other party so that one can follow the discussion by making reference to the

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 172.

2 Sa'dī, Muṣliḥ al-Dīn, *Kuliyāt*, ed. Muhammad Alī Forūghī, p. 274.

ideological principles accepted by the two sides. It is among the instances that are specifically eminent in the debates of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), as he says to Nawfil, “I am going to debate with Christians by their Bible, with the Jews by their Torah, with Sabaeans by their code of conduct, with the Hyrbads by their own beliefs, and with Romans in their own language.”<sup>1</sup>

The debate of His Holiness with the Christian Catholicos is an example of this method of discussion. In the session in which he debated with His Holiness, he first asked the Imam, “How should I debate with someone, whose argument is based on the book which I deny and who refers to a prophet as evidence, in whom I do not believe? The Imam said, “If I refer to your Gospel as evidence, would you confess it?” Catholicos said, “Yes”. When the Imam made him confess, asked him, “Do you believe in John of Dailam?” He answered, “Yes”. Then, the Imam read some statements on rejecting his belief from the Gospel of John and took as witness to this the Roman Nastas and Jewish Exilarch and had him confess to it.”<sup>2</sup>

## 6. Equity in Social Relationships

In this borderless world, there are many people who

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1 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 1, 318.

2 Sharif Qurshī, Bāqir, *Pazhūhishī Daqīq dar Zindigī-yi Imam Ali b. Mūsā al-Riḍā*, trans. By Sayyid Muhammad Ṣāliḥī, vol. 1, pp. 219-220.

consider their opponents as nothing in their dialogues, but one should know that all the principles of a correct dialogue originate from that golden rule that is acceptable by all people and it wants all people to treat others as they wish to be treated. This is a tradition that has a special status in Abrahamic religions and in all modern human cultures, being regarded as the origin of global ethics. Let us learn this golden rule from Imam Riḍā (A.S.) who stated the necessity of properly treating others in the following:

Spend from your own for others as you wish others spend from their own for you.<sup>1</sup>

Sa'dī, the well-known Iranian poet has versified this concept as follows:

I remember from a learned old man,  
You too remember this admonition from me:  
Whatever you do not like for yourself,  
Do not like it for others, as well.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, all those who frequently talk about dialogue among civilization know quite well that dialogues are not one way but two way roads. That is to say, any dialogue involves both listening and speaking. Thus, it should be known that listening to the words of the other party is an ethical excellence that should be acquired and mold one's

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. Ali (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Amālī*, p. 311.

2 Sa'dī, Muṣliḥ al-Dīn, *Kulīyyāt*, ed. Muhammad Alī Forūghī, p. 997.

character by it. It is quite natural that everyone likes his words to be heard in any dialogue, his ideas are not to be metamorphosed, and his statements and ideas to be accepted if they are true.

In this regard, it behooves us to set the social conduct of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) as our exemplar, who neither interrupted others while having dialogue with them nor spoke harshly to them. Shaykh Ṣadūq has quoted Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abbās in this respect as saying:

I never saw Imam Riḍā (A.S.) speak harshly to someone or interrupt someone unless he has stopped talking.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Fourth Discourse: Cooperation and Convergence in Human Society**

Cooperation and convergence of human beings throughout the universe and history is supported by the Islam school regardless of language, time, race, color, nationality, and religion. What has been said in the interpretation of the term "Umma" (Nation) confirmed above point as it is said: "The Umma is the great community that Allah has sent them a prophet to guide them, whether people believe in the Prophet or deny him and his religion. Verses such as the following confirm that the human societies are all the Umma of Muhammad,

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1 Idem, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, pp. 197- 198.



wherever they are:

﴿Say, 'O mankind! I am the Apostle of Allah to you all﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿We did not send you except as a bearer of good news and warner to all mankind﴾<sup>3</sup>

This is why Muhammad's Nations have been divided into two groups: The first group is the ones who accept the Prophet's invitation and believe in his religion and the second group is the people who have been invited to Islam, but have not yet believed in this religion.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the Holy Qur'an has introduced human being from a single Umma<sup>5</sup> and from a parent is a clear proof of this point: ﴿We created you from a male and a female﴾<sup>6</sup>

According to these Qur'an verses, Imam Ali (A.S.), in his covenant to Mālik Ashtar, has divided people into two groups; harmonious in belief and equal in creation: They are two categories: either your brother in religion or in creation.<sup>7</sup> Imam Riḍā (A.S.) inspired by the Holy Qur'an,

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1 Q. 7: 158.

2 Q. 21: 107.

3 Q. 34: 28.

4 Al- Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ummat al-Islāmiyah Ḥaqīqat lā Vaham*, p.9-11.

5 Q. 4: 1.

6 Q. 49: 13.

7 Fayḍ al-Islām, Ali Naqī, *Tarjuma wa Sharḥ- Nahj al-Balāgha*, n.53, p.993.

which considers men of any color and race from one parent,<sup>1</sup> and using the words of Imam Ali (A.S.) which has introduced human beings alike in creation, has introduced all human beings as brothers and sisters.

A man from Balkh says, “When Imam Riḍā (A.S.) left for Merv, I had the privilege of accompanying him. During the meal, Imam called everyone from servants and non-servants, from black and non-black, to one table, and all sat down and ate. When I saw this scene, I told the Imam, “Would it not be better if you ordered the servants to eat separately? He said,

“Be quite! God is for everyone, and our mother and father are the same, and everyone's reward depends on his deeds.”<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Peaceful Coexistence with the Followers of Revealed Religions**

The monotheistic school of Islam, which calls human beings to inalienable monotheism, considers the evolution of the universe in God's power, emphasizes the unity of religion throughout human history; because in Islam's view, divine religion is one and in principle its multiplicity does not exist. What are multiplicative, are laws, each of which is based on the mankind needs and time. Verses

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1 Q. 49: 13.

2 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya‘qūb, *Kāfi*, vol. 8, p. 230.

like ﴿Indeed, with Allah religion is Islam﴾<sup>1</sup> and ﴿Should anyone follow a religion other than Islam, it shall never be accepted from him﴾<sup>2</sup> are proofs for religion unity. Therefore, when the Holy Qur'an discussed about religion, it forbade any divisibility: ﴿Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it﴾<sup>3</sup> The Qur'an emphasizes on the fact that religion is one and all Divine prophets have received it from a unique source and have been appointed to its propagation. First, it summarizes all the principles in one verse, which is saying: ﴿piety is [personified by] those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets﴾<sup>4</sup> Then, in another Surah, recognize denying one of these principles as misleading and exiting divine religion, says: ﴿Whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels, His Books and His apostles and the Last Day, has certainly strayed into far error﴾<sup>5</sup> Because the religion is one and not multiplied, God has commanded the Prophet to say in response to the false idea of some other heavenly books followers, who differentiate their religion from other religions and know it the only right:

﴿Say, 'We have faith in Allah and what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Abraham,

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1 Q. 3: 19.

2 Q. 3: 85.

3 Q. 42: 13.

4 Q. 2: 177.

5 Q. 4: 136.

Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus were given, and that which the prophets were given from their Lord; we make no distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit﴾<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that there is no difference in religion among religions, but in laws. The Holy Qur'an also points to the plurality of the laws, saying:

﴿We have sent down to you the Book with the truth, confirming what was before it of the Book and as a guardian over it﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿For every nation We have appointed rites [of worship] which they observe﴾<sup>3</sup>

In the unity of religion and the diversity of the laws, for comparison, we can say: the truth of divine religion is like fountain that flow from the mountains and divide into small and large rivers, and each river flows into a different territory. Although these rivers differ from each other due to the differences in the beds and they are separated from other rivers. It is clear that the essence of all of them is a unique truth, and it is nothing but the foundation that gushes from the mountains and flows in its paths. Divine religion is like this, because the revelation is a single entity that emanates from a single source, and in terms of time and place, it flows in different ways.

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1 Q. 2: 136.

2 Q. 5: 48.

3 Q. 22: 67.

The difference between the unity of religion and the multiplicity of laws appears here, that religion is neither multiplicative nor abrogable, while the law is both multiple and abrogable, since the complete law abrogate the previous one. Imam Riḍā (A.S.), inspired by the above-mentioned verses that introduce the religion of God unique, knew any divisions in monotheistic religions as implausible, it was worthy of respect for other followers of the heavenly religions and with their respectful interaction with them.<sup>1</sup> He also honored other revealed religions' followers, and he was interacting with them respectfully. The words and behavior of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in dealing with religious minorities, is an example of this interaction that has appeared in this kind Imam's conduct. The following examples confirm this fact:

1. Yāsir, the servant, says that a letter came from Nishapur to Ma'mūn with the subject that a Zoroastrian man had made a will to divide his property among the needy, and Nishapur Judge divided his property among the needy Muslims. After Ma'mūn failed to answer this question, he asked Imam Riḍā (A.S.) about its religious precept. The Imam answered:

Zoroastrians do not give charity to the needy Muslims. Write a letter to the Nishapur judge to take his property equivalence from public treasury and give it to the

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1 ﴿Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it﴾ Q. 42: 13.

Zoroastrians needy.<sup>1</sup>

2. Rayyān b. Shabīb also says, "I asked Imam Riḍā (A.S.) that my sister made a will that I give some money to a group of Christians. Can I divide that money among Muslims? The Imam said: Perform the will as set forth by your sister,<sup>2</sup> since God has said that ﴿And should anyone alter it after hearing it, its sin shall indeed lie on those who alter it﴾<sup>3</sup>

As you can see, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in his glorious words recognizes the rights of non-Muslim citizens who live in the Islamic community to think according to their creed and to act according to their customs and culture. He has gone so far as to insist on the necessity of respecting their thoughts that he said, "As much as they have taken from Zoroastrian possessions and divided among the needy Muslims, they should take from Muslims' public treasury and distribute among the Zoroastrian needy".

3. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) using the verse ﴿Say, 'O People of the Book! Come to a common word between us and you...﴾<sup>4</sup> that invited followers of divine religions to the common principles, used this principle in his discussions with the people of the book. Therefore, he relied on

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol.1, p.18.

2 'Uṭarūdī, 'Azīz Allāh *Musnad al-Imam al-Riḍā*, vol.2, p. 410.

3 Q. 2: 181.

4 Q. 3: 64.

common principles such as monotheism, resurrection, the revelation of heavenly books, the coming of the prophets, and their infallibility, and managed the discussion based on these principles.

4. It is quoted from Zakariā b. Ādam, a pupil of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), "A poor man from "people of the book"<sup>1</sup> came to me while he held his son's hand. He said, "I have brought my child to deliver him to you as a slave, feed him and give him clothes, so he will not die of hunger. "Zakariā said that I did not pay attention to him until I went to Imam Riḍā (A.S.) and asked him about it. The Imam prevented me from doing this and said, "The free man is not for sale. This is neither proper for you, nor for the people of the book".

As you can see, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) does not allow the dignity of a person to be subverted, and the value of his freedom is to be exchanged for material value, even though he is one of the people of the book, and this exchange is done with his own suggestion and desire.

This behavior of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) reminded us what happened to a Christian old man during the time of Imam Ali (A.S.). One day a blind and weak begging man passed

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1 Someone who is Christian, Jewish or Zoroastrian is considered as a citizen of an Islamic country and has a peaceful life with Muslims. As long as he does not carry out a hostile campaign against Muslims and the Islamic state, everyone in the Islamic government is duty-bound to accept him and protect his life, property and family.

by Imam Ali (A.S.) and his companions. Imam asked, "Who is this man who is so weak and begging?" They said, "He's a Christian man." The Imam was upset and said, "You have used him so much that he is old and disabled, and you're not giving him something? Provide his living expenses from public treasury."<sup>1</sup>

This is the respect of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) to the religious minorities that led them to live together with each other and all alongside Muslims and close to Imam Riḍā (A.S.) to benefit from his almighty. This important strategy for minorities not only led to greater unity among the followers of divine religions, but also exposed the glory of Islam to the judgment of others and attracted the hearts of enthusiasts to Islam.

## **2. The Need for Convergence in the Faithful Community**

Empathy and convergence in the social system of Islam are not just a tactic, but a strategic issue; because the convergence in the political thought of Islam is rooted in principles that the most important of which is monotheism, and monotheism, which is the most fundamental principle in all divine religions, leads to the consensus, because unity in the social system of Islam is

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1 Ṭūsī, Muhammad b. Hasan, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 7, p. 77; 'Uṭārudī, 'Azīz Allāh *Musnad al-Imam al-Riḍā*, vol.2, p. 304.



tied to monotheistic worldview. That is why the Holy Qur'an has united the invitation to monotheism by invitation to the union of society and bringing them together. The following verses are examples of this issue:

﴿Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So worship Me﴾<sup>1</sup>.

﴿Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me﴾<sup>2</sup>.

﴿This indeed is my straight path, so follow it, and do not follow [other] ways﴾<sup>3</sup>.

If you look at Islam's religious orders, it will become clear that this school directly or indirectly links the unity in society to the monotheism in the system of genesis. Law making such as Friday and congregation prayers, Hajj and the like are examples of these commands.

Even in the personal command such as prayer, phrases such as "You [alone] do we worship", "to You [alone] do we turn for help", "Guide us on the straight path", "Peace be upon us", "Hail to the righteous servants of God," and the like, remove the individuality from the human and connects him to the population. This means that in the monotheistic system of Islam, when a Muslim wants to pray to God, he must first formulate himself in the form of a community and he needs to speak with Him in the

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1 Q. 21: 92.

2 Q. 23: 52.

3 Q. 6: 153.

form of community to achieve this demand of the monotheistic school of Islam which never isolates the unity of society from monotheism and the system of creation.

One of the principles that are reflected well in Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) conduct is the need to care unity and sympathy among Muslims. It has not been seen that Imam Riḍā (A.S.) showed anger to the followers of other Islamic sects, or ignored the scientists and students from other sects who wanted to use Imam's knowledge.

In order to prevent any diversity among Muslims, the Imam recommended the believer to compromise and to avoid the anger against other people's intolerance. This is because one of the most important factors in social disagreements is to abandon the principle of compromise and assistance to the people in social life.

In the emphasis on preserving the principle, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) denied the improper debates that lead to tension and he also laid stress on the compromise with people.

The believer is not a true believer unless there are three qualities in him: a tradition from his God, a tradition from his Prophet and a tradition from his Imam ... As for the Prophet's tradition, it is to compromise with people<sup>1</sup>.

The result of the Imam's recommendation for compromise was that great Sunni scholars such as Yaḥyā

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1 Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. 'Alī, *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, p.424.

b. Yahyā, Ishāq b. Rahwayh, Muhammad b. Rāfa', Ahmed b. Ḥarb,<sup>1</sup> and the like at the gate of the city of Nishapur, along with the Shi'ite scholars, were eager to see the Imam's glorious face and hear the words of Imam until they heard the historical tradition of *al-Silsilat al-Dhahab* (Golden Chain) and recorded that sweet memory on the immortal pages of history.

If you want to discuss the role of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in unity and sympathy among Muslims in an exemplary manner, you should refer to his role in the Arab and non-Arab rapprochement.

Although national pride and patriotism are the natural and desirable characteristics of every human being, this feature, like all other hidden human characteristics, may be subject to extremes, in which case it will divert humanity from reason, and left him in a valley of prejudice and fanaticism.

The Arabian bias before Islam, which considered other races as their captives, is a testimony to this excessiveness.

However the Holy Prophet During his mission fought this false idea with words such as: "I do not prefer Arabs to non-Arabs". Therefore, he somewhat moderated this sense of ignorance. After the demise of the Prophet, once again, racism and Arab nationalism grew among some Arabs, and the idea of Arab supremacy grew.

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1 Cf. Sibṭ b. Jowzī, Yūsuf b. Ghazoghli, *Tadhkirat al-Khawās*, p. 315; Dhahabī Shāfi'i, Ahmad, *Siyar A'ālam al-Nubalā'*, vol. 10, p. 512.

Not only before Islam arrived in Iran, some Arabs were separated from Iran because they know Iranians as infidels, but also after the arrival of Islam into Iran, their sense of nationalism was not reduced. They went so far to express their feelings that they denied Iranians' Islam: "The Iranians did not accept the religion of Islam and what they have is a mix of Zoroastrianism and Islam."<sup>1</sup>

Mu'āwīyah's letter to the governor of Fars and Khuzestan, Zīyād b. Abīh, is a sign of the ignorant bias that still was presented among the people. In part of his letter, he has expressed his Arab bias as follows:

The people who are called "Mawālī" (non-Arab converts to Islam) among the Umma of Islam and are called "Farsi" ... must be treated in such a way that they can never raise their head. In the grocery division, reduce their share as much as you can. Be careful that the non-Arabs are not in the first line of the congregational prayer, even if they are both righteous and faithful, unless the number of Arabs is not enough to complete the lines.

Even if they are scholars in jurisprudence and Qur'an, they will not judge in any court, and they will not rule over any city in the Islamic cities, and in the passages, however high their position, they will not take precedence to the Arabs, even if the Arabs are dishonorable.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Ash'arī, Sa'd b. 'Abd Allāh, *Al-Maqālāt va al-Firaq*, p. 61.

2 Hilālī Kūfī, Salīm b. Qays, *Kitāb Salīm b. Qays al-Hilālī*, p. 282

Jurji Zeidan says about the prejudice of the Arabs against non-Arabs,

The Arabs did not walk in a row with the Mawālī, and the Mawālī did not have the right to choose nickname.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Arabs called them ' *ulūj* ' that means ignorant and infidel, and treated them as servants.<sup>2</sup>

We should also add that there was no one-sided bias of nationalism, and not only by the Arabs, but Iranians also had a racial and ethnic fanaticism more or less, due to the insults of the Arabs and it was evident in their social behavior. But the presence of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in Iran and his kind attitudes toward Iranians caused the Arabs to reconsider their behavior to Iranians and give them a hand of friendship, and the Iranians set aside their Iranian biases against the Arabs. Instead, they set Islam as the basis of their genuine identity of all Muslim nations, and warmly accepted Arab Muslims. Following this friendship and abandoning racial and Iranian bias, the Iranians not only tolerate Arab Muslim immigrants in their homeland and did not react to them, but they behaved immigrants respectfully and gave them special honor. This respect continued not only during their lives, but also after their demises. Iranian respect to buried offspring of Imams in

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1 nickname is a name that begins with " *ab* " or " *um* "

2 Georgie Zeidan, *Tarikh Tamaddun Islami, (History of Islamic Civilization)*, trans. Ali Jawaher Kalam, Tehran, Amir Kabir, 1373 sh. p. 229-230

Iran from the past to the present is a clear testimony to this fact.

### **Fifth Discourse: Task-orientedness and Good Relationship with the Poor**

Every human being, although a small member of society, should know that he is the member of a large society and also should know that whatever existing in the society does not belong to him alone so that he can spend it as he wishes; rather, it belongs to all members of the society, even the future generations have a right in it. Therefore, everybody is required to benefit as much as his normal need, because any excessiveness in expenditure would result in deprivation of others as well as that of the future generations. As it is mentioned in Islamic teachings, the despair of the poor is the result of the rich avoiding to pay their due rights. Referring to one of the reasons for paying *zakāt*, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has considered fulfillment of the needs of the poor as among the reasons for the obligation of *zakāt* and in response to a question asked by Muhammad b. Sanān, says:

The reason for the obligation of *zakāt* is provision of food for the needy... and this is because God has obliged the healthy ones to come to the help of the bedridden sick and other afflicted people; as God says, ﴿You will surely

be tested in your possessions and your souls<sup>1</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning the fact that proper consumption would prepare the ground for helping others, it is befitting to set the Imam's luminous words as an epigraph for our task as when he saw one of his servants throwing away a half-eaten fruit, he became disturbed and said:

If you are no more in need of this fruit, there are other people who are in need of it; give it to the needy.<sup>3</sup>

### 1. Helping the Needy

One of the topics of social conduct is the proper cooperation with and having a spirit of giving assistance to the people. We hear this from the Prophet of Mercy (S.A.W.), who has introduced rendering service to other people as one of the most desirable tasks with God and says:

People are the household of God; the best of you with God is the one who provides benefit to God's household and makes the people of the household happy.<sup>4</sup>

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who was truly a kind Imam, was a pioneer in helping others. Although he enjoyed the position of heir apparenacy, His Holiness used to behave in

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1 Q. 3: 186.

2 Ḥurr 'Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 6, p. 5.

3 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya'qūb, *Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 428; Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 49, 102.

4 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya'qūb, *Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 164.

the way his forefathers acted and with this behavior he instructed the proper lifestyle and altruism.

Before we mention some examples of Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) conduct toward the poor, it seems necessary to quote one of his recommendations, which suggests respecting the poor. In this regard, His Holiness said:

If a person encounters a poor Muslim and greets him in such a way that is different from greeting the rich, he will meet God on the Resurrection Day while He is angry with him.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the necessity of helping the poor, His Holiness said:

Your helping the poor is better than alms-giving.<sup>2</sup>

Now, here are some examples of His Holiness' conduct toward the poor.

1. Bazanṭī, one of Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) companions, said, "When he was in Merv, His Holiness wrote a letter to his son Imam Jawād (A.S.):":

I have heard that the servants take you out of the house through the backdoor for their own convenience and in order that no one would ask you for something. That is because of their being misery that they want no good would reach anyone from you. I want you, by the right I have upon you, from now on to leave and enter the house

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1 Ḥurr 'Āmili, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 8, p. 422.

2 Sharīf Qurshī, Bāqir, *Ḥayāt al-Imam al-Riḍā*, vol. 2, p. 82.



from the formal big front door and take with you some dirhams and dinars so that if a needy person asks you, you would be able to give him some.<sup>1</sup>

2. Among Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) actions concerning helping the poor was that in his migration's itinerary to Merv, he would alight and settle in poor areas and called on the houses of the poor, asking about their problems and if possible would see into their problems.<sup>2</sup>

3. Among Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) helps was his paying off the debt of the debtors. If he was able to pay their debts, he would pay off their debts<sup>3</sup>, and if that was not possible for him, he would guarantee their debt and ask the creditors to give them a respite so that they could gradually pay off their debt. This was due to the fact that he himself stated an Islamic law in Islamic society:

The debt must be suspended for one year, so that the debtor would have time to pay off his debt, otherwise the Islamic ruler will pay his loan from public treasury.<sup>4</sup>

Shaykh Ṭūsī, quoted Imam Riḍā (A.S.) about the question that from which sources the Islamic ruler should pay these debts? He said that it should pay from legal alms:

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1 Ḥurr 'Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 43, p. 463.

2 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 49 p. 122.

3 Cf. Sharīf Ghurashī, Bāqir, *Pajūhishī Daqīq Dar Zindigī Imam Ali b. Musa al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 62- 63.

4 Kulayni, Muhammad b. Ya'qūb, *Kāfī*, vol. 6, p. 283.

The debtor is given a due date until the news reaches the ruler and the ruler will pay his debt from debtors' share.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Kindness with Subordinates

Obviously, servants, caretakers, doorkeepers, and the like, although at a lower level, are human beings and have their own dignity and character. Hence, it is necessary to preserve their dignity and personality and respect their feelings and their rights.

Despite having a supreme position of Imamate and succession political post, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) had a human and Islamic behavior with his subordinates and always considered their dignity and respect.

Yāsir, the servant, says:

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) told us, “Do not stand up while you are eating, even if I stand above you.” It happened many times that the Imam Riḍā (A.S.) called one of us. When we answered that he was eating, he said, “Let him eat”.<sup>2</sup>

He also said, “On the day Imam's poisoning reached its peak, and his condition was critical, after noon-prayer he asked whether the servants had eaten? I said, ‘My lord! No one has appetite because of your poisoning’. At that time, the Imam sat down and said, ‘Set the table.’ Then he called all the servants and workers on the table. When

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1 Tūsī, Muhammad b. Hassan, *Tahzīb al-Ahkām*, vol. 6, p. 186.

2 Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Sh'ra*, vol. 16, p. 425.

they were full, he spoke kindly to all of them.”<sup>1</sup>

‘Abd Allah b. Ṣalt said, “I heard from one of the people of Balkh saying, 'I was in the company of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in his way to Khurāsān. One day, he called everyone to the table, and the slaves, black and white, came to the table. I said, 'May I be your ransom, it is better to have a separate table for them.' He said, 'God is one, all people's mother and father are one but the rewards are different, which depends on human behavior.’”<sup>2</sup>

### **Sixth Discourse: Workers' Rights Consideration**

However, in today's societies, international organizations, institutions and others have tried to protect workers and their rights through the approval of agreements and ratification various labor laws. Among them, Islamic school, more than any other, cares about this issue and provide efficient strategies.

The importance of the worker and his dignity, the employment contract between the worker and the employer, and determining the working-hours and wages are among these strategies. In this case, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has some remarkable points that are touched upon as follows:

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1 Ibn Bābway, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī (Sahykh Ṣadūq), *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol.2, p. 241.

2 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya‘qūb, *Kāfī*, vol. 8, p. 230.

## 1. Workers' Dignity

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), referring to the high position of the workforce in Islam, considers the worker as struggler in the way of God, says,

Those who work hard to seek divine bounties to provide for their families will have a greater reward than those who fight for God.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Contract with Fixed Wage

Today, one of the gross oppression is the exploitation of the workers by capitalists and aggressors. This great oppression has always existed throughout history, and today it is more modern than the past; because the capitalist networks oppress the working class with their organized connections and internal and external agents, and pay lower wages than labor value. But Islam, contrary to these cruel practices, has forbidden any kind of exploitation. And it has ordered everyone to pay workers' due. Qur'an says,

﴿O my people! Observe fully the measure and the balance, with justice, and do not cheat the people of their goods﴾<sup>2</sup>

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) who was grown in pure Islamic culture, wrote in a letter to Ma'mūn, when he outlines the Islam's instructions, mentions the necessity of observing

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1 Hurr 'Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 12, p. 43.

2 Q. 11: 85.

the weight and the measure, "Avoid lowering the scale and balance." And he has also noted the indecency of betrayal in financial matters, which includes betrayal to work force. The need for a contract between the workforce and the employer was considered a serious mandate by the Imam.

This historical incident which Sulaymān Ja'farī quoted about the Imam is a testimony to this fact:

"I went to Imam Riḍā (A.S.) to do an errand. I saw Imam out of the house as he was walking home, and I accompanied him. As we entered the house, the Imam paused a little and looked at the servants and workers who worked at the barn, among them he saw a black and strange man. He asked the servants, "Who is this man?" They said, "He is a daily-paid worker that we will pay his wages at the end of his work. The Imam asked, "Did you determine his wages?" They said, "We have not determined, but he does not expect much, and whatever we give, would satisfy him. The Imam was disturbed and said, "I instructed you not to employ anyone without wage determination. Then, he turned to me and said, "If you employ someone without wage determination and you intend to pay his wages threefold at the end, he thinks that you have not paid him rightly, but if you pay his wages as you set before, he will be satisfied and pleased, and if you add a little, he will adore you and pray for you."<sup>1</sup>

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1 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya'qūb, *Kāfi*, vol. 5, p. 288.

### 3. Working Hours

One of the important issues in working-class organizations is the amount of working hours that varies greatly in societies and ranges between eight to fifteen hours a day. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has paid attention to this issue, and he divided man's time into four parts, "Try to divide your time into four parts: one part to pray to God; another part to earn livelihood; the other part to spend on socializing and sharing with trusted brothers, who are familiar with your defects and in private treat you honestly; and finally devote the fourth part to lawful relaxation and pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

### Seventh Discourse: Protecting Nature and Preserving the Environment

During his lifetime, man has a close connection with the world around him, in addition to interacting with other humans. Mountains and plains, forests and deserts, seas and lands, and wild and domestic animals form the environment<sup>2</sup>.

From the Holy Qur'an's point of view, the relationship of human with his environment must be a positive relationship because the Creator has willed that natural manifestations such as earth<sup>3</sup>, rivers<sup>1</sup>, and seas<sup>2</sup> serve

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1 Majlisi, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 75, p. 346.

2 Cf. Vatandoust, Rezā, *Godhārī bar Sira-yi Imam Riḍā*, p. 246

3 Cf. Q. 67: 15.

human beings so that he can subjugate nature and use its natural manifestations. But it should not be forgotten that humans are responsible for the use of nature and its manifestations. The proper use of nature and its preservation are examples of these responsibilities. We should learn from the leaders of Islam that we are responsible for the nature and the necessity of environmental protection, since they did their best in this regard; as God's Prophet knew watering a thirsty tree and rescuing a person from thirst are equal.<sup>3</sup> Or Imam Bāqir (A.S.) introduces the domestic animal as entitled to alimony; the owner is obliged to pay this alimony<sup>4</sup>. Also, a leader such as Imam Riḍā (A.S.), on his way to the migration to Merv, occasionally dredged the spring<sup>5</sup>, and sometimes planted an almond tree with his hands.<sup>6</sup>

However, the importance of nature and the care of the environment can lead to many examples of Prophets' household teachings, but we just mention some practical measures of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) and his guidance:

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1 Cf. Q. 14: 32.

2 Cf. Q. 16: 14.

3 Ḥurr 'Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Shr'a*, vol. 12, p. 25.

4 Tūsī, Muhammad b. Hasan, *al-Mabsūṭ*, vol. 6, p. 47.

5 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 17, p. 256 & vol. 49, p. 125.

6 Ibid. vol. 49, p. 121.

## 1. Development of Land

In the Qur'an, God entrusts the responsibility for the development of the earth to mankind:

﴿He brought you forth from the earth and made it your habitation.﴾<sup>1</sup>

It is concluded from this verse that the development of the earth and, in general, the environment restoration as well as the observance of the principles of life in nature, have mingled with humanity and are his inevitable responsibilities. Imam Ali emphasized on the necessity of land development in a part of his covenant to Mālik Ashtar,

“It is necessary that your efforts in land development be more than the collection of taxes, because taxes are not provided except by land development, and anyone who desires to give tax without development, he has destroyed the cities and the servants of God, and his situation will not improve much.”<sup>2</sup>

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), along with playing his role in land development, on his way to Merv, near Nishapur, dredged a dry spring with his followers, and then entered the spring, perform ablutions and prayer. After this, people used to drink and perform ablution at that spring as treatment, and perform prayer in its side, so that the

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1 Q. 11: 61.

2 Q. 11: 61.



spring was known as the *Ḥammām al-Riḍā*.<sup>1</sup> Today, people know the bath as "Kohlān Spring".<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Planting Trees

One of the duties of man in nature is planting trees and takes care of it. The Prophet has made special orders in expressing human responsibility in nature and the necessity to improve the environment, and he introduced planting trees as ongoing charity:

Anyone who plants a tree, any human being or creatures eat from it, it is considered charity for him.<sup>3</sup>

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who was nurtured in pure Islamic culture, despite the fatigue of a long journey from Medina to Merv, planted some trees in several places with his blessed hands. Planting of almond trees in Nishapur at the home of a woman named Pasandeh is an example of his blessed acts.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Supporting Animals

Divine will is intended to capture species of animals for

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 145.

2 Namāzī, Shāhrūdī, Ali, *Mustadrak Safinat al-Bihār*, p. 7, p. 527; Muhammadī Ishtehārdī, Muhammad, *Rābita-yi Iran bā Islām va Tashayyu'*, p. 333-334.

3 Pāyandeh, Abulqāsim, *Nahj-al Faṣāḥa*, vol. 2, p. 563.

4 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol.49, p. 121; 'Uṭārudi, 'Azīz Allāh, *Musnad al-Imam al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 57.

mankind so that he can use some for feeding and riding, and enjoy some other types for dairy and meat products. But one should not forget that human beings have responsibilities to animals that he should not fail. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in necessity of protecting animals said:

“Anyone who eats in his house and some of the food falls down, he should pick it and eat it, but if he eats in wilderness or out of his house, he should leave the food for birds and other animals”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Eighth Discourse: The Need for Morality in Family**

The importance of forming a family in humankind is vital and inevitable. This is based on the instinct, love, affection and love between men and women before they are based on divine rules and laws. The school of Islam, on the one hand, referred to the importance of this issue, introduced marriage as one of the verses of God and a source of peace, as the Qur’an said,

﴿And of His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort in them﴾<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Islam has identified the hands of men who are neglecting their nature, and refusing to choose a spouse as devil's fellows. Prophet said,

"Your worst people are those who did not have

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1 Ibn Khālid Barqī, Ahmad b. Muhammad, *al-Mahāsīn*, vol. 2, p. 445.

2 Q. 30: 21.

spouses, and these are devils' brothers."<sup>1</sup>

In the course of this discussion, we will put Imam Riḍā (A.S.) and his ethic in the family as a model for every man and woman, and for the importance of marriage, the marriage conventions and the health of the family, we study his conduct and teachings:

### **1. Investigation about Desired Spouse**

Every man and woman who wants to choose a partner, it is necessary to know that the partner will be with him until the end of his life and will know his or her secrets; the partner who acts either as a mother and a mentor for children or as a spouse and father. Therefore, every man and woman must do research well about his or her partner, as Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said,

“Marriage is entrustment, whenever one of you marries her daughter, he has entrusted her, so each one of you must pay attention who he entrust his daughter to.”<sup>2</sup>

Direct advice of this narration goes back to the girls' families who need to be careful and do research when they say yes to their child's suitor. But boys are not excluded from this law and it is necessary to set aside their emotions when choosing a wife, and investigate carefully,

“Woman is a necklace; be careful what necklace you

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1 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 14, p. 156.

2 Tūsī, Muhammad b. Hassan, *Amālī*, p. 519.

put on".<sup>1</sup>

Prophet also clarifies the duty of men to investigate their future wife, saying,

"Choose honorable women as your children's mothers, because women give birth to children looking like their siblings."<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Determining and Paying Marriage Portion

It is natural that the bride and groom, and their families agree on the marriage portion, but the groom must know that before religion, custom and law, it is his duty to pay the marriage portion. As soon as marriage contract is concluded, half of marriage portion is obligated to the husband and if it is demanded, it must be paid, and the other half is payable after the wedding. The Prophet has said that anyone who decides not to pay his wife's marriage portion is considered an adulterer by God.<sup>3</sup> Imam Riḍā (A.S.) warns against not paying the marriage portion,

"God is the All-forgiving of all sin, except sin of the guilty person who denies the woman's marriage portion or refuses to pay the laborer wage."<sup>4</sup>

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1 Ibn Bābwayh, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Ma'ānī al-Akhhbār*, p.144.

2 Suyṭūṭī, Jalāluddīn, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 1, p. 504.

3 Ṭabrisī, Hassan b. Faḍl, *Makārim al-Akhlāq*, p. 429.

4 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 13, p. 378; Namāzī, Shāhrūdī, Ali, *Mustadrak Safinat al-Biḥār*, vol. 9, p. 501.

### 3. Kindness in the Family

The family must have a solid foundation that is love and affection. The husband and wife should be sympathizer and enjoy each other's presence. The conditions are not like that they only want to compromise because they have to, because compromise is the post-war peace that comes from inevitability and it is for the sake of their own or children's interests or any other expediency. A house without love and bondage of hearts in which husband and wife live only on the basis of compromise is like a prison that its prisoners are compelled to tolerate each other. Referring to the importance of the family, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has mentioned some of the factors that make this center more attractive. In his glorious words, he advised the necessity of good behavior in the family, as well as the manner in which he behaved with his wife,

"One whose faith is superior to others, he is kinder to his family, and comparing all of you, I am the most kind to my family."<sup>1</sup>

As you can see, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has introduced good behavior in the family as a criterion of faith; if we want to know what our faith's score is, we need to look at our own behavior in the family. If our behavior is good and excellent, the score of faith is also excellent; otherwise it will be weak.

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1 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 71, p. 287.

#### 4. Providing Family Needs

One of the most important tasks of men is to meet the needs and provide the comfort of the family. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in reference to this duty of men said, "It is imperative for everyone who is financially motivated to provide more comfort for his family."<sup>1</sup>

#### 5. Mental Security with Prinking up at Home

One of the important ethical commands related to the family is the need for the husband and wife to prink up at home. As a man expects his wife to prink up, he must, prink up himself to create affection and attract his wife's attention and satisfy her desires. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said, "Your wife expects you as you expects her."<sup>2</sup>

As he ordered others to prink up for their wives, he himself was the pioneer in this regard. I went to Imam Riḍā (A.S.) and saw he had tinted his hair. I said surprisingly, "May I be your ransom, have you tinted your hair?" The Imam answered,

"Certainly, the preparation of men is one of the things that increase the chastity of women. Women have abandoned chastity due to the fact that their husbands have left their readiness and prinking up. Then he said, 'would you like to see your wife unadorned like you?' I said, 'no'. The Imam said, 'this is the meaning of being

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1 Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. 'Alī, *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, p. 442.

2 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 73, p. 102

unprepared'.”<sup>1</sup>

We recognize from this tradition that the rights of women and men in the family must be mutual, and each one has a righteous and humane relationship. Adornment and avoidance of slatternliness are parts of these mutual rights, which if properly done, will encourage both parties and bring peace of mind. Because once the man and woman prink up for each other inside the family, in addition to building a desirable relationship and deepening the affections, couples' confidence increases. In this way, the woman will not consider another man except her husband, and the man will not be greedy to another woman. The security that comes from this reciprocal behavior covers all aspects of the life of men and women and eliminates any pessimism and uncertainty in marital relationships.

### **Ninth Discourser: Moderation, the Most Pivotal Principle of Life**

Going to extremes in consumption is a huge flaw that the modern human being is infected with. Obviously, if this flaw is not treated and consumption is not corrected, the future of the human being will be threatened and problems will arise in various spheres of individual and social life and human beings will step onto the path of

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1 Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya'qūb, *Kāfi*, vol. 5, p. 567.

annihilation. The Holy Qur'an, which takes into account these issues and the consequences of improper consumption, considers the excessive consumption as one of the most reprimanded deeds, describing it as an action of pharaohs and says,

﴿For Pharaoh was indeed a tyrant in the land, and indeed he was an unrestrained [despot]﴾.<sup>1</sup>

The Qur'an, referring to the obscenity of wastefulness, introduced the wasteful aligned with the devil and says,

﴿But do not squander wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of Satans﴾.<sup>2</sup>

Discernibly, if the principle of moderation is exerted to consumption, it brings so much decent effects and blessings; and if it is neglected, it would bring harmful consequences for the health and dignity of the individual and society. Now, using the words of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), we will note some of these blessings:

### **1. Abatement of Financial Crimes**

One of the harmful effects of wastefulness in society is the rise in the expenses of life. Noticeably, when natural and legitimate incomes do not meet the heavy cost of living, humans have to involve in financial and economic crimes such as embezzlement, bribery, theft, fraud, overcharging, using short weights, usury, and so on.

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1 Q. 10: 83.

2 Q. 17: 26-27



Perhaps the words of Imam Ṣādiq (A.S.) refer to the same consequences when he said, "poverty and deprivation are bordered with disbelief."

If someone feels guilty of committing the crimes deep inside, he must give up to overwhelming extra work, which hurts human in short-term and endangers human health. This is from Imam Riḍā (A.S.) as he says:

"Anyone who is satisfied with low lawful income will bear a light burden and his family will live in peace, and the Lord will enable him to see the pain of the world and its healing, and ultimately will send him with a steadfast faith to the abode of peace."<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Attaining the Perfection of Faith

It has been proven in Islamic teachings that there is a direct and close relationship between faith and action, and every good and evil act has a positive or negative effect on faith. The Prophet (S.A.W.) says,

"Faith and action are in harmony with each other, and neither is corrected without the other."<sup>2</sup>

Hence, as far as man possesses righteous deeds, the same is strengthened in his faith and he is on the path of evolution. From the Islamic viewpoint, moderation in consumption and avoiding wastefulness and lavishness are examples of good practice. Thus, any influence that other

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1 Qummī, Abbās, *Safīnat al-Bihār*, vol. 2 p.378.

2 Hisām al-Din al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, vol. 1 p. 36.

acts of righteousness make on human faith and personality, the observance of the pattern of consumption will bring the similar influence. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in reference to the effect of moderation in livelihoods said:

“No human will figure out the truth of faith completely unless he has three traits. Reflection in religion, moderation in livelihoods and [...]”<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Health Guarantee

Eating and drinking is not the goal, but the goal is maintaining health and the possibility of survival. Accordingly, one should give up any type of food or drink that threatens human’s health. Excessive eating is one of the things that makes human vulnerable to diseases because medical science has proven today that excessive food intake leads to obesity, and obesity increases the likelihood of developing a variety of chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, increase in fat accumulation and blood pressure, diabetes and joint discomfort. Therefore, the Islamic sharia has forbidden humans to overeat and has recommended moderation in eating. Imam Riḍā’s (A.S.) overeating prohibition is one of these orders where he says,

“If people cut their food and do not overeat, their bodies will stay healthy and well.”<sup>2</sup>

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1 Ibn Shu‘ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl*, p. 446.

2 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 2 p. 155; Majlisī,

In the necessity of avoiding extremes in eating, he likened the human body to a farmland, saying,

“The body is like a clean, ready-to-use land for farming, where watering must not be excessive or minimal, because excessiveness overwhelms the land and destroys it, just as watering less than necessary makes it dry and non-cultivable. The human body also has such similarity in eating and drinking.”

He goes on to say:

“The integrity of the body is related to food and drink, as well as the corruption of the body. Correspondingly, if you made both of them optimal and good, you would be well, and if not you would be ill.”<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Securing the Rich

Experience has shown that the concentration of wealth with the rich, increases the gap between them and the deprived class of society and leads to a greater distance between them, because it is natural that those who have more income with their financial backing can build themselves an aristocratic life and in this way they consume a large part of the community's potential. However, the underprivileged stratum due to minimum income and financial poverty lacks the purchasing power.

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Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol.63 p. 334.

1 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 16 p. 455; Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol.59 p. 316.

Obviously, if the gap is not restored and minimized by regulating the wealth of the poor and improving the lives of the underprivileged, it will not be long before pessimism and distrust will be formed, and the hearts of the deprived people of the community will be hardened and malicious against the wealthy class. It will accumulate and the explosion will come in the long run, so that if this pessimism is not controlled, the explosion, tensions, violence and even physical conflicts might emerge. Perhaps the following verse, which is linked to the donation and prevention of destruction, implies that:

﴿Spend in the way of the Lord, and do not cast yourselves with your own hands into destruction﴾.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, if the matter of helping the underprivileged of the community is forgotten and the wealth is only stored at one pole of society, there will be the right grounds for a massive explosion in society. Also if the needs of the deprived are not provided directly and indirectly, and thus their anger is not restrained, finally, their anger reaches its peak and explode, and its flames will capture the wealthy<sup>2</sup>.

The sacred sharia of Islam, which always seeks to maintain calm in society, has provided effective solutions to prevent these kinds of tensions. Advice on proper consumption and helping the needy with the excess of income are among these approaches. Obviously, if this

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1 Q. 2: 195.

2 Makārim Shīrazī, Nāsir, *Tafsīr Nimūnih*, vol. 2 p. 21.

recommendation is implemented, the standard of living of the deprived class will be improved, and the risk of an explosion against the rich will be minimized. What was said is the theme of this sociological talk of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), which highlights the necessity of poor tax and its benefits that also preserve the security of the wealthy and mentions the blessings of this divine command and states,

“The reason for legal alms is procurement of the essentials of the needy and the safekeeping of the rich’s wealth.”<sup>1</sup>

Affirming and emphasizing this point, another statement from him is narrated by Faḍl b. Shādhān, which regards justice and decency to others as a factor in the survival of the blessings,

“The exercise of justice and altruism is the declaration of blessings durability.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Tenth Discourse: The Essentiality of Hygiene for Everyone**

Hygiene is one of the most important principles in human life. By taking care of hygiene, you can eliminate all kinds of illnesses and ensure your physical and mental health.

The religion of Islam, which is always in the thought of the health of the human body and soul, regards hygiene as

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1 Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, vol. 6 p. 5.

2 Nūrī Hamadani, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 11 p. 317

the intellectual and religious duty of each person and made effective recommendations. Advice on dressing and using nice fragrance, taking care of clothes and body, washing hands before and after the food, bathing and performing obligatory and recommended ritual bathing, observing the limits of marital relationship and so on are among these instructions that if followed, mental health is provided. Here we quote the experts from the World Health Organization who say that spending on health is a kind of investment, not waste of money.

All the leaders of Islam have emphasized on health, and have presented effective recommendations for its institutionalization; however, what is intended here is referring to Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) behavioral and speech conduct and we focus on this topic in two sections: "Body Hygiene" and "Mental Health":

### **A. Body Hygiene**

The teachings of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) concerning body hygiene are abundant to the extents that they demand several books to expound on. However, in this work which is written about the universal ethos of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), brief citing is inevitable. Consequently, we only mention some of his hygienic teachings, letting the details of the discussion to another chance.

## Bathing

One of the important issues to keep in mind regarding public hygiene is bathing, which has a profound effect on the health and well-being of humans. Thereby, Islamic teachings have paid special attention to this matter and much emphasis has been placed on bathing and body washing. The commandment of Islam to all kinds of obligatory and recommended ritual bathing is due to the importance of cleanliness. Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) words are the proof where he expressed on the philosophy of ritual bathing,

“The cause of ritual bathing is neatness and cleansing of the human soul from contamination and cleansing other parts of the body<sup>1</sup>.”

He emphasized some of the benefits of bathing and cleaning of the body where says,

“The benefit of bathing is to moderate a person's temper, cleanse the pus of the body, soften the veins and tendons, make the large organs of the body strong, and eliminate the excreta and infections out of the body<sup>2</sup>.”

Although bathing vouches human hygiene, there are limitations to be observed. Imam Riḍā (A.S.), in addition to encouraging people to cleanliness and bathing, also

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. 'Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Ilal al-Sharāyī'*, vol. 1 p. 888, chapter 195.

2 Nuri, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-wasā'il*, vol. 1 p. 375; Reyshahri Muhammad, *Al-Musua'ta al-Tabayah*, vol. 1, p. 162.

highlighted its restrictions. One of these cases is the bathing with full stomach, as he says,

“Bathing with full stomach might bring about colic<sup>1</sup>.”

Other hygienic measures to be taken in the bathroom are to avoid combing and brushing in the bathroom. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said,

“Beware of combing your hair in the bathroom, because it causes cholera in hair. Beware of brushing your teeth in the bathroom, as this will cause cholera in the teeth. Beware of cloth washing your head and face with your rag<sup>2</sup>.”

### **Hand and Face Hygiene**

Since hands are the only means of contact with the eyes, ears, nose and mouth, proper hand hygiene is necessary because in case of negligence, it may become dirty under the nails and between the lines of the fingertips and enter the body through the aforementioned pores and thus the body health could be compromised. Hence, in Islam, washing hands and face is emphasized in different ways. Commandment to ablution and the washing hands and face after waking up, as well as washing hands before and after food is the reason for the importance of hygiene in Islam.

Answering the question whether human can eat

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1 Sharīf Qurshī, Bāqir, *Zindigīyi Imam al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 223.

2 Nūrī Hamādānī, Husayn, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 1 p. 382.



without washing hands after waking up, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) said, “No, because he does not know where his hands have been during that time thus and one should wash his hands<sup>1</sup>.”

In his encouragement to wash hands before eating, he introduced this advice of the attributes of the elders and kings, saying; “This is of the traits of the Kings<sup>2</sup>.”

The Eighth Imam (A.S.), referring to a part of the wisdom of ablution, mentioned the purity of the body among the benefits of ablution and says:

“The ablution is stressed since the servant should be clean when stands before the Lord for prayer, and obey what the Lord has commanded him, and be pure from any kind of filth and impureness<sup>3</sup>.”

### **Oral and Dental Hygiene**

Oral and dental hygiene is vital and everyone requires observing it. Meanwhile, Islam's recommendation to oral and dental hygiene and brushing is exemplary. Imam Riḍā (A.S.), who is trained in the school of Islam, has words interesting to hear about oral and dental hygiene about which we mention some examples:

It is narrated from Imam Riḍā (A.S.) who quotes from

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *‘Ilal al-Sharāyī’*, vol. 1 p. 890, chapter 195.

2 Ibn Khālid Barqī, Ahmad b. Muhammad, *al-Mahāsin*, vol. 2, p. 425.

3 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 2 p. 103.

the Prophet (S.A.W.) who said, “Your mouths are paths from among the paths of your Lord; so clean them<sup>1</sup>.”

“Tooth brushing increases the light of the eyes, grows the hair and eliminates epiphora<sup>2</sup>.”

“Anyone who wants his teeth not to be decayed does not eat sweets unless he takes a bite of bread before<sup>3</sup>.”

The recommendation is because bread crumbs fill between the teeth and their possible pores and prevents sugar from damaging the tooth.

### **Hair and Nails Hygiene**

Hair and nails hygiene is a hygienic recommendation that everyone must follow. Cutting short and cleaning hair and nails, as well as combing hair are part of these recommendations. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) in reference to the necessity of hair and nails hygiene says,

“Follow the traditions of Friday, which include: ... washing your face and head’s hair with hollyhocks, cutting short your whisker hair, clipping nails, changing clothes (wearing clean clothes instead of dirty clothes) and using a fine fragrance<sup>4</sup>.”

On the verse “Put on your adornment on every

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1 Maḗlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 73 p. 130.

2 Ṭabrisī, Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan, *Makarim Al-Akhlāq*, p. 50.

3 Namāzī Shāhrūdi, Ali, *Mustadrak Safinat al-Bihār*, vol. 5, p. 186; Askarī, Murtaḍa, *Ṭib al-Riḍā*, p. 115.

4 Ibn Bābway, Alī ibn Husein (The father of Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 128

occasion of prayer<sup>1</sup>,” he considers combing the hair of head and face of the orders of the verse and says,

“And relating to this ornament, is combing hair in every prayer<sup>2</sup>.”

### Defecation Hygiene

One of the things that everybody inevitably faces is the matter of bowel movement and defecating, which also has its own rituals. Put the weight of the body on the left foot<sup>3</sup>, avoiding urination in standing position<sup>4</sup>, confirmation of emptiness and depletion of the urethra from acidic sediment<sup>5</sup>. Imam Riḍā (A.S.), referring to some of these rituals said:

“The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) has forbidden a man to answer others’ question or speak while defecating<sup>6</sup>.”

The Prophet says elsewhere in the necessity of quick urination,

“Anyone who does not wish to suffer from bladder pain should not hold his urine, even on the back of the

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1 Q. 7: 31.

2 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Man lā yahḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 1, p. 128.

3 Yazdī, Muhammad Kāzim, ‘Urwat al-Wuthqā, p. 57.

4 Ḥurr ‘Āmilī, Muhammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā’il al-Shī’a*, vol 1, p. 352.

5 Ibid. p. 320.

6 Ibid. p. 308.

stead<sup>1</sup>.”

### **B: Mental Health**

One of the vital matters that have a double necessity is person's mental health and peace of mind. One possesses mental health is able to do everyday activities efficiently without any anxiety and stress and to communicate with others in a reasonable and healthy way and enjoys life. In this occasion, using the words of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), we mention some examples of referents of mental health:

#### **Time Management and Healthy Recreation**

Although healthy recreation is one of the most important mental and psychological needs of humans, some people do not have the opportunity to visit and go to promenades because of business and livelihood hardships. This is where you need to manage time in order to allocate a part to healthy recreation, because if time management is neglected and human pursues full-time business, due to the daily and monotonous routine of life, a kind of lethargy overcomes the human life and the soul of the human gets tired and annoyed.

Imam Riḍā (A.S.), highlighting the necessity of time management says,

“Try to divide your time into four parts: a part to

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1 Burūjirdī, Ḥusayn, *Jami'ah ahādith al-Shi'a*, vol. 2, p. 225; Kāfī, Hasan, *Imam Riḍā Uswa al-Şirāt al-Mustaqīm*, p. 222.

worship and privacy with the Lord; a part for making money and providing living expenses; another part of your time in dealing with trusted brothers, who show you your faults and covertly are intimate and sincere to you, and the fourth part to healthy recreation and lawful pleasure<sup>1</sup>.”

Interestingly, the Imam (A.S.) considered the fourth part very important in the persistence of the tradition and has introduced it as the basis of other parts and states,

“Through the aid of this part of your time, you can manage other parts.”

Along with the necessity of human happiness, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has also suggested the necessity to rejoice others, since providing happiness to others is a godly act and a good human morality. He suggested helping people with disabilities and attending them in livelihoods regarding how one can cheer up others, as he says:

“One must insist on satisfying the demands of the believers and rejoice them and resolve their miseries, because in the Lord's realm, after the fulfillment of the obligatory duties, nothing is superior to satisfy the needs of the believers<sup>2</sup>.”

These are the illuminated words of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) that the altruist people of Iran have taken them in order to share their joy with other compatriots in need on special

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1 Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 75, p. 346.

2 Ibn Bābway, Alī b. Husayn (The father of Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Fiqh al-Riḍā*, p. 339.

occasions such as the beginning of the new year and the school year, as well as Eid al-Fitr, by holding celebrations such as the “Charity Celebration,” “Affections Celebration,” and “Golrizān Celebration.” It happens when the altruist people, given the extent of the need of the needy at each of the above particular time, share their joy with the needy families every year by donating new shoes and clothes at the beginning of the New Year (*nawrūz*) and the donation of writing wares at the beginning of the school year, as well as financial aids to release unintentional blood money of prisoners on the verge of Eid al-Fitr.

### Trust in God and Mental Health

Trust (*tawakkuʿ*), which is rooted in the belief in the Lord<sup>1</sup>, has many effects and blessings that include deepening the knowledge on the Lord<sup>2</sup>, increase of certainty and belief<sup>3</sup>, the sense of supportive existence<sup>4</sup>, the feeling of optimism about the ability to do the work<sup>5</sup>, lack of being in need of others<sup>6</sup>, the immunity against failure<sup>1</sup>,

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1 Q. 3: 122; 5: 23.

2 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Amālī*, p. 327.

3 Laythī Wāsiṭī, Ali b. Muhammad, *Uyūn al-Hukm wa al-Mawāʿiz*, p. 24.

4 Q. 3: 159.

5 Ibn Shuʿba al-Harrānī, Hasan b. Ali, *Tuhaf al-Muhammad*, p. 27.

6 Laythī Wāsiṭī, Ali b. Muhammad, *Uyūn al-Hukm wa al-Mawāʿiz*, p.

etc.<sup>2</sup>

Some of these works emerge in the words of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), two cases of which we highlight here: First, it is peace for the human with reliance. One who relies on the Lord, because of the lack of facilities and the unfavorable conditions, does not abandon his goal, but by trust in the Lord commence his sacred movement and continues with all power and with complete peace of mind tries to reach his goal. In reference to this effect of trust, Imam (A.S.) said,

“The limit of trust is that man does not fear anyone except the Lord<sup>3</sup>.”

One of the other effects of trust in his words is the feeling of optimism about the ability to carry out a work, because trust in the Lord transforms man's attitude upon the world, and strengthens his belief in the fact that all the objects of the world are the creations of the creator, and He has created all for the comfort of man. It is clear that this belief and a positive look to the world will double the effort and ability of the individual, making the unevenness smooth and difficulties easy<sup>4</sup>.

448.

1 Nurī, Husayn *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 11 p. 217.

2 Cf. Qāsimī, Sulaymān, *Behdāshht va Salāmat-i Ravān*, pp. 95–101.

3 Ibn Shu'ba al-Harrānī, Hasan b. Ali, *Tuhaf al-Uqūl*, p. 445.

4 Laythī Wāsiṭī, Ali b. Muhammad, *Uyūn al-Hukm va al-Mavāiz*, p.

426.

Imam Riḍā (A.S.) says in this respect,  
“Whosoever wishes to be stronger than everyone else  
should trust in the Lord<sup>1</sup>.”

### **Mental Health in Avoiding Bad Temper**

One of the mental illnesses that may appear in some people is malice and jealousy of others. A person suffering from this disease spends his life in an envy fire, wishing the elimination of other people’s blessings, and will burn in the hell he has provided. Imam Riḍā (A.S.), pointing to one of the consequences of this kind of bad temper says:

“There is neither comfort for the avaricious nor for the jealous<sup>2</sup>.”

How beautiful is this wisdom of Socrates, who in referring to the aftereffects of jealousy, said, “A jealous person becomes skinny because of others’ fatness<sup>3</sup>.”

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1 Ibn Bābwayh Qummī, Muhammad b. ‘Alī (Shaykh Ṣadūq), *Amālī*, p. 358.

2 Ibn Shu‘ba al-Harrānī, Hasan b. Ali, *Tuhaf al-Uqūl*, p. 450.

3 Cf. Mūsavī Lārī, Mujtabā, *Barrisī Mushkilāt-i Akhlāqī va Ravānī*, p. 99.



## **Conclusion:**

### **The Universal Charter of Ethics from Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) Perspective**

To summarize this study, some instances of Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) moral instructions, which have universal trend and already have been mentioned in this work, are noted as the universal charter of ethics in His highness teachings. We hope that Muslims, the disciples of other revealed religions and other free humans and freethinkers in spite of having cultural differences and variety, attempt to implement the articles of this unifying and reverential charter, which are taken from the doctrines of this Proof of God:

1. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has defined wisdom and intellect, which are the greatest investments of humanity as to be forbearance and friendship with others.

2. Imam Riḍā (A.S.) condemns whatever threatens the society and ruins the security and comfort of others.

3. Since in religious and worldly affairs, people need a protector and ruler, Imam Riḍā (A.S.), considered a society without a government and ruler far from the

wisdom of the wise God.

4. The justice of the rulers is a double need and government officials must observe it in Raḍawī utopia.

5. Meritocracy is a principle that both responsibility respondents and the people who have the right to delegate responsibility to others must observe it.

6. Raḍawī utopia abounds with honesty and philanthropy, affection and trust, lawfulness and justice and other human and Islamic values.

7. In a society, which benefits from the culture and ideology of Imam Riḍā (A.S.), human beings are dependent upon each other and everyone's happiness pertains to the other's happiness.

8. In such a society, everyone treats others, as he likes to be treated.

9. In this society, everyone pledges to honor the life, dignity, individuality and variety of human beings and to behave humanly to every person from different races.

10. People who live in such a society are affectionate and warm to others and for the sake of common characteristics overlook the differences that may exist among them, and fraternal relationship with others is the topmost priority for them.

11. Unlike those who are trapped in secularism and consider religion and politics as separate from each other, in the ideology of Imam Riḍā (A.S.) politics and religion overlap each other. Thus, there can be both political

religionists and religious politicians.

12. The citizens in Raḍawī utopia put the elements that lead to the consolidation of society and the bond among men on their agenda and discard the anomalies, which may threaten the solidity of the society.

13. In the Raḍawī culture and ideology, men strive for kindness and generosity and everyone considers humans as their family members and respects the members of this family.

14. Citizens in the Raḍawī utopia do not forsake the children, the elderly, the poor, the sufferers, and the forlorn and always try to serve these people.

15. In such a society, there are no oppressors and the oppressed; because no one is exploited but is rewarded based on the efforts he does.

16. People in Raḍawī utopia commit themselves to justice, peace and tranquility, condemn any violence and violation and consider them against the social life conditions.

17. In this culture, all human beings are invited to mutual understanding, social benefits and promotion of peace, universal morality and philanthropic conducts.

18. People in this culture apply the factors that fortify the society in order to grow and promote social existence; moreover they cast off whatever that threatens the society and overall, they enhance their level of tolerance against the limitations of social life.

19. In Imam Riḍā's (A.S.) new world order, dialogue of civilizations has its own special standing. These dialogues have principles and standards, which His Holiness has specified, and everyone is obliged to follow.

20. Regardless of language, time, race, nationality and religion, Imam Riḍā (A.S.) has regarded the alliance of human beings as something worthy and essential and has called everyone toward a peaceful life with others.

21. In the ideology of His Holiness, any kind of schism and disagreement in the camp of monotheistic religions is an abominable matter and considerable respect is assigned for the disciples of other revealed religions.

22. In His Highness outlook, unity in the social system of Islam has been intertwined with Monotheistic worldview. Hereupon every action, which harms this unity, is condemned and denounced.

23. In Raḍawī culture, revering the poor and fulfilling their needs is a principle and the needy should be treated in a way that they do not feel humiliated.

24. The labor force in Raḍawī culture has a supreme status and is identified as the workers of God. Therefore, both imposing extra work on them and underrating their work are rejected and condemned.

25. A family is founded by the mutual love and tenderness of husband and wife and every element, which endangers and threatens the security of a family, is denounced and condemned.

26. In Raḍawī culture, moderate consumption is the most vital principal of life and by observing it, people and the society receive many blessings.

27. Physical and psychological hygiene, which is one of the most significant principles in human life, is a necessity in Raḍawī culture, which everyone must benefit from.

28. In this culture, caring about nature and cleansing the environment is a necessity and the community does its best to emphasize on it.

29. How beautiful it is when the leaders of great religions, regardless of the present policies of countries and the disagreement among the leaders, talk about the reconciliation among the religions and nations and act based on it.

30. What a gift it is when the political and religious leaders apologize from each other after disputes, wars and cold wars and substitute warfare and hatred with a stable peace.



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