

Letter to Malik al- Ashtar

Session Two

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What are the different groups of people mentioned in this section?
- 2) How does Imam describe the common people and the chiefs?
- 3) What qualities should we look for those in those whose company we keep?

Agenda

- Groups of people in society
- Social and Political etiquette
- Social Disharmony
- Covering the faults of others
- Harms of flattery

Groups of people in society

- 1) Common people
- 2) Chiefs
- 3) Those who spread corruption:
 - fault finders
 - those who spread hatred
 - rumor mongers
 - back biters
- 4) Those who have bad influence
 - misers
 - cowards
 - greedy people

5) Those who support sin and oppression

6) those who openly speak the truth

- support truth
- refuse to support evil

7) God fearing and truthful people

8) The virtuous and the vicious

Social and Political etiquette

Religion is sociological. Islam advocates totality of religion in all spheres of life.

In principle, any religious allegiance might make demands on every aspect of life to such a degree that a religious body could constitute a complete society, its way of life a self-sufficient culture. But Islam especially has tended to make this kind of total demand on life. In many spheres, not only public worship but such spheres as civil law, historical teaching, or social etiquette, Muslims succeeded quite early in establishing distinctive patterns identifiable with Islam as a religion.

Hodgson, pg 89

Social Disharmony

- an evil deed or thought violates natural law and breaks the natural fabric of society
- it affects the collective consciousness of society, the community consciousness
- rise of a society depends on the coherence of the collective consciousness
- the destruction of the community consciousness can be averted by individuals who practice virtue and truthfulness

Covering the faults of others

Qualities of Allah

One who reveals the beautiful and covers the evil

Adorn me with the adornment of the righteous, and clothe me in the ornaments of the God fearing, through . . .

. spreading about good behaviour, covering faults,

Dua Makarimul Akhlaq, Saheefa as-Sajjadiyya

Whoever comes to know of an evil of his brother [in faith] and covers it, Allah will cover him on the Day of Judgment

Imam Ali ar-Ridha (a)

Harms of Flattery

O Allah, replace for me . . .
the attachment of flatterers
with love set right

Dua Makarimul Akhlaq, Saheefa as-Sajjadiyyah

avoid . . . love of exaggerated praise because this is one
of the most reliable opportunities for Satan to obliterate
the good deeds of the virtuous.

Letter to Malike Ashtar, Nahjul Balagha