

The correct method of enjoining good and forbidding evil (Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar) as taught by the AhlulBayt and the importance of become familiar with the Quran.

There is a way and manner of discharging our duty of Amr Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar. Recapping from last nights majlis, we must ensure we practice what we preach and work on ourselves.

The 6th Imam discusses the topic and says 'As a matter of principle anyone who wants to discharging his duty of Amr Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar must satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) He must be **practicing** what he preaches
- 2) He should **abstain** from what he preaches against
- 3) He must ensure that he maintains the **highest standards** of good Akhlaq while they perform this duty.'

This third characteristic will be expounded upon further in this lecture as it is one we must adhere to and pay careful attention to. The whole practice of Amr Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar is a very sensitive one, as nobody likes being told they are wrong, hence we should not offend or embarrass them. Unfortunately, many people carry out Nahi Anil Munkar in a repulsive manner, for which no reward is gained.

We need to learn from the AhlulBayt and carry out our obligation just as they did. When Imam Hussein (a.s) was leaving for Kerbala, he said 'I am following the footsteps of my grandfather and father'. Hence we should use their approach and methods in discharging this obligation. We see Allah discussing how to carry this out in the Holy Quran in 16:125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَدِلْهُمْ
بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided.

The example we find from the AhlulBayt when Imam Hassan Imam Hussein asked an old man who was performing his Wudhu wrong to check their Wudhu is one we should learn from.

The 6th Imam has said 'Invite people to our path without using your tongues' i.e. through your actions. Hence our akhlaq and actions must be such that people are drawn towards the religion through seeing them. This is a difficult challenge, but one we as the Shia must strive to achieve.

The Prophet was one day walking through the streets of Medina and came across a young boy surrounded by a dozen girls, laughing and joking. The Prophet simply greeted the boy. He became embarrassed and made up a story that he was looking for his camel and requesting information from these girls. The Prophet did not admonish him as he knew this was not the right time to admonish him. This happened again a few days later and again, the Prophet greeted the boy and walked on. The boy made up another lie to justify why he was there and the Prophet smiled and walked on. Days later, the Prophet noticed this boy praying in the mosque and after the boy finished, he approached the boy and asked if he had found his camel. The boy admitted he had been lying and apologized. The Prophet told him he had known about the lie and the boy was shocked asking the Prophet why he had not been scolded there and then. The Prophet explained that he did not wish to embarrass the boy and had waited for the right moment to speak to him about it. The youth was amazed after hearing this and was so deeply moved that he retook the Shahada, changed his ways and became among the most pious youths of Medina. Such was the effect of correctly carrying out Amr Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar and we must exhibit such akhlaq in situations we encounter.

On many occasions, the AhlulBayt showed beautiful examples of this. A man once came to the 4th Imam and cursed him and his mother in front of him. Rather than getting angry, the Imam went to the man and told him 'If what you say about my mother is true, I ask Allah to forgive her, and if what you say is false, I pray to Allah that he forgives you.' This person professed the Shahadah and became a lover of the A'immah through this incident.

We must all strive to show such akhlaq and good character when spreading the message of Islam. Unfortunately, in recent years the message has been taught in a manner not in line with the teachings of the AhlulBayt. We must not provoke other people and we should stop people spreading it in the wrong way. The Maraja have been clear in condemning people who spread the message in a hateful and disrespectful manner. Further, the Imams have taught us that rather than cursing and using abusive language, it is much better we factually point out where wrongful actions have been carried out and the truth has been abandoned. This will lead to a more convincing argument and is better for us.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

And do not insult those they invoke other than Allah , lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge. Thus We have made pleasing to every community their deeds. Then to their Lord is their return, and He will inform them about what they used to do.

Allah instructs us in 6:108 (above) not to curse others or their beliefs as this may lead them to cursing Allah and the Ahlul Bayt. Hence we must maintain the highest standards of good Akhlaq as instructed by the 6th Imam in the criteria listed above. If we do not live by these standards, we cannot call ourselves the Shia.

Another key aspect of Amr Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar is to defend Islam, which can only properly be done by knowledge and by mastering the Qur'an and AhlulBayt's teachings. We must become well versed in the Quran as many people take the Quran out of context in order to degrade the religion. Take the following verse from the Quran found in 2:191:

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَفَفْنَاهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾

And kill them wherever you find them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and fitnah is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al- Haram until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

Unfortunately, many of are unable to respond to these claims and as a result, allow others to conclude that the Qur'an does indeed preach hatred. If we were to look at the verse in its correct context, the verse before it discusses that the Muslims should fight against those who fight them but they must not exceed limits and do so in moderation. Rather than preaching that the Muslims should kill disbelievers wherever they find them, Muslims should act in self defence, with a moderate retaliation as mentioned in verse 190:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾

Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors.

Hence if we become familiar with the Quran, we will be able to defend the religion from false allegations and portray it in a positive light, something which is particularly important in society today. Too many times today, people come with half the picture having taken verses out of context. We should give them the full picture and expose the fallacies of their argument. People will try and shake our religion by using false quotations from the Quran and we can only refute these by understanding the context of the verses.

Conclusion:

- We must perform Abil Ma'roof and Nahi Anil Munkar with the best of Akhlaq
- We should take examples of the AhlulBayt's teachings and preach with love, not with hatred and admonish people at the correct time and in the correct way
- We should seek knowledge and familiarize ourselves with the Quran so that we are able to defend the religion from false accusations.