

ALI241: Akhlāq of the Ahlul Bayt (a) - Course Outline

This is a 10 session course that will cover various aspects of personal and social ethics. The art of interacting with others as well as behaving in personal settings will be discussed in light of Qur'anic verses, Hadiths and lifestyle of Ahlul Bayt (a). We plan to refer a number of books, but much of the material will be drawn from *Akhlāq Ahlul Bayt (a)* by Sayyid Mahdī al-Sadr¹. Students will be encouraged to do pre-class reading and participate in group discussions.

Here is a tentative course outline on what we will Inshaa Allah cover over 10 sessions.

Session 1: Meanings of 'Ilmul Akhlāq and Makārimul Akhlāq as used in Islamic literature. Two main approaches to learning Akhlāq: changing personal attitude and improving social interaction. Why study the Akhlāq of the Ahlul Bayt (a)? How does the discipline of Akhlāq encompass other disciplines in Islam?

Session 2: Husn al-khulq and Sū' al-khulq (good manners and bad manners). Good manners are signs of excellence and completion of faith. Practicing good manners entails same reward as worshiping and struggling in the way of Allah. On the other hand having bad manners and ill-temper can take a person to the Hell. How can a disposition with bad manners be remedied?

Session 3: al-Sidq and al-Kidhb (Truth and lying): these play a great role in the lives of individuals and societies. Nothing beautifies a speech more than truth and nothing makes it more useless than lying. Social and psychological reasons of lying. Can truth erect hurdles to success?

Session 4: Tawādu' and al-Takabbur (Modesty and arrogance). Virtues of modesty and the art of developing modesty. Modesty in behavior was the norm and practice of all Divine leaders. Why is arrogance and pride abhorred and censured in Islam? How to treat arrogance?

Session 5: Ghadhab (anger) is one of the biggest liability in building self-esteem, family relations and social interaction. Limited occasions when invoking anger is permitted. How to rein and suppress anger and rage.

Session 6: Use of tongue: it can be the greatest asset and cause to take us to the Paradise or it can drag us to Jahannam. Wrong use of tongue causes major sins: sarcasm, backbiting, accusation, swearing and foul language, giving false witness, etc. Great *thawāb* (Divine rewards), benefits of preoccupying the tongue with *adhkār* (remembrance of Allah).

Session 7: Virtues of Sabr (patience) and its role in self-building. Does practicing sabr entail depriving one's rights? How is sabr interlinked with faith?

Session 8: Al-'iffah and al-Fuhsh (Chastity and promiscuity). Qur'anic style of describing sexual relations. Beauty of al-Hayaa (modesty). Long term effects of practicing shamelessness and promiscuity. The affliction of pornography.

¹ The English translation of the book is *The Ahl ul-Bayt; Ethical Role-Models*, published by Ansariyan in Qum.