

Razavi Codes of Ethics

A Glance at Imam Reza's Personal & Social Behavior!



Chapter 1

Introduction

In Salman's land, no place has won Shia's attention throughout history more than Tus - Mashhad al-Reza. Each year, throngs of people travel from either far or close areas of the world to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali bin Musa al-Reza (P.B.U.H.). They eagerly bear the costs to gain tranquility, spirituality, and calmness by being present in the inviolable shrine of this figure, who is dear to Allah.

Dear pilgrims! You are among those keen multitudes who have been bestowed such a grace to go on a pilgrimage to this gracious Imam! Although you took a long way and [possibly] had great difficulties, you uncontrollably burst into tears and shed tears of happiness and love as soon as you see the burial chamber!

The Islamic Relations Office
and Foreign Pilgrims' Affairs

Chapter 2

The mystery of our love for the Imam

Have you ever asked yourself why you feel so eager to make a pilgrimage to his Shrine? As soon as you see the dome from a distance, your eyes fill with tears.

When your eyes fall on his Burial Chamber (Zarih), you feel blissfully calm. Has this question ever come to you why these large numbers of people, whether young or old, poor or rich, weak or powerful, have fallen in love with him?

Do you know the mystery of this affection towards him? Before going through the rest of the text, ponder on it and find the answer in your mind. Then read our answer too.

In fact, the Imam is one of the dear descendants of the messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.F.), Imam Ali bin Abi Talib and Lady Zahra (P.B.U.T.) and he also has a great spiritual status before Allah.

He is not an ordinary person but he is superior to everyone in knowledge and moralities. He did not learn such knowledge at school, but he received it like a mystery as a trust for an Imam which has been conveyed to him chest to chest by his forefathers. And his forefathers had been quenched through the clear pond of the prophethood's knowledge, and the messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.F.) had received such knowledge from Allah, the Omniscient.

Since the Imam has been appointed by Allah as a teacher to guide us, our love and respect for him are regarded as loving Allah and respecting His decrees.

The Imam's superiority over other people is not only out of his great insight and knowledge but out of his good words, deeds, benevolence and his capability for guiding people as well. His deeds, devotion and acts of worship have endeared him to Allah, and his moral character has made believers' hearts captivated. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says to His Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.F.), "Thus it is Allah's mercy that you are lenient to them, had you been severed and hardhearted, they would surely have

dispersed away from you. "Ali bin Musa al-Reza (P.B.U.H.) and all the Prophet's descendants(P.B.U.T.) (immaculate Imams) have inherited this characteristic from

1 The Holy Qur'an, 3:159

the messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H. & H.F.). Through his good morals during his lifetime, Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) taught us how to live, love and best serve humanity and Allah. Our hearts have been so captivated that we listen to his teachings like enthusiastic students and can attain high levels of knowledge and morals in his school of perfection. So it might be worthy of taking a brief look at some of his good manners together. We wish to achieve perfection and good morals through following the teachings of this gracious Imam.

Chapter 3

The Mercy for all believers

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.F.) was a source of goodness and blessing not only for believers but for the entire world as well. Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) has been the heir to the Prophet's love, affection, mercy, and virtues. While praying for believers, he would pray for their prosperity and would ask Allah,³

"O' Bounteous Lord! Forgive every believer man or woman in the east and west."

2 And We did not send you (O' Our Messenger Muhammad!) but as a mercy Prophets 21:107

3 Muhammad Baqer Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar Vol 49 P.117

Respect for all

Imam Ali bin Musa al-Reza (P.B.U.H.) as a social and excellent role model respected humanity. In his viewpoint, humanity deserves to be paid respect. As witnessed by his friends, acquaintances, and followers, he possessed the following virtues in his lifetime:

*This magnanimous Imam never talked to anyone unkindly. Conversing with people, he never used a language which they may find offensive or nasty.

*When someone was talking to him, the Imam listened to him with patience and never interrupted him.

*He satisfied people's needs to the extent possible and tried not to let them down.

*He was polite and well-mannered. He never stretched out his legs in front of others.

4 Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol.2, P.182

5 Ibid

6 Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol.2, P.182

7 Ibid

*Attending a gathering, he never sat in a way suggesting disdain and his disregard for others. For instance, he did not lean against cushion to imply his [own] superiority over others and their belittlement.

*He treated his servants with respect and did not speak harshly or rudely to them.

*Being respectful of humanity's high status, he sat beside his servants for eating without[any] arrogance.

*He did good deeds openly and secretly.

*He worshiped His Lord by night and fasted most days.

Chapter 5

His care of the needy

Traveling from Medina to Khorasan by Ma'mun's force, Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) stayed with the needy in the deprived areas, although he was accompanied by the government attendants. It was a great

8 Ibid

9 Ibid

10 Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol.2, P.182

11 Ibid

consolation to the needy. It implied the care of the Prophet's descendant of the destitute and his consideration for them.

Another good example of such behavior was obvious on the Imam's arrival in Neyshabour. Thousands of personages and scientists along with throngs of ordinary people rushed to welcome him.

Although it was a short stay, the Imam chose to be the guest of a destitute lady named Pasandide, whose house was in Blush Abad or Plus Abad, a region with poor living conditions.

It is evident that Imam's arrival at such regions or houses not only made those destitute people respectful but also poured incharitable contributions towards them.

Chapter 6

His affability towards others

Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) was approachable and well-mannered towards people. "Everyone who smiles at his Muslim brother's face not only for his own benefit but for the sake of Allah and his humility

12 Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 49, P.122.

before Him, Allah will enter him to Paradise." (.), he said.

With particular emphasis on being kind and companionable towards others, the Imam also said, "To be kind to people is half of wisdom."

Being supportive to believers

The Holy Qur'an recommends the believers not to help the oppressors and evil rulers and not to take on any responsibilities in their governments. Shouldering responsibility in their corrupt governments is regarded as an act of cruelty towards people and hinders the divine religion from being established and spread.

Corresponding with Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) friend of his asked the Imam to let him shoulder responsibility and be employed in the Abbasid government. But he always warned him of it and eventually told him, "If you feel certain that you are able to

13 Feqh al-Reza, P. 398.

14 Tohaf al-Oqul, Vol. 15, P. 52; Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 78, P. 435.

follow the Prophet's instructions after shouldering their responsibilities, to choose your assistants from among righteous and qualified people, and to use the facilities of which you are in charge to help the poor, it does not cause any problems. You are supposed to serve your Muslim brothers; otherwise, it is not permissible for you to be employed in the Abbasid government [according to Islam]."

His love and affection for his followers.

From the religious point of view, all humanity is Allah's servants and dear to Him. He bestows His blessings upon all and has invited them to guidance, salvation, and prosperity. Believers wish all goodness and guidance for all as well. As mentioned before, the Imam always prayed for the believers of the east and the west of the world, but it does not imply that believers and Shiites do not love their own coreligionists more than others. To the common sense and beliefs, any family, clan, community or nation feels more responsible

15 Furu-e-Kafi, Vol. 5, P. 111; Mosnad al-Imam al-Reza (P.B.U.H.), P. 131

for his own coreligionists without being cruel or unkind to others or ignoring their rights. In other words, we are expected to love our coreligionists and Shiites more.

Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) was once passing an alley in Tus on horseback, he heard somebody crying. He traced the sound and found a family mourning for the loss of their bread winner. The Imam dismounted the horse, respectfully approached the dead man and kindly gave the corpse a stroke and said, "Any one attends the funeral of a friend of ours, his sins will be forgiven."

Then he attended the man's funeral and while putting him in the grave, he put his hand on the dead body and gave glad tidings to his family about his good death.

The narrator asked the Imam, "Did you know the man? He said,"Yes, he was one of our followers (Shiites). We are always aware of our followers' circumstances. If we see those committing sins, we ask Allah for their divine forgiveness. If we find them doing good deeds, we wish them divine assistance."

16 Bihar al-Anwar, Vol.49, P. 99; Ibn Shahr Ashub, Al-Manaqib, Vol. 4, P. 341

Chapter 9

Respect for the father

Considering the importance of holding the father in respect, the Imam said:

Obeying your father is obligatory on you, unless his requests lead to His disobedience or committing sins.

Be kind and modest to your father.

Speak about your father's goodness when he is absent from a gathering.

Do not speak harshly or rudely with your father.

Make the most of the facilities bestowed upon you by Allah to satisfy your father.

Because the messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H. &H.F.) said, 'The child and his possessions belong to his father.

Then s/he is supposed to obey him until he is alive and ask for his forgiveness when he passes away.'

Anyone who does not do good deeds and pray for his father after his death, s/he will be regarded among those disowned by their parents."

Chapter 10

Respect for the mother

The kind and compassionate Imam strongly recommended respecting the mother, saying:

"Observing the mother's right is among the most obligatory actions, for she carried you with herself during her pregnancy and breast-fed you in infancy.

A mother tolerates such great pain and suffering for her child as other people are not willing to stand.

She carefully brings you up, looks after you, and loves you with her own heart and soul.

She is willing to feed you while she is starving and to quench you while she is thirsty.

She prefers you to be well-dressed while she herself does not have enough

17 Feqh al-Reza, P. 334

clothing. She prefers you to be comfortable in shadow while she is in the sun. So you should be always immensely grateful to her, treat her kindly for all the troubles and sufferings you caused her. Nevertheless you can not repay her favors or reward her efforts unless Allah bestows the opportunity for that on you. Allah has regarded parents' rights like His own and has said, 'Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me is the return, {for you will be questioned for your deeds. }'"

Making efforts and showing great concern for the family

A true believer should feel responsible towards the parents, family, and the fellow members of one's society, but Allah strongly recommends him to feel more responsible towards his own parents, family and relatives.

The person who does not fulfill his obligations and commitments towards his parents, spouse and children, who

18 Feqh al-Reza, P. 234

19 Loqman (chapter 31), verse 14

considers them as strangers, who does not feel sympathetic towards them and who is not willing to sacrifice and strive to improve their conditions, who is actually far from religious and human feelings.

Therefore, he should not really expect any love or affection from others.

Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) has said, "Everyone who is hardworking to earn the living of one's family through lawful ways will be rewarded more than the mujahids and soldiers fighting in Allah's path."

Although the Imam was one of the great personages in the Islamic community, he himself went shopping for providing the necessities of his family. He never felt degraded for doing the shopping. The Imam invariably told his friends and followers, "Each rich man is supposed to keep his family in peace and comfort, provide his family with peace and quiet, and settle their affairs. Let this family members get into difficulty because of his stinginess or miserliness while he can solve their problems and meet their needs."

20 Furu-e-Kafi, Vol. 5, P. 89

21 Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol. 2, P. 205

22 Tohaf al-Oqul, P.225

Chapter 12

Forgiving each other's faults

Believers do not seek vengeance, harbor hostility or act vindictively towards others. They do struggle against injustice and defend their own rights. But they forgive the others' faults when they are in power. After the martyrdom of Imam Reza's magnanimous father, Imam Musa al-Kazim (P.B.U.H.), soldiers of the Abbasid caliph broke into the houses of Abu Talib's descendants including Imam Reza's in Medina during the reign of Harun al-Rashid and cruelly looted, plundered, and seized their possessions.

After a while, Harun died and Ma'mun became the caliph. And outwardly he got furious with some previous executives for this act.

Among them was the one who was in charge of attacking the houses of Abu Talib's descendants. When he entered Ma'mun's court for punishment, the Imam was also sitting there. By the first glance, Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) immediately recognized the wicked man and remembered that he was the Abbasid executive who plundered his house. He could be revengeful and make a complaint against him to Ma'mun but he refused. Since he was the epitome of manliness, magnanimity, and divine blessing and kindness and since was faraway from revenge and malice, he told Ma'mun in a low voice, "Forgive this man's faults and spare him."

Watching Imam Reza (P.B.U.H.) whispering to Ma'mun, the executive thought that he was complaining to Ma'mun about him, and that he wanted Ma'mun to severely punish him! So he cried, "O'Caliph, do not accept this man's [Imam Reza's] words about me for the sake of Allah!" Being very furious with the man because of knowing his wicked character, Ma'mun said, 'Ok; that is what you want! Ali bin Musa al-Reza (P.B.U.H.) asked me not to kill you; but I do, because you swore me to Allah not to accept his words about you.'

This historical event clears the fact that even if a person forgives his fellowman's faults for the sake of Allah, He will punish the wrongdoers and ill-mannered people who do not deserve to be forgiven.

23 Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol. 49, P. 126

Chapter 13

Avoiding wastage

Being busy eating fruit, Imam Reza's servants finally left some of it and discarded the rest. The Imam said, "If you are full of it, do not discard the rest of the fruit but give it to people who are in need of it."

Chapter 14

Well-dressing

In his personal life, the Imam wore plain and rough clothes in his home so that welfare might not make him neglectful of remembering Allah. However, he was well-dressed when he appeared in public."

24 Furu-e-Kafi, Vol. 6, P. 279

25 Fiqh al-Reza, P. 98

26 Wasael al-Shia, Vol. 4, P. 359-360

Chapter 15

Wearing perfume

Imam would burn Indian incense in his house, which was one of the sweet-smelling fragrances at that time, and would wear pure rose water or musk." Describing his noble grandfather, the Imam said, "Through the sweet-smelling fragrance, we could easily trace the place where Imam Sadeq (P.B.U.H.) said his prayers."

It is required mentioning that wearing perfume is not allowed for ladies unless men other than the husband or close blood relatives will not smell it or their attention will not be attracted to them because of it."

Through studying this book, it is hoped that the dear readers, respected pilgrims, and lovers who bore great pain and suffering for going on a pilgrimage to Imam Reza's tomb will become more familiar with Imam Reza's words and manners, will be determined to follow his teachings in their daily life, and make their life more fruitful and prosperous in this world and the world to come."

27 Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol. 2, P. 179

28 Makarem al-Akhlaq, P. 44

Chapter 16

Sources:

1. Allame Majlesi, Bihar al-Anwar (Oceans of Lights), Vol. 49/78.
2. Fiqh al-Reza (P.B.U.H.), P. 98.
3. Furu-e-Kafi, Vol. 5/6.4. Makarem al-Akhlaq, P. 44.
5. Ibn Shahr Ashub, Al-Manaqib, Vol. 4.
6. Mosnad al-Imam al-Reza (P.B.U.H.).
7. Uyun Akhbar al-Reza, Vol. 2/ 49.
8. The Holy Qur'an.
9. Wasael al-Shia, Vol. 4.

Unlike some other religions and schools of thought that invite their followers to blindly obey them and want them to accept the orders of the leaders unquestioningly and thoughtlessly, the Ahl al-Bait's school and Ithna Ashari Shiites not only do not forbid people from questioning about the main issues of the religion but they also encourage them to do it.

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IN THE AGE OF INFORMATION
IGNORANCE IS A CHOICE

*"Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer,
let him claim it wherever he finds it"*

Imam Ali (as)