

# Hadith for Conduct

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قال: إمام موسى الكاظم (ع)  
لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يُحَاسِبْ نَفْسَهُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ

*“He is not from us who does not make inquiry of his own nafs (self) each day.” Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (AS)*

Scholars of Islamic ethics consider the preoccupation with one’s own deficiencies as one of the highest fundamental principles of struggle, and they have acknowledged it among the most sensible and effective norms of ethical conduct. Contemplation of one’s own weaknesses is a practical means of restraint from becoming engrossed on the weaknesses of others, considering that it is highly impractical for one person to concentrate on two different concerns concurrently. Those who are busy with a constant self-evaluation and survey of their own character seldom scrutinize others and, consequently, will remain safe from the perils of inquisitiveness in this world and the Hereafter. Furthermore, one who investigates the deficiencies of other people will overlook his own weaknesses; he may conceivably conclude that he is free from all blemishes and become immersed in a more destructive vice of عُجْب (conceit).

It is reported that when Allah (SWT) is pleased with someone, He will make him mindful of his own deficiencies. Accordingly, the heedfulness about one’s behavior and understanding of personal shortcomings is a divine blessing. In order to prepare the Muslims for the formidable task of self-purification, Islam has expressly forbidden inquisitiveness and prying into the affairs of others and encourages contemplation and involvement in one’s own defects. Imam Musa Al-Kadhim (AS) stated: “It is the duty of every Muslim to review his deeds once every day and night to attain consciousness of his spiritual and moral deficiencies and attempt to correct them.” The Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

حَاسِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسَبُوا وَزِنُوا قَبْلَ أَنْ تُوزَنُوا . (رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله)

*“Make assessments of yourselves (your own deeds) before others make assessment of you and examine yourselves before others attempt to investigate you.”*

Islam, in its well-defined scheme of human development, explicitly encourages self-assessment to the extent that it characterizes a true believer as one who regards others superior in merits and more pious than himself, without losing self-respect and confidence in his own personality. On the other hand, Islam emphatically prohibits investigation of others for the purpose of criticism, malice or hostility. The Holy Qur’an determines that (تَجَسُّسٌ) engaging in the inquisitorial gain of information on the deficiencies of others is a sin and a reprehensible act. The Holy Prophet (S) stated:

يَا مَعْشَرَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ بِلِسَانِهِ وَ لَمْ يُسَلِّمْ بِقَلْبِهِ لَا تَتَّبِعُوا عَنَرَاتِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ تَتَّبَعَ عَنَرَاتِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَنَرَاتِهِ وَمَنْ تَتَّبَعَ اللَّهُ عَنَرَاتِهِ يَفْضَحْهُ.

*“O you assembly of people who have proclaimed Islam merely with your tongues and have not surrendered with your hearts, do not engage in the pursuit of discovering the shortcomings of Muslims. For those who pursue Muslims to find faults in them, Allah (SWT) will expose their deficiencies and He will disgrace them.”*

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: "كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ عَيْبًا أَنْ يَبْصُرَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا يَعْمَى عَنْهُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ."

*It is reported from Imam Baqir (AS) who stated: It is a sufficient disgrace for a man who would see in others the very same thing that he remains blind in regard to himself.*

Islam, as an ultimate source of enlightenment and the only impeccable divine manifesto, explicitly forbids the denunciation of others and exposing their faults. However, it considers inviting constructive criticism from others as an invaluable component of self purification and an effective means to identify the imperfections present in one’s own soul.