

26. Moral Islam

The following Prophetic traditions are from the same collection by al-Nawawi, though here the emphasis is, as it was for most pious Muslims, moral and social rather than dogmatic.

From Abu Hurayra, with whom may God be pleased, who said: Said the Apostle of God, upon whom be God's blessing and peace: "Do not envy one another; do not vie with one another; do not hate one another; do not be at variance with one another; and do not undercut one another in trading, but be servants of God, brothers. A Muslim is a brother to a Muslim. He does not oppress him, nor does he forsake him, nor deceive him nor despise him. God-fearing piety is here," he said pointing to his breast. "It is enough evil for a man that he should despise his brother Muslim. The blood, property and honor of every Muslim is inviolable to a fellow Muslim." Muslim relates this tradition. (Nawawi, *The Forty Traditions*, no. 35) [JEFFERY 1962: 157]

From Abu Hurayra, with whom may God be pleased, who said: Said the Apostle of God, upon whom be God's blessing and peace: "In truth God, may He be exalted, has said: 'Whoever acts with enmity toward a friend of Mine, against him will I declare war. No servant of Mine draws near to Me with anything I like more than that which I have laid upon him as an incumbent duty, and a true servant of Mine will continue drawing near to Me with supererogatory acts of worship so that I may love him. Then when I am living with him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he takes things, his foot with which he walks. If he asks of Me, I will surely give him, and if he takes refuge with Me, I will surely give him refuge.' " (Ibid., no. 38) [JEFFERY 1962: 158-159]

27. Faith and Good Works in Islam

The early problem of unbelief and its political consequences caused Muslims to look closely at the nature of faith and its relationship to good works. The following reflections are from the so-called Testament of Abu Hanifah. That Muslim jurist died in 767 C.E., but the Testament is likely by some later member of his legal school (Chapter 5 above).

Faith may neither increase nor decrease, for decrease in it could only be conceived of in terms of unbelief, and increase in it in terms of the

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ease, for decrease in it could only nd increase in it in terms of the

decrease of unbelief, but how could a single person be at one and the same time both a believer and an unbeliever? The true believer is in truth a true believer and the infidel is in truth an infidel. Faith is not a matter which admits of doubt, nor is unbelief a matter which admits of doubt, for the Most High has said, "These are in truth true believers" (Quran 8:74), and "these are in truth unbelievers" (Quran 4:151). Even the disobedient ones of the community of Muhammad, upon whom be God's blessing and peace, are all of them true believers, and are not to be classified (despite their disobedience) as unbelievers.

Works are something other than faith, and faith is other than works. This is proved by the fact that there are numerous occasions when a true believer is granted exemption from works, whereas it is not permissible to say that he is ever exempted from faith. Thus a women in menstruation or childbirth is granted exemption by God, praised and exalted is He, from prayers, but it is not permissible to say that God has granted her exemption from faith and bidden her abandon her faith. Also to such the Lawgiver says: "Give up fasting but make it up later," but it could not be that one is told to give up faith and make it up later. . . .

We confess that the predetermining of good and evil is from God, exalted be He, for should anyone claim that the predetermining of good and evil is from other than He, he would be one who disbelieves in God and annuls his own confession of the divine unity.

We confess that works are of three kinds, to wit, obligatory, meritorious, and sinful. The obligatory are by God's command and in accordance with His will, His liking, His judgment, His knowledge, His help and His writing on the "Preserved Tablet" (see Quran 85:21). The sinful are not (such) by God's command but in accordance with His will, not in accordance with His liking but by His decreeing and His predetermining, by His creation but not by His help, in accordance with His abandoning and His knowledge, but not with His recognition, and in accordance with His writing on the "Preserved Tablet." (Abu Hanifah, *Testament*)

[JEFFERY 1962: 342-343]

28. Alms and Charity

One of the pillars of Islam, and so an obligation binding upon every Muslim, was the paying of a statutory alms tithe. The complex subject of tithing—how much, to whom, from whom, and for what purpose—is discussed at length in Muslim law books. But there are two Prophetic traditions in al-Nawawi's summary collec-

tion that look at alms not in their legal aspect but as a function of the virtue of charity.

From Abu Dharr, with whom may God be pleased, who said that some from among the Companions of the Apostle of God, upon whom be God's blessing and peace, said to the Prophet, upon whom be God's blessing and peace: "O Apostle of God, the rich take off all the rewards. They say prayers just as we do, they fast just as we do, but they can give in charity out of the superabundance of their wealth (and so surpass us in storing up merit)." He said: "Has not God appointed for you that you should give in charitable alms? Truly, in every ejaculation 'Glory be to God!' there is such an alms, in every 'God is the greatest!' in every 'Praise be to God!' in every 'Hallelujah!' in every bidding what is right and forbidding the doing of what is wrong; even when one of you has sex with his wife, there is an alms in that." They said: "O Apostle of God, (do you mean to say that) when one of us satisfies his desires (with his wife), there will be a reward for that?" He answered: "What do you think? Had He put it among the things forbidden, it would have been sinful for one, so when He put among the allowable things, there was a reward for it also." Muslim relates this tradition. (Nawawi, *The Forty Traditions*, no. 25)

[JEFFERY 1962: 153]

From Abu Hurayra, with whom may God be pleased, who said: Said the Apostle of God, upon whom be God's blessing and peace: "An alms is due each day that the sun rises from every finger joint of all the people. If you straighten out some trouble between two individuals, that is an alms. If you help a man with his beast, mounting him thereon or hoisting up onto it his luggage, that is an alms. A good work is an alms. In every step you take in walking to prayer there is an alms. Whenever you remove something harmful from the path, that is an alms." Al-Bukhari and Muslim both relate this tradition. (Ibid., no. 26) [JEFFERY 1962: 153]

29. Militant Islam: War in the Sacred Month

The Messenger sent Abdullah ibn Jahsh off in (the month of) Rajab [624 C.E.] on his return from the (first skirmish) at Badr. He sent with him eight "Emigrants," without any of the "Helpers." He wrote for him a letter, and ordered him not to look at it until he had journeyed for two days and then to do what he ordered him, but not to put pressure on any of his companions (to do likewise). . . . When Abdullah had traveled for two days he read the letter and looked into it and this is what it said: