

## Lesson 28: The Greatness of Worship and Servitude and its Existential Effects

In this section of the *hadith*, the greatness and superiority of worship and devotion to Allah, the Exalted, has been mentioned and also the fact that man's deeds—whether righteous or unrighteous—do not remain hidden from the eyes of witnesses and vigilantes; to the extent that the earth, on which we worship or perform unbecoming acts will even give witness either in our favor or against us on the Judgment Day.

It is not possible that our deeds and conduct could be without effects and consequences, but in addition to worldly repercussions the fruits of our deeds will become manifest in the hereafter also. In the hereafter, the ground on which we perform worship shall bear positive witness in regard to our worship, or will bear witness against us and even curse us if we do unbecoming deeds upon it.

### The Witnessing of the Earth in regard to Man's Deeds

“O Abu Dharr! There is no man who places his forehead on a part of the earth save that it bears witness on the Day of Resurrection in regard to that, and there is no house in which people meet but that it blesses or curses them.”

Some great people would recite their prayers in different parts of the mosque instead of in one place, or when they entered a house they would initially recite two *rak'ats* (cycles) of prayer. The reason they did this was to have more witnesses in their favor on the Day of Resurrection. This in itself is cleverness, which is beneficial and praiseworthy for a believer.

With regard to the superiority and value which has been mentioned in this and other *hadiths* for prayer, persistence in reciting prayer in different places is an acknowledgement of submission and confidence in the sayings of the Noble Prophet (S) and the Pure Imams (‘a).

As can be observed, this section and the other parts of this same *hadith* are expressive of this fact that

the earth, the trees and other inanimate creatures which we conjecture as lacking perception and awareness do have conception and cognizance and comprehend our deeds and bless us for our good deeds and curse us for our bad actions; in addition, they will bear witness either in our favor or against us on the Day of Resurrection.

## **Characteristics of the Praise of the Earth and Inanimate Objects**

About this section of the *hadith*, where perception and awareness is characterized for the earth as well as inanimate objects, and also Qur'anic verses and other *hadiths* which have similar subject matter, great scholars have presented three points of view:

**The first point of view:** A number of scholars believe that these expressions are metaphorical and the intention is not their literal meaning and they mention allegorical interpretations for every instance correspondent with it. Perhaps the majority of exegetes have chosen this method in their interpretations of this type of verse and *hadith*.

**The second point of view:** The gnostics and mystical philosophers, like Sadr al-Muta'allihin<sup>1</sup> and their students believe that these existents truly have perception and awareness and glorify Allah and have fear of Allah, but we are unable to comprehend this reality.

These are the real meanings which they deduce from the Qur'anic verses and *hadiths* and assert that the trees, earth, stones and... have awareness and glorify Allah:

... تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ

***“The seven heavens glorify Him, and the earth [too], and whoever is in them. There is not a thing but celebrates His praise, but you do not understand their glorification...”<sup>2</sup>***

In the exegesis of the aforementioned verse, 'Allamah Tabataba'i says, “This verse proves the glorification of material particles of the cosmos—that they glorify Allah and that they exempt Him from having any partners. Glorification means establishing the transcendence of Allah through speech.

Speech is essentially the unveiling of one's inner intentions through signs and indicators. Because man has not found an existential way to express his intent, he is compelled to make use of words, which are sounds that have been established to signify various meanings and thus make intentions known. From then onwards, this method of explaining and understanding has become standard. In addition, man makes use of hand and head signals and sometimes writes or posts signs.

In short, that which unveils intentions is speech. The result of one's endeavors to convey their intentions is that person's speech, even though that inner intention is not in the form of sounds and words. The proof of this point is that terms such as word, speech, command and revelation have been attributed to

Allah in the Qur'an and without any doubt the way Allah conveys meaning is in no way similar to words and sayings uttered by human beings.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, in the heavens and the earth and that which exists within them, something exists that openly declares the Oneness and Unity of Allah and exonerates Him from all defects and imperfections. This is that all existents are in absolute need and want. This need is proof of the existence of the Being whom everything and everyone is in need and there is no thing independent and needless of Him. Therefore, all existents proclaim the presence of a Self-sufficient Creator by means of their existential need and natural imperfections.

In continuation, 'Allamah Tabataba'i states:

The word of Allah, the Exalted, is indicative of this fact that by creating existents, knowledge and awareness too have been spread in them and every one of them derives benefit from knowledge to the extent that they derive benefit from existence and being. This is not to say that they all have knowledge to the same extent and also not that the knowledge and awareness of all creatures is of one kind.

It is not true that the knowledge of all of the creatures is like the knowledge of man and/or that man is informed of the knowledge and awareness of every one of the creatures. For this reason, every created existent is in some way aware of itself and manifests its need and imperfection by means of its being and existence, which has become encompassed in the needlessness of Allah and that He has perfection and there is no lord save Him. Therefore, every created existent glorifies its Lord and exempts Him from every partner and imperfection.<sup>3</sup>

**The third point of view:** All existents have a spiritual form in addition to their material forms which they possess in this world and in reality perception and awareness are a part of that spiritual and inner form and that same spiritual form becomes manifest on the Day of Resurrection and gives witness.

We do not comprehend that spiritual form in this world, that is why we do not conceive the glorification of things and do not perceive the effects of awareness and knowledge in them; but that [spiritual] form is existent and becomes manifest in the hereafter and the realities which it comprehends will appear and give witness.

According to the clear explanation of the Qur'an, on the Day of Resurrection even the skin of man bears witness against him, and the tongue, hands and legs all give witness against him. If these limbs did not have any perception, their evidence would be meaningless. In regard to the evidence of the limbs of the body, the Gracious Qur'an states:

... وَقَالُوا لِحُلُودِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

***“They will say to their skins, ‘Why did you bear witness against us?’ They will say, ‘We were given***

### ***speech by Allah, who gave speech to all things’.”<sup>4</sup>***

If the skin of man does not have perception by which it conceives at the time of committing sins, how can it to give evidence on the Day of Resurrection in regard to sin which it was incapable of perceiving at the time it was committed? Evidence is meaningful once the witness has conceived and experienced the scene of sin; otherwise, testimony is useless.

If it is said that Allah, the Exalted, will compel the limbs and parts of the body to give evidence on the Day of Resurrection without their having perceived sin, it ought to be answered that in that case there is no evidence applicable and ascription of the term evidence on such an instance is purposeless. For this reason, the bearing of witness by the limbs of the body takes place after perception and experience and a kind of knowledge of the deed and in other than this case, giving evidence does not take place.

Therefore, according to the second and third points of view, there is no doubt in regard to the primary principle of the existence of perception, experience and a kind of knowledge and awareness in the order of creation.

However, differences of opinion exist in regard to the quality: is this knowledge accompanied by the transcendental soul of things? Or, do they themselves truly have perception and awareness? Of course, the proponents of the first point of view assert that when the limbs and members of a human being manifest on the Day of Resurrection, the effects of man’s conduct that abide in the limbs are the same as their testimony.

## **The Intelligence and Consciousness of Creatures and How they are Influenced**

Perhaps among the above three points of view, the third perspective is the best. In any case, it can be gathered from the *hadiths* and the Qur’anic verses that material things and creatures have a kind of perception and awareness. Not only is their existential awareness constant, but they are affected by events which take place around them and these events that affect them consequently bring about new conceptions in them: when worship is performed in a place, it has a good effect, and the place becomes delighted and expresses pride.

In contrast, if sin is committed in a place, it leaves a bad effect on it and the earth becomes upset and curses the sinner. Of course, we are not able to comprehend these kinds of notions and the subject matter of these verses and *hadiths* has not become precisely clear to us, but we have to admit that there are unknown truths in the cosmos that are outside the realm of conception and understanding and our knowledge of them is meager. As the Qur’an states:

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ...

***“...And you have not been given of knowledge except a little.”<sup>5</sup>***

There are a great number of truths in the universe of which we have no knowledge. We have come to know some of these truths by means of revelation or because the great Prophets (‘a) and the Pure Imams (‘a) have explained them to us and we have confidence in their sayings, so we must be thankful to them that they have clarified these realities for us because, if they had not, our intellects would not have attained them and it would not have been possible for us to conceive such truths with our imperfect intellects:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

***“As We sent to you an apostle from among yourselves, who recites to you Our signs, and purifies you, and teaches you the Book and wisdom, and teaches you what you did not know.”<sup>6</sup>***

With regard to what has been mentioned, two points have become clear: the first point being that even if one attains a huge amount of knowledge and awareness and knows all the available scholarship of mankind, still what he knows is less than that which is unknown and his knowledge is still a drop in the bucket compared to that which exists in the universe; for this reason, one ought not to be proud and boastful. In addition, it is not even possible for an individual to acquire all the knowledge of mankind.

Every individual attains only a part of the existing knowledge—a drop from the boundless ocean of knowledge is allotted to him. The second point is that we ought not to imagine that we live in a world where no one sees us when we do something in a secluded place: even if the earth does not conceive and understand, the angels who witness our deeds do perceive and write our deeds and also there are those who do have complete predominance over this universe and nothing remains hidden from their eyes.

## **The Expansive Domain of the Light of the Pure Imams (‘a)**

On the basis of our belief as Shi‘ah, the light of the Immaculate Imams (‘a) is present everywhere, although we do not all comprehend their light as is befitting. The holy presence of the ‘the Final Successor’, Imam al-Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance, is present everywhere, especially in the gatherings of the Shi‘ahs, so much so that he replies to the greetings of an individual who greets him, but our ears are incapable of hearing what he says. If an individual shouts out for his help, he responds to that person.

If a lost one in the wilderness calls upon him, he hastens to help that individual and guides him, and he cures the sick who have lost hope in getting well. It is clear that he is present and he listens because, if he were not present and did not listen, how would he hasten to help and save a person who calls for his help once caught up at the bottom of the sea or lost in the wilderness?

The late 'Allamah Majlisi narrates from his father that one of the righteous people of his age who had great piety and knowledge and went to *hajj* often, was well known for his ability of instantaneous transportation between places [*tayy al-ard*] came to Isfahan where I met him and asked him how he attained this ability.

He said, "One year I was traveling to the House of Allah with other pilgrims. I arrived at a place eight or nine stops away from honorable Mecca. I fell back and lost the caravan. I lost the way and went astray and became so thirsty that I lost all hope of ever remaining alive. In that state, I shouted out, 'O Aba Salih! Show me the way!' All of a sudden, I saw a man mounted on a camel coming my way. When he got near, I saw that he was a very handsome youth in splendid clothes with the appearance of a great person carrying a vessel of water.

"I greeted him and he responded to my greeting and asked, 'Are you thirsty?' I said, 'Yes.' He gave me the water and I drank it. After that he said, 'Would you like me to take you to the caravan to join your companions?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Get on the back of my camel.' I got on the back of his camel and he started moving towards Mecca. I started reciting the supplication of 'Hirz Yamani' as was my habit and after reciting a few words, that Arab youth taught me to recite it correctly.

"After a little while, he asked me, 'Do you know this place?' I looked and saw that I was at a place very close to Mecca. He told me to disembark from the camel. As soon as I disembarked from the camel, he disappeared from my sight. It was then that I realized that that handsome youth was the Imam of the Age, may Allah hasten his reappearance."<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, the light of the Imam ('a) is present everywhere even though we do not perceive it; however, comprehension of this truth is difficult for everyone and such realities if openly narrated without any constraints, may cause some to become afflicted with hyperbolic exaggeration.

Therefore, the lower levels of this issue have been explained and this is that the records of our deeds are presented to the Imam ('a), or as has been recorded in some *hadiths* that the records of our deeds are presented to the Noble Prophet (S) and Allah. It has been recorded in a *hadith* that on one occasion talk about the days of the week was brought up, and when Thursday was mentioned, Imam al-Rida ('a) stated:

*"... The day when the deeds of Allah's servants are presented to Allah, the Noble Prophet (S) and the Imams is Thursday."*<sup>8</sup>

It has been recorded in some of the *hadiths* that the angels take the deeds of man to the Throne in the evening after recording them and present them to Allah. Now, perhaps one might ask: is Allah not present in all places that the angels take the records of man's deeds to His Throne? However, it must be understood that the levels of existence have special needs and the presentation of deeds also has a particular discipline which is suitable with the order of Divine Lordship and this is not contradictory with the fact that Allah is present in every place.

## Deeds do not Remain Hidden from the Eyes of Witnesses

With regard to what has been mentioned, we have to be aware that we do not live in a world devoid of comprehension and perception: in this world seeing eyes and listening ears exist which bear witness to our actions and words and on the basis of the apparent meanings of some Qur'anic verses and *hadiths*, even the earth, the trees and the birds have perception and do understand, and of course we are unaware of this fact.

Even if this is not so, at least there are angels who bear witness to our deeds, and higher than this is the holy presence of the Imam of the Age, may Allah hasten his reappearance, who sees our actions and even higher than all is the Divine Essence of Allah watching over our deeds:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ...

***“...Indeed Allah is witness to all things.”<sup>9</sup>***

In regard to His awareness about the apparent and hidden deeds of man and also the watching of the angels over the actions of man, Allah, the Exalted, states:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعَلْمُ مَا تُوسْوَسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ \* إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ  
وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ \* مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

***“And certainly We have created man and We know to what his soul tempts him, and we are nearer to him than his jugular vein. When the twin recorders record [his deeds] seated on the right hand and on the left, he says no word but that there is a ready observer beside him.”<sup>10</sup>***

Elsewhere, in regard to the witnessing of the Noble Prophet (S) on the Day of Resurrection, Allah states:

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

***“So how shall it be, when we bring from every nation a witness, and We bring you as a witness to them?”<sup>11</sup>***

From these verses which state the witnessing of the Prophet of Allah (S) and the other witnesses, it can be deduced that those witnesses observe the deeds of Allah's servants in this world; otherwise, how would they bear witness if they did not witness the actions of people in this world? Is it possible for a person to bear witness to an event he has not seen?!

If we pay heed to this point that the world which we live in is not dead and is not devoid of awareness

and perception, but instead there are beings who see us and observe and witness over our deeds even though we do not see them, we will be alert and think twice in regard to our conduct and modesty and this will be a hindrance to our doing indecent deeds.

If people pay heed to the fact that when they commit sin, the earth and the sky will bear witness to their deeds, that there are books in which lists of man's deeds are recorded and that all actions will become apparent on the Day of Resurrection, they will abstain from perpetrating wrongdoing and not commit sin even in seclusion. As Imam 'Ali ('a) states:

*“Beware of disobeying Allah in solitude, because the witness (of that) situation is also the judge.”<sup>12</sup>*

If you are in a condition you are not willing to be seen by anyone and someone takes a picture of you, you make every effort to destroy that picture lest in the future that photo is seen by others. Without the least doubt, man does not want a picture which will bring about shame and embarrassment to be taken of him. At the time of taking pictures, a person adorns himself, wears clean clothes and tries to show an attractive appearance so as to make the picture appear as charming as possible.

Again, it is not pleasing for a picture to be taken which will cause one shame. With regard to this similitude, we must understand that natural causes like the earth, the sky, doors and walls are always taking pictures of us and on the Day of Resurrection those pictures will be made apparent for all to see. For this reason, we ought to try not to let them get pictures of us in ugly and shameful circumstances in order not to become embarrassed on the Day of Resurrection when all our deeds and thoughts will become apparent:

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا...

*“The day when every soul will find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it will wish there were a far distance between it and that (evil).”<sup>13</sup>*

## Sincerity of Intention in Allah's Servants Brings about Joy and Pride

“O Abu Dharr! There is no morning and evening that passes save that the different points of the earth ask each other, ‘O my neighbor! Has a person glorifying Allah passed by?’ or ‘Has one of His servants placed his forehead on you in prostration for Allah?’ Some points of the earth say ‘Yes!’ and some other points say, ‘No.’ Every point which says ‘Yes’, takes pride in itself and becomes happy, and considers itself higher than the other points.”

Another issue which has been discussed in this noble *hadith* is that the point of the earth on which Allah's servant worships and prostrates takes pride in itself. We must consider what the secret of this

boasting is. Its secret is that principally that which is valuable in the presence of Allah is attention to Him and all deeds only become worthwhile when they are accompanied by this attention and performed with the intention of winning Allah's favor.

A deed is done for the sake of winning Allah's favor when it is performed with attentive remembrance of Allah. The actions of a person that is negligent of Allah cannot be done with the intention of winning His favor. Such a deed is done either with the intention of pleasing one's own heart or for the purpose of gratifying the hearts of human beings and has no value whatsoever in the eyes of Allah.

Therefore, remembrance of Allah and paying heed to Him and anything which connects man to the eternal world has validity, and everything else becomes valuable in the shadow of heedful remembrance of Allah and is worthless without His remembrance.

For this reason, man's true perfection is attained through attention to Allah and if this is suffused like a soul into all the deeds of man, those deeds acquire value. In other than this case, without paying heed to Allah and without accompanying deeds and worship and divine and sincere intention, they become like a dead body devoid of spirit. Therefore, it is befitting that all our deeds and acts of worship are done for Allah:

قُلْ إِنِّي أُؤْمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ

***“Say, ‘Indeed I have been commanded to worship Allah with exclusive faith in Him, and I have been commanded to be the first of those who submit [to Him]’.”<sup>14</sup>***

The Noble Prophet's (S) emphasis on sincerity, especially sincerity in religion, is because man is Allah's servant, he has been created for devotional servitude to Allah and he ought to pursue perfection, prosperity and spiritual growth in all the stages of his life and because this important issue is not attainable except under the auspices of sincerity and being attentive to Allah.

Therefore, purifying acts of worship and sincere devotion to Allah is the most important religious order because it is an important cause for man's gaining proximity to Allah, the Exalted, and attaining desirable perfection. For this reason, Allah, the Exalted, in the Gracious Qur'an has invited the believers to sincerity. It should be understood that man can attain levels where Allah, the Exalted, purifies him for Himself, as praise has been heaped upon the sincere in various instances in the Qur'an, for example, in regard to Moses (‘a):

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَى إِنَّهُ كَانَ مُخْلِصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا

***“And mention in the Book Moses. Indeed he was exclusively dedicated [to Allah], and an apostle and a prophet.”<sup>15</sup>***

Naturally, the purified [*mukhlas*] needs a purifier [*mukhlis*] and beyond the shadow of doubt it is Allah who purifies the pure, to the extent that the devil cannot ensnare them towards perversions:

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ \* إِلاَّ عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

***“He said, ‘By Your might, I will surely pervert them, except your exclusive servants among them.”***<sup>16</sup>

In explanation of this Qur’anic verse it ought to be said that the pure and sincere person has a mental, spiritual and divine power which is a hurdle against his falling in the trap of the devils and Satan cannot have a bad effect on them. Of course, the sincere derive benefit of such power by the grace and mercy of Allah. In regard to Prophet Joseph (‘a), Allah, the Exalted, states:

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهِ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْ لا أَنْ رَأَى بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهِ كَذَلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلِصِينَ

***“And certainly she made for him; and he would certainly have made for her [too] had he not beheld the proof of his Lord; so it was, that We might turn away from him all evil and indecency. He was indeed one of Our dedicated servants.”***<sup>17</sup>

It has been emphasized in this verse that Joseph (‘a) was not afflicted by sin and wrong-doing, despite the fact that suitable and tempting conditions had been made available to him; circumstances in which any other person might have fallen in the trap of the devil.

Prophet Joseph (‘a) was at that time at the peak of maturity and the blossoming of sexual desire and the circumstances in the house of the King of Egypt were filled with welfare and comfort. In addition, the wife of the King of Egypt had created a situation such that, if Joseph had not perceived the proof of Allah, he would have fallen into temptation.

## **Sincerity of Intention Brings about Superiority in Works**

Regarding the previous discussion, that which adds value to the deeds of human beings and is a cause for redemption from the implicit and explicit traps of the devil is purity of intention and attention to Allah, the Exalted; therefore, even the best and greatest of deeds lack any value and worth if they are not done for Allah. In the words of the *hadiths* and Qur’anic verses, the best of deeds is *jihad* (striving in the way of Allah), to the extent that Allah states:

فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى ...  
الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

***“Allah has graced those who wage jihad with their possessions and their persons by a degree over those who sit back; and to each Allah has promised the best of reward, and Allah has graced those who wage jihad over those who sit back with a great reward.”<sup>18</sup>***

Now this very *jihad*, despite all its superiority and excellence, is devoid of any value if it is carried out without any attention to Allah and without a divine intention. According to some narrations, in one of the wars during the early days of Islam, one man on the battlefield fought with utmost bravery and valiance and finally was killed. The fighting and bravery of that man aroused the admiration of the other Muslim soldiers.

For this reason, they addressed the Noble Prophet (S), “Surely, that man has a very high position in the eyes of Allah on account of his brave and courageous fighting.” The Noble Prophet (S) responded, “He has not been killed in the way of Allah, but in the way of his horse!” (That man’s horse had become entrapped in the army of the enemy as a result of fear and dread, and that man fought very hard in order to rescue his horse from the enemy until he finally was killed.)

Of course, not every *jihad*, endeavor in Allah’s cause or martyrdom brings about perfection. Only martyrdom which is accompanied by attention to Allah can result in perfection, like our beloved martyrs who made vows [*nadhr*] to become martyred during the Iran–Iraq war. Some would go to the Mosque of Jamkaran for forty nights on Fridays and/or Thursdays and ask Allah to grant them their wish of martyrdom. This kind of martyrdom is valuable because it is accompanied by remembrance and attention to Allah.

The superiority and value or inferiority of man’s deeds and conduct are related to one’s intention: a person’s deeds are valuable if his intention is pure and his deeds are done for the sake of Allah. The more one’s remembrance of Allah and the more his love and knowledge increase, the more the value of his deeds increases. In contrast, if man’s deeds are done without knowledge and love of Allah and without attention to and remembrance of Him, they are like a dead body devoid of vital force and benefit.

When the various points of the earth ask from each other, they do not enquire, “Has anyone done the *jihad* or spent his property in the way of Allah upon you?” On the contrary, they ask, “Has anyone remembered Allah upon you or not?” Therefore, the deeds of man are considered as worship if they are done with attention to Allah. One’s *jihad*, prayers, and spending property in the way of Allah are all considered to be worship if they are done with a sincere intention for Allah.

Acquisition of knowledge, teaching, academic discussion and even listening to speeches are considered to be worship once done with a pure intention for Allah. However, if sincerity of intention is absent, not only are one’s deeds not worship, they are also a means of attracting the attention of other human beings. Hence, the thing that is important and worthy of attention, to the extent that even elements of the earth have conceived it, is attention to Allah and the Divine Presence.

When we turn the pages of the Glorious Qur’an, we do not find any scene in which the invocation and

glorification of Allah has not been mentioned. One of the statements of Allah, the Exalted, is:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

***“O you who have faith! Remember Allah with frequent remembrance.”***<sup>19</sup>

In another place, after citing for the wise reasons for creating the sky, the earth and the rotation of the night and day, Allah, the Exalted, thus introduces those who possess wisdom:

...الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

***“Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say], ‘Our Lord, You have not created this in vain!’...”***<sup>20</sup>

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) says that Prophet Moses (‘a) thus requested from Allah, the Exalted:

“O Allah! There are times and states in which I feel embarrassed to invoke You!” (Perhaps he meant the time of easing nature.) Allah responded, “O Moses! My invocation is good and acceptable in all states.”<sup>21</sup>

It is for this reason that supplications have been recorded even for times of using the toilet and when easing nature, so that man does not become forgetful of worshiping Allah even in that state because Allah is never pleased that even one moment of our lives is passed in forgetfulness or that we become negligent of worshiping Him and it is for this reason that man’s perfection is attained under the auspices of devotion and servitude to Allah.

Therefore, we must strive to be attentive to Allah, the Exalted, at all times, even though that attention may be weak. Invocation and remembrance of Allah is an alchemy which, added to a valueless item, causes the item to acquire the highest value; this alchemy bestows value and purpose to our lives.

1. Mulla Sadra.
2. Surat al-Isra’ 17:44.
3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 13, pp. 114–116.
4. Surat Fussilat 41:21.
5. Surat al-Isra’ 17:85.
6. Surat al-Baqarah 2:151.
7. Tabari Nuri, Kifayat al-Muwahhidin, vol. 2, p. 182.
8. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 23, p. 346.
9. Surat al-Nisa’ 4:33.
10. Surat Qaf 16–18.
11. Surat al-Nisa’ 4:41.
12. Nahj al-Balaghah, p. 420, trans. Shahidi.

- [13.](#) Surat Al 'Imran 3:30.
- [14.](#) Surat al-Zumar 39:11.
- [15.](#) Surat Maryam 19:51.
- [16.](#) Surat Sad 38:82-83.
- [17.](#) Surat Yusuf 12:24.
- [18.](#) Surat al-Nisa' 4:95.
- [19.](#) Surat al-Ahzab 33:41.
- [20.](#) Surat Al 'Imran 3:191.
- [21.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 13, p. 343.

---

**Source URL:**

<https://www.al-islam.org/provisions-journey-mishkat-volume-2-muhammad-taqi-misbah-yazdi/lesson-28-greatness-worship-and#comment-0>