

Moral Counsel in Nahjul Balagha

Session Three

Questions

- 1) What is the relationship between Zuhd and Altruism?
- 2) How can we practice altruism in our modern, affluent societies?

Agenda

- Defining Altruism
- The Zahid and Altruism
- Signs of Altruism
- Altruism in the Holy Quran
- Readings from Nahjul Balagha
 - Khutba no. 209
 - Letter no. 45

Defining Altruism - الايثار Al-Ithar

- 1) Concern for others
- 2) Beyond duty and obligation
- 3) Preferring others over yourself
- 4) Giving when you yourself are needy
- 5) Not expecting any compensation, direct or indirect

The Zahid and Altruism

The zahid is hard on himself, and kind to others.

He has minimum needs and is content with less.

He is sensitive to the needs of others.

He is more satisfied when others are happy than when he himself is happy.

Signs of Altruism

Not being egoistic and concerned about the self

Able to withstand hardship by sacrificing

Seeing others as connected to yourself

Loving others and being sensitive to their needs

Understanding the difference it can make in their lives

Altruism in the Holy Quran

الَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا
وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ۗ وَ
مَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

And those who made their abode in the city and in the faith before them love those who have fled to them and do not find in their hearts a need of what they are given, and prefer (them) before themselves though poverty may afflict them, and whoever is preserved from the miserliness of his soul, these it is that are the successful ones.

(Sura Hashr, 59:9)

The foremost (in faith) from the
Muhajiroon and the *Ansar*
and those who follow them in righteousness
God is well-pleased with them
and they are well-pleased with Him.
He has prepared for them gardens
under which rivers flow
to dwell therein forever
that is the supreme success.

Sura Tawbah, 9:100

By no means shall you attain righteousness unless
you spend of that which you love.

Sura Aale Imran, 3:92

Empathy for others

A Zahid feels very responsible towards others.

When he sees the deprived and the oppressed he:

- 1) Strives to change the situation
- 2) He sacrifices and gives, sharing what he has with others.
- 3) He shares their deprivation.

True Leaders

Certainly, Allah, the Sublime,
has made it obligatory on true leaders
that they should maintain themselves
at the level of low people
so that the poor do not
cry over their poverty.

Khutba 209

Shall I be satisfied simply because people call me "Amir al-Mu'minin" (Leader of the faithful Muslims)?

Shall I not sympathise with the faithful Muslims in their calamities?

Shall I not be their partner in their adversities?

Shall I not be their fellow-sufferer?

Shall I not set an example for them to patiently, courageously and virtuously bear privation?

Letter no.45