

58) Prostration

Prostration, which is one of the features of the pious, is a general act of worship. A look at the Quranic verses and traditions shows that a devoted servant of God should be in prostration all the time.

Prostration is an obligatory act. God Almighty, in the Quran, refers to prostration of all beings and says:

“Do you not see that Allah is He, to Whom bow down in adoration whosoever is in the heaven and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals and many of the people; and many there are against whom chastisement has become necessary...?”¹

Imam Sadiq(AS) has been reported as saying: “God has made prostration obligatory during the day and the night in prayer.” The Imam (AS) further says: “O you who believe! Perform genuflection and prostration. Obey your Lord and do good so that you will become prosperous. This is a common obligation on the face, the two hands and the two feet.”²

Prostration has many benefits, the most important of which is the feeling of humbleness before God. When God sees His servant in this state, He will look at him favorably, fulfills his needs and answers his call.

It is to be noted that prostration does not belong to prayer alone. There are other prostrations for human beings before Allah. Prostration of gratefulness after each prayer, prostration for every blessing that God gives to us, prostration after reciting certain Quranic verses, and prostration for expressing our needs are some other examples, provided that we have already purified our hearts.

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: “One day Prophet Moses (AS) was preaching his followers. One of them rose up and ripped his own shirt. God revealed to Moses to say: “Do not rip your shirt, rip your heart.”

Imam Sadiq (AS) has further said: “One day, Prophet Moses (AS) passed by one of his followers who was in prostration. When Prophet Moses (AS) returned, he was still in prostration. Being impressed by this act, Prophet Moses (a.s.) said: ‘If I could fulfill your needs, I would certainly do it. A call came from

God, saying: Even if he keeps on prostrating so much until his neck is broken, I will not accept it unless he keeps his heart busy with what I like and give up what I dislike.”[3](#)

Long prostrations of Imam Sajjad, Imam Musa al-Kadhim, and other infallible Imams (peace be on them all) are well known to everyone.

17–21: One of the other features of the pious is endurance. In this connection, Imam Ali (AS) says: “In the day, they are patient, knowledgeable, virtuous, and pious. The fear (of Allah) has made them thin like arrows. If any one looks at them, he thinks that they are sick, and he says that they have gone mad. In fact, great concern (fear) has made them mad.”[4](#)

Some scholars have said: “Endurance is to be certain on affairs and to be moderate at anger. It prevents man from becoming anxious. Some of its signs are the lack of restlessness, not hastening for revenge and scolding, and not showing odd behaviors.”[5](#)

Allamah Naraghi has defined endurance as follows: “I have realized that endurance is tranquility to the soul which is not easily moved by anger in a way that no blameworthy act can affect it quickly.” Naraghi the Second says: “The opposite of anger is endurance, which is the self-confidence that is not easily moved by the power of anger, and that the hardships of life cannot make one easily anxious.”[6](#)

Then, Naraghi the First says: “Endurance is the best personal attainment after knowledge without which knowledge is of no benefit.”

The pious have truly such a feature. When they treat their parents, children, brothers and sisters, relatives, purchasers or sellers, people of knowledge or laymen, they have endurance and they avoid anger.

Anger

Anger is a deadly factor that sometimes leads to murder. Anger is said to be a temporary madness. Imam Ali (AS) has said: “It is a kind of madness, for one, who gets angry, will then regret and if he does not regret, his madness shall get stronger.”[7](#)

Imam Baqir (AS) has been reported as saying: “Anger is a firebrand from Satan that is kindled inside man. When one of you gets angry, his eyes become red, his veins become swollen, and Satan enters into him.”[8](#)

It is for this reason that endurance and forbearance have been so much recommended. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported as saying: “Seek exaltation with Allah!” He was asked: “What does that mean? The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: “Maintain relationship with one who has cut off relations with you. Give to one who has deprived you, and be patient with one who harms you.”[9](#)

The Holy Prophet (SAW) has also said: “Surely a forbearing Muslim due to his endurance is like a fasting worshipper.”[10](#)

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported as saying: “When people gather on the Day of Judgment, a herald will call: ‘Where are the people of virtue?’ Some people shall rise up happy and pleased and shall walk speedily toward the paradise. Angels will meet them, saying: ‘We see that you are rushing to paradise. They shall say: ‘We are people of virtue.’ The angels shall ask: ‘What is your virtue?’ They shall say: ‘When we were wronged, we had endurance, when we were treated unjustly, we pardoned, and when we faced folly, we had forbearance.’ They are said: ‘Enter paradise which is an excellent reward for what you have done.’”[11](#)

In the du’as, we read: “O Allah! Make us benefit from knowledge! Bless us with endurance. Honor us with Taqwa. Surely my guardian is Allah who has sent down the Book and He is the Guardian of the righteous.”[12](#)

Endurance is an outstanding feature of the pious, by which we can recognize them. The true examples of endurance are the Imams of guidance, the purified household of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and most of their followers. Malik al-Ashtar is an example.

Knowledge

As we have already discussed, knowledge is a valuable feature by which human beings can attain sublime positions. All the misfortunes and deprivations of society arise from ignorance.

It is through knowledge that man feels that he has certain duties to discharge. It is knowledge that makes man know and establish a sound relation with God, the prophets and the Imams. It is knowledge that gives courage, honor, glory, capability, strong faith, conviction and hundreds of other good features. It is knowledge that gives man perpetual happiness and makes him have a standing above the angels. It is knowledge which has made everything conquered by human beings and they are conquered by God. It is knowledge that makes everything fear God. It is through knowledge that man has subdued everything and he is subdued by God.

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has said: “The sleep of a scholar is better than one thousand rak’as of prayer performed by a worshipper.”[13](#) He has also said: “One hour of a scholar who inclines on a cushion and looks into his deeds is better than seventy year’s prayers of a worshipper.”[14](#)

When one dies, his deeds cease, unless he had knowledge from which people benefit, a charity (by him) which is in circulation, and a good son who prays for him.”[15](#)

When the Day of Judgment comes, the ink used by the scholars in writing is measured with the blood of martyrs and the ink shall be preferred to the blood.[16](#)

As for kindness and good deeds, Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: “Patience, forbearance, and good temper are features of the prophets.”[17](#)

The Imam (AS) has also said: “Being kind to brethren and trying to fulfill their needs are deeds of the righteous.”[18](#)

The Imam has further said: “Have relations, be kind, and have mercy to one another and be kind to brethren as God has commanded.”[19](#)

Sho’ayb al-Aqarqoofi narrates: “I heard Imam Sadiq (AS) say: ‘Fear Allah, be kind to the brethren, love one another for the sake of God, keep your kinship, be merciful, visit and meet one another, remember our advice and keep it alive.’”[20](#)

Being kind and righteous is extremely important in Islam in the same way that being kind is one of God’s Attributes: **“Surely, He is Kind and Merciful.”** The pious too have this feature which is mentioned both in the Quran and the du’as: **“Our Lord! Forgive us our faults, and cover our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous.”**[21](#)

After speaking of hell that is the abode of the unbelievers, God speaks about the righteous who are the very pious ones. He says: **“But as to those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord, they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding in them; an entertainment from their Lord, and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous.”**[22](#)

In the Quranic Suras, Infitar (82), Insan (76), and Mutaffifeen (83) the abode of the righteous on the Day of Judgment has been described. We do not discuss it further.

22–23: One of the other features of the pious is that “they are not satisfied with their meager good acts, and do not regard their major acts as great. They always blame themselves and are afraid of their deed. When any one of them is spoken of highly, he says: I know myself better than others do, and my Lord knows me better than I do. O Allah, do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than what they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know.”[23](#)

This topic has been already discussed in the section of “piety and practice” as well as of “self-conceit”. Obviously, the pious do not consider their deeds as great, for when they compare their deeds with the greatness of God Almighty, they see them too meager.

Addressing Hisham, Imam Musa ibn Ja’far al-Kadhim (AS) says: “O Hisham! How can your deeds be pure with God when you have made your wits busy away from the command of your Lord and have made your wits obey your passions and desires?”[24](#)

For this reason, when someone speaks highly of the pious, they feel unhappy; because they do not have the impression that they have good features, hence they do not consider themselves worthy of praise. In such conditions, they say to themselves: “I know myself better than others do and my Lord knows me

better than I do.” Then they pray: “O Allah, do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than what they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know.”

In these statements, there is a lesson to be learnt, and that is we should not be pleased when we are praised by people, because everyone knows himself better than the others do. He himself knows better than others do about his knowledge, piety, patience, steadfastness, good temper and devotion. The pious know that neither praise nor criticism can add to or reduce from their deeds. In this connection, Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS) says to Hisham: “If a walnut is in your hand, but people say it is a pearl in your hand, it will not benefit you when you know it is a walnut. The same is true if there is a pearl in your hand and people say it is walnut. It will not harm you when you know it is a pearl.”²⁵

If a person has such a concept, he shall not be influenced by other people’s praise nor will he be pleased to be praised.

About this, God says: “... **Therefore, Do Not Boast (Of Being Purified), That He Knows Best Those Who Avoid Evil.**”²⁶

Jameel narrated: “I asked Imam Sadiq (AS) about the meaning of this verse, and he said: ‘It is the speech of one who (boastingly) says: I performed prayers all last night and fasted yesterday.’

Then the Imam (AS) said: ‘A group of people say in the morning: ‘I offered prayer last night and fasted yesterday’, whereas Ali (AS) says: ‘I sleep in the day and in night, and if I find anything (of time) between them, I will sleep.’”²⁷

This does not mean that Imam Ali (AS) sleeps throughout the day and night, but it means that one should never be proud of his worship. The pious not only do not become happy when they are praised, but also they hate to be praised.

24–35: One of the other features of the pious is the following: “The sign of one of them is that you see that he has firmness in religion, determination along with leniency, faith with certainty, greed in (seeking) knowledge, knowledge in forbearance, moderation in wealth, devotion in worship, good-looking in poverty, patience with hardships, striving for the lawful things (sustenance), vitality in guidance, and refraining from greediness.”²⁸

Strength in religion is another feature of the pious as mentioned by Imam Ali (AS). Imam Sadiq (AS), in relation to his grand-uncle Abbas, says: “Our uncle Abbas (ibn Ali) was of great insight and firm faith. He fought alongside his brother, Hossain, passed the test successfully and was martyred.”²⁹

Describing the believers, God says: “**The (true) believers are those only who believe in Allah and His messenger and afterward doubt not...**”³⁰

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported by Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: “Doubt and sin are in fire; they are not from us and do not return to us. The believers’ hearts are wrapped totally in faith. When God wills to

enlighten what there is in them, He will enlighten them with the revelation. He will sow the seed of wisdom in them... and will reap the harvest.”[31](#)

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Reza (AS) as saying: “The best of deeds to Allah Almighty is faith in which there is no doubt, fighting (for the sake of Allah) in which there is no grudge and betrayal, and the accepted Hajj.”[32](#)

One, who is strong and steadfast in his faith and is not deviated from it because of any doubt, is a pious man. On the contrary, one who has doubt about his faith will go astray because of the slightest temptations.

Leniency as another feature of the pious has been mentioned in the Holy Quran and traditions. God has recommended the Holy Prophet (SAW) with it. ***“It was by the mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if you had been stern and fierce of heart, they would have dispersed from around you.”***[33](#)

About parents, God says: ***“And make yourself submissively gentle to them with mercy, and say: O my Lord! Have mercy on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.”***[34](#)

Addressing the Holy Prophet (SAW) about leniency to the believers, God says: ***“And lower thy wing (in kindness) unto those believers who follow thee.”***[35](#)

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (AS) as saying: “Leniency is not put on anything except that it betters it, and it is not taken out of anything except that it makes it defective.”[36](#)

Imam Baqir (AS) has said: “Everything has a padlock, and the padlock of faith is leniency.”[37](#)

Here, Imam Baqir (AS) has likened a subjective concept with something tangible, meaning that he should be lenient, because roughness, bad temper and violence lead to perdition.

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: “Shall I not inform you of one from whom fire shall be prevented tomorrow (on the Day of Judgment)?” They said: “Yes, O Messenger of Allah!” The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: “The humble lenient one, the simple lenient one.”[38](#)

Faith with certainty

As we have already discussed, one of the features of the pious is conviction. In this relation, God says: ***“...and they are certain of the hereafter.”***[39](#)

Al-Baydhawi says: “Conviction is the strengthening of knowledge by the rejection of doubt through reasoning.”

Raghib says: "Certainty is a feature of knowledge above awareness and cognition, and it is classified into three kinds; the knowledge of certainty, the essence of certainty, and the very truth of certainty."⁴⁰

Allamah Majlisi says: "Some scholars have mentioned three states for certainty; the knowledge of certainty which is the knowledge obtained with a proof, like when seeing a smoke, we are certain that there is a fire around. The essence of certainty is when we see something with our own eyes like when we see the fire. The very truth of certainty is when someone enters into fire and shall have the very features of fire."

Hence, certainty is the highest degree of belief and it is given to few people. Only the pious have this worthy feature. Certainty is even above Taqwa. Yunus asks Imam Reza (AS) about faith and Islam. The Imam (AS) says: "Abu Ja'far (Imam Baqir) (AS) stated: 'Faith is one stage above Islam, Taqwa (piety) is one stage above faith, and certainty is one stage above Taqwa, and there is nothing as scanty as certainty in people.'"

The narrator said: "I asked: 'What is certainty then?', and The Imam (AS) said: 'the reliance on God, the submission to Him, the contentment with the divine fate and the entrusting of affairs to God.' I asked: 'What does this mean?' The Imam (AS) said: 'Thus said Abu Ja'far.'"⁴¹

When he was asked by Abu Baseer about the extent of reliance, the Imam said: "The extent of it is certainty." When asked about the extent of certainty, the Imam (AS) said: "Not to fear anything when you are with God."⁴²

In a commentary on this verse: "***And there was beneath it a treasure for them***",⁴³ in Majma' al-Bayan, we read: "There was a tablet of gold with this inscription: 'It is strange that one believes in the divine fate, and yet he is sad! It is strange that one is certain about sustenance, and yet he puts himself in trouble! It is strange that one believes in the Reckoning, and yet he is unmindful! It is strange that one knows how deceitful the world is to the people of the world, and yet he seeks comfort in it! There is no god but Allah and Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah.'"⁴⁴

Greed in seeking knowledge

The virtue of knowledge is obvious. The pious know that it is knowledge that promotes man to the highest stage of humanity. It is with knowledge that God has been acknowledged and worshipped. It is knowledge that makes man distinct from animals and other creatures. It is worth mentioning that the knowledge of the pious is transfused with forbearance. It has been related that a man went to Imam Hossain (AS), saying: "I have to pay a full blood-money and I cannot afford it. I said to myself: 'I will go to the most generous man.' I do not know anyone other than the Household of the Messenger of Allah."

The Imam (AS) said: "O my Arab brother! I ask you three questions. If you answer one of them, I will give one third of my wealth to you. If you answer the other two, I will give you two thirds of my wealth,

and if you answer all the questions, I will give you all my wealth.”

The Imam added: “I heard from my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, his saying: ‘Favor is (regarded) to the extent of knowledge.’” The Bedouin said: “Ask your questions. If I can answer, I will; otherwise, I will learn from you. There is no power save with Allah, The Most High, The Great.”

Imam Hossain (AS) asked: “What is the best knowledge?” The Bedouin said: “It is the faith in God.” The Imam asked: “How can we attain salvation?” The Arab man said: “Through the trust in God.” The Imam (AS) asked: “What is the ornament of man?” The Arab man said: “Knowledge with forbearance.” The Imam asked: “If there was no knowledge?” The Arab man said: “Wealth with generosity.” The Imam asked: “If there was no wealth?” The Arab man said: “Poverty with patience.” The Imam asked: “If there was no patience?” The Arab man said: “A thunderbolt from the sky to burn him, for he deserves it!” Imam Hossain (AS) smiled and gave him a bag in which there was one thousand Dinars. The Imam (AS) gave him his own ring with a precious stone on it that was about two hundred Dirhams, saying to him: “Give the gold to the creditors and sell the ring to provide your expense.”

The Arab man took it and said: “Allah knows where He puts His mission.”[45](#)

Economic and Moderation in Richness

This is also a feature which has been discussed in the section of “economy”.

Moderation in riches is a source of salvation. Imam Baqir (AS) has been reported as saying: “The factors that lead to salvation are the following; to fear Allah openly and secretly, to be moderate in riches and in poverty, and the speaking according to justice in contentment and anger.”[46](#)

Imam Ali (AS) said: “One, who is moderate, shall never be in need.”[47](#)

Submission in Worship

This is another feature of the pious. In this relation, God says: **“Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers.”**[48](#)

In Majma’ al-Bayan, we read: “O the humble ones! The humble ones never raise their sights from the places of their prostration, nor do they look right or left.”

Therefore, devotion in prayer is that man should be humble before the greatness of God, and be fully mindful whether his worship is prayer, fasting, Hajj, or else. As for being humble in prayer, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saw a man playing with his beard while offering the prayer. He said: “If he was humble in his heart, all the parts of his body would be humble too.”[49](#)

Splendor in Destitution

This is to show that God the Beneficent has made them (the pious) independent of others lest others may do them some favor making them indebted. Imam Ali (AS) has said: “Give to whomever you wish, and you will be his commander! Beg from someone, and you will be his captive! Be independent of whomever you wish, and you will be like him.”[50](#)

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported by Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: “There should be both a feeling of being in need of people and independence of them in your heart. Your need for them should be in your speaking softly to them and being cheerful (with good temper). Your independence of them should be in your pure honor and preserved dignity.”[51](#)

In a commentary on this, Allamah Majlisi says: “Perhaps, the meaning of what Imam Ali (AS) has said is that we should have two beliefs in our heart; one is to believe that we are in need of others, because man is a civilized creature by nature, and the other is to believe that we are not in need of people, for it is God Who provides us with our sustenance. Hence, we should not turn to people for our needs. Therefore, the first belief is related to the association with people through good speech and behavior, and the second belief is related to the safeguarding of our dignity, and dignity is achieved by abandoning begging and greed.”

Patience with Hardship

Endurance is an outstanding feature of the pious. Imam Sadiq (AS) has said: “Patience is the head of faith.”[52](#) The Imam has also said: “The position of patience to faith is as the position of the head to the body. When the head is gone, the body is gone too. It is the same that when patience is gone, faith is gone too.”[53](#)

The Seeking for well-gotten Sustenance

It is a prominent feature of the pious, for the impious are reckless about what is lawful and what is unlawful. The pious do their best to eat what is lawful. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Baqir (AS) as saying: “Worship (devotion) has seventy parts. The best part of it is to seek lawful sustenance.”[54](#)

Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (AS) said: “Whoever seeks lawful sustenance for his dependents is like one who is fighting in the way of God.”[55](#)

Khalid ibn Najeer has reported Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: “Greet whomever you meet. Say: Ja’far ibn Muhammad sends his regards to you and say: fear Allah for the sustenance He gives to you. By God! I do not advise you unless I advise myself (with the same) first. It is incumbent upon you to do your best! Whenever you finish your Morning Prayer, seek your sustenance in the early hours of the day. God will

soon give you sustenance in the early hours of the day. God will soon give you sustenance and will help you to obtain it.”[56](#)

The messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Ali (AS) as saying: “On the Day of Judgment, no man walks even a step unless he is asked about four things; he shall be asked on what he has spent his life, how he has spoiled his youth, where he has obtained his wealth from and how he has spent it, and about the love to us, the Ahl al-Bayt.”[57](#)

Pleasure in Guidance

By this, Imam Ali (AS) may mean that the pious are happy, because they have been guided. Imam Ali (AS) has said: “Deceive your self in worshipping, be lenient to, and do not force it. Engage it (in worshipping) when it is free and merry except for the obligations on you, for they must be done.”[58](#)

Refraining from Greed

It is a feature of the pious, for they know that greed has its roots in vices. In the words of Allamah Khoo’ee, greed causes humiliation, jealousy, enmity, backbiting, scandal, sycophancy, hypocrisy, abandonment of the enjoining of the good and forbidding the evil, giving up the reliance on God and the contentment with the divine fate, and others.

The messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported as saying: “The poorest man is one who is greedy.”[59](#)

Being asked what feature makes man’s faith steady, Imam Sadiq (AS) said: “What makes man’s faith steady is piety, and what brings him out of faith is greed.”[60](#)

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also said: “If you want your eyes to be enlightened and attain the good of this world and the hereafter, do not be greedy for what people have, count yourself among the dead, do not consider yourself above others; and keep your tongue (not to say any bad thing) as you keep your property.”[61](#)

A man called Abu Ayyoob Khalid ibn Zeid came to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and asked: “O Messenger of Allah! Give me an advice, so that I will put it into practice.” The Holy Prophet (SAW) said: “I advise you of five things; set no hope on what is in the hands of people. This is independence. Keep away from greed, for it is indigence. Offer prayer as if it is your last prayer. Avoid doing what you have to apologize for it. Wish for your brother what you wish for yourself.”[62](#)

Imam Baqir (AS) said: “Do not covet (the belongings of) one who is above (better than) you. It is sufficient what God has said to the prophet: **“Let not then their property and their children excite your admiration.”**[63](#) God has also said: **“And do not stretch your eyes after that with which We have provided different classes of them, (of) the splendor of this world’s life.”**[64](#)

We should take into consideration the simple way of living of the Messenger of Allah whose food was bread of barley, his sweetmeat was dates, and his firewood was the dry fronds of palm-tree.”[65](#)

Virtuous Deeds

36–40: One of the other features of a pious man is that “He performs virtuous deeds, but he still feels afraid. In the evening, he is anxious to offer thanks (to Allah). In the morning, his anxiety is to remember (Allah). He passes the night in thanking and praising God, and when the morning comes, he is busy glorifying God. He spends the night in fear and in the morning he is delighted with hope. He is afraid of forgetfulness delighted for the favor and mercy received by him.”[66](#)

A pious man never underestimates his deeds. He fearfully keeps telling himself: will there remain any good deed for me despite my sins, forgetfulness and unrestrained way of living? Shall I not be taken to account?

Offering Thanks

One of the features of the pious is that they offer thanks. Thanking, as Raghīb believes, is to appreciate a favor and to express it. The opposite is ingratitude which is the ignoring and concealing of a favor. Gratefulness is of three kinds; heartfelt gratefulness, which is the appreciation of a favor and blessing, gratefulness expressed by the tongue which is the laudation of the Lord, and gratefulness by the organs of the body which is the gratitude to a favor as it deserves to be treated.[67](#)

In this relation, there are many Quranic verses and traditions. Allah says: **“And very few of my servants are grateful.”**[68](#)

In Kashshaf, it has been related that someone was praying in this way: “O Allah! Make me among the few ones!” When he was protested as what kind of supplication it was, he recited the above-mentioned verse, and said: “I like to be among them.”

In another verse, God says: **“If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe.”**[69](#)

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: “One, who eats his food thankfully, has the reward of one who has observed recommended fasting. One, who offers thanks for his being healthy, has the reward of one who is afflicted, but is patient. One, who offers thanks for what has been given to him, has the reward of one who is deprived, but is satisfied.”[70](#)

Ammar ad-Duhni narrated: “I heard Imam Sajjad (AS) say: ‘Surely, Allah loves every sad heart and loves every grateful servant. God Almighty will ask each servant on the Day of Judgment: ‘Did you thank so-and-so person?’ When the servant says: ‘No, I just thanked You’, God will say: ‘When you did not thank him, you have not thanked Me.’” Then the Imam said: ‘The most thankful one of you before God is

one who thanks people.”[71](#)

Being grateful to God is an outstanding feature of the pious. Hence, God Almighty has introduced His prophets as thankful servants in the Holy Quran.

Prophets sometimes introduce themselves as such. When people protested the Holy Prophet (SAW) why he put himself in so much trouble, he would say: “Should I not be a thankful servant?”

When the Lord of the universe praises a group of people, He says: **“Most surely there are signs in this for every patient endure, grateful one.”**[72](#)

When God blames a group of people, He says: **“... but most of people do not give thanks.”**[73](#)

It means that they see divine blessings, but they are indifferent to them. Mentioning His blessings, God says: **“And He it is Who made for you the ears and the eyes and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks.”**[74](#)

When telling the stories of the prophets and their nations, God says: **“...that you may give thanks.”**[75](#)

What is gratefulness that is so much important? What is the meaning of being grateful to God that He has attached so much importance to? What is the gratefulness with which God tests His servants? What kind of act is gratefulness that the abandonment of which shall entail chastisement for the servants, but to practice it makes man beloved to God and increases His blessings? Sa’di the Persian poet says in one of his poems: “Gratefulness increases God’s favors; whereas ungratefulness takes blessings out of your hands.”

Sheikh Toosi says: “Being grateful is considered as the best act which entails God’s favors. It can be through words, behavior, or intention. Gratefulness has three elements:

1– Acknowledgement of the Benefactor; man should know that all blessings, open or hidden come from God Almighty. He is the true Benefactor and all mediators are ruled and conquered by Him.

2– Submission, humbleness, and delightedness towards a favor or blessing; As it is a gift, it shows the favor of the Benefactor, the sign of which is that man does not get happy with the world except with what may bring him closer to God.

3– When this state is felt in the heart, vigor is seen in the act which belongs to the heart, the tongue and all parts of the body. As for the heart, the intention is to glorify and praise God, reflect on the sign of favor, and serve God. As for the tongue, it is to express that with laudation, praise, and glorification of God, and with enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. As for the acts of the organs of the body, it is to use all the blessings and favors, open or hidden, in the service of God. Observing piety and self-restrain against sins, using the eyes to see (and ponder on) what God has created in the nature, reciting the Quran, and reviewing the knowledge and sciences of the prophets and the imams...and the same is said

about the other organs.

Now, it is clear what gratefulness is, why it is considered as an important feature of perfection, and why God has said ***“and very few of My servants are grateful.”***⁷⁶

As expressing thanks by the tongue is a divine blessing by itself, it requires another gratefulness.

In expressing gratefulness to God with the tongue, which is itself a blessing and requires other thanking, man, in thanking God, must admit inability in knowing God and the appreciation of the blessings. The Holy prophet (SAW) has said: “My Lord! We have not worshipped You as You deserve and we have not known You as You are.”

Imam Sajjad (AS) says: “O Lord! I cannot count Your praise, the praise which is due to You.”⁷⁷

Sa’di the Persian poet in the introduction of his book, Gulistan (Rose Garden) writes: “The favor of God, Mighty and Glorified, Whose obedience is a cause of approaching (to Him) and the gratitude (to Him) brings more blessings. Every inhalation of the breath prolongs life and every expiration of it gladdens our nature, wherefore every breath confers two benefits and for every benefit gratitude is due. Whose hand and tongue is capable to fulfill the obligations of thank to Him? ***“Give thanks, O family of David, and few of My servants are thankful.”***⁷⁸

It is the best to a worshipper, because of his shortcomings, to offer apologies at the Throne of God, although what He deserves no one is able to accomplish.”

- ^{1.} Qur’an, 22:18.
- ^{2.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 82, p. 128.
- ^{3.} Rawdhah of al-Kafi, p. 128.
- ^{4.} Hammam Sermon.
- ^{5.} Minhaj al-Bara’ah, vol. 6, p. 10.
- ^{6.} Jami’ al-Sa’adaat.
- ^{7.} Jami’ al-Sa’adat, vol. 1, p. 161.
- ^{8.} Ibid.
- ^{9.} Ibid., p. 165.
- ^{10.} Jami’ al-Sa’adaat, vol. 1, p. 165.
- ^{11.} Ibid.
- ^{12.} Al-Baqiyat al-Salihah, by Sheikh Mofeed.
- ^{13.} Awalim, vol. 2, p. 271.
- ^{14.} Ibid.
- ^{15.} Awalim, vol. 2, p. 271.
- ^{16.} Ibid., p. 275.
- ^{17.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 394.
- ^{18.} Ibid.
- ^{19.} Ibid., p. 399.
- ^{20.} Ibid., p. 401.
- ^{21.} Qur’an, 3:193.

- [22.](#) Qur'an, 3:198.
- [23.](#) Hammam Sermon.
- [24.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 75, p. 301.
- [25.](#) Ibid., p. 300.
- [26.](#) Qur'an, 53:32.
- [27.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 323.
- [28.](#) Hammam Sermon.
- [29.](#) Tanqeeh al-Maqal, vol. 2, p. 128.
- [30.](#) Qur'an, 49:15.
- [31.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p. 126.
- [32.](#) Ibid.
- [33.](#) Qur'an, 3:159.
- [34.](#) Qur'an, 17:24.
- [35.](#) Qur'an, 26:215.
- [36.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, pp. 51, 60.
- [37.](#) Ibid., p. 55.
- [38.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 51.
- [39.](#) Qur'an, 2:4.
- [40.](#) Mofradat.
- [41.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 138
- [42.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 142
- [43.](#) Qur'an, 18:82.
- [44.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 152
- [45.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 44, p. 196.
- [46.](#) Safeenat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 431.
- [47.](#) Ibid.
- [48.](#) Qur'an, 23:1-2.
- [49.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 112.
- [50.](#) Ibid., p. 107.
- [51.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 112.
- [52.](#) Ibid., p. 183.
- [53.](#) Ibid., vol. 72, p. 183.
- [54.](#) Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 12, p. 11.
- [55.](#) Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 12, p. 11.
- [56.](#) Ibid., p. 12.
- [57.](#) Khisal, vol. 1, p. 253.
- [58.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, p. 1061.
- [59.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 168.
- [60.](#) Ibid.
- [61.](#) Ibid.
- [62.](#) Ibid.
- [63.](#) Qur'an, 9:55.
- [64.](#) Qur'an, 20:131.
- [65.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 172.
- [66.](#) Hammam Sermon.
- [67.](#) Mofradat.
- [68.](#) Qur'an, 34:13.
- [69.](#) Qur'an, 14:7.

[70.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 22.

[71.](#) Ibid., p. 38.

[72.](#) Qur'an, 31:31.

[73.](#) Qur'an, 40:61.

[74.](#) Qur'an, 23:78.

[75.](#) Qur'an, 28:73.

[76.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 22

[77.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 23.

[78.](#) Qur'an, 34:13.

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