

Letter to Malik al- Ashtar

Session Three

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Imam (a) mentions different classes of people in this section. How are these groups linked?
- 2) List some of the leadership qualities that Imam (a) advises Malik about.
- 3) To work for society is a difficult task. What are some of the obstacles and challenges?

Agenda

- Classes of people in society
- Building good relationships
- Appreciation
- Noble characteristics
- Poverty

Classes of people in society

- 1) The Army
- 2) Secretaries
- 3) Judges
- 4) Maintainers of Justice
- 5) Those who pay head tax and land tax
- 6) Traders
- 7) Industrial workers
- 8) The Poor

Building good relationships

- strengthen others
- be fair to them
- be kind and compassionate
- appreciate them
- trust them
- look after their affairs
- monitor their work

Appreciation

Be like the honeybee, which always drinks the purest of things, and yields the purest of things, and does not break any bough that it alights upon.

Imam Ali (a)

Encouragement and appreciation play a most basic role in the motivation of individuals . . . while being the cheapest kind of medicine, it is so marvelously effective that it can infuse new life into a sluggish and impoverished society and open before it new vistas of life.

Sayyid Mujtaba Musawli Lari

The Role of Appreciation in social progress

Ethics and Spiritual Growth

Excellence through noble characteristics

See how We have made some of them to excel others, and certainly the Hereafter is much superior in respect of excellence.

Sura al Israa, 17:21

Excellence is through perfection and noble actions, not through wealth and grand actions

Whoever prefers others over himself has deserved the term of excellence (Fadhilat)

Hadith from Imam Ali (a)

Whoever does good to one who does evil to him
has achieved complete excellence

Force yourself towards noble characteristics
because lowly characteristics are in your nature

Hadith from Imam Ali (a)

Poverty

O Allah, I seek refuge in you from poverty and disbelief

Holy Prophet (s)

O my son, whoever is afflicted with poverty is afflicted with four things:

- weakness in his faith
- loss in his intelligence
- softness in his religion
- decrease in his shamefulness (self dignity)

so seek refuge from poverty

Imam Ali (a)