

## Modesty

Modesty is to regard the others' standings and avoid behaving arrogantly with them. It is an attractive quality that draws the hearts and provokes admiration. God ordered His Prophet Muhammad (S) to cling to modesty:

***“And be modest with him who follows you of the believers. (26:215)”***

The Prophet (S) said: “The most favorable of you and the nearest to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the most well-mannered and the most modest. The remotest of you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the bigmouth and the proud<sup>1</sup>.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “It is very nice for the rich to behave modestly with the poor, out of seeking that which is with Allah. A nicer thing is the arrogance of the poor towards the rich, out of their trust in Allah<sup>2</sup>.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “In the heavens, there are two angels whose mission is to oversee the servants. They advance him who behaves modestly, and humiliates him who behaves proudly<sup>3</sup>.”

“Modesty is to accept to sit in a place other than the first row of a session, to greet whom you meet, to avoid disputation even if you are right, and to detest to be praised for the acts of God-fearing<sup>4</sup>.”

It is worth mentioning that the recommended modesty is characterized by moderation and free from negligence and excess. Excessive modesty causes meanness, and negligence of modesty is a motive of arrogance.

A proverb says: The modesty of a high-positioned one will save him from the malicious enjoyment at his falling.

We now forward some models of the virtues of The Ahlul-Bayt (a) regarding their unique and ideal modesty: The Prophet (S) was the most modest. When he was attendant in a house, he sits in the last place. In his house, he helped his wives. He also used to milk his ewe, patch his garment, repair his slippers, serve himself, carry his goods from the mart, sit with the poor, and eat with the needy.

When someone wanted to whisper in his ear, he used not to nod his head so that the other party would not nod the head. When someone shook hands with him, he used not to pull his hand unless the other party would do. When somebody sat with him, he used not to leave that meeting unless the other party would leave. He used to greet everyone he met and extend his hand before the other would do. He had never extended his legs among his sitters.

He used to honor everyone who would visit him. In most cases, he used to spread out his garment so that his guest would sit on it, and used to give the cushion on which he had sat to his guest. He used to call his companions with their most preferable nicknames. He had never interrupted a speech. He used to divide his looks fairly among his companions. He was always smiling and good-humored<sup>5</sup>.

Abu Dharr al-Ghifari<sup>6</sup> narrated:

“The Prophet (S) used to sit among his companions. Any stranger who visited him for the first time would not distinguish him among the others unless he would ask. We therefore asked him to choose a special place so that the strangers would recognize him. We then made a muddy bench on which he used to sit while we were beside him.”

It was also narrated that he was, once, in a journey when he ordered his companions to cook a ewe. A man volunteered to slaughter it, another volunteered to skin it, and a third volunteered to cook it. The Prophet (S) volunteered to gather firewood. When his companions told that they would do that mission instead of him, he answered: “I know you can do it, but I do not like to be distinguished. Allah dislikes to see His servant distinguish himself from his companions.”

It was also narrated that the Prophet (S) went to bathe in a spring. Huthaifa Ibn al-Yeman, who accompanied him, took a piece of cloth to screen him. When he finished, the Prophet (S) took a piece of cloth so as to screen Huthaifa who began to bathe. Huthaifa refused and asked him not to do, but the Prophet insisted. When Huthaifa finished, the Prophet said: “For the two persons who accompany each other, Allah will prefer and love more the one who is more lenient to his companion.”

Describing Amirul-Mu'minin, the ideal example of modesty, Dhirar said:

“Among us, he was just like one of us. He used to approximate us when we visited him, answer us when we asked him, respond to our invitations, and answer our questions. Along with this, we could not speak to him because of fear of him. When he smiled, his teeth were the like of well-organized pearls. He used to honor the religious and favor the needy. The strong could not exploit him and the weak were not despaired of his justice.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated: Amirul-Mu'minin (a) was, once, riding an animal and his companions were walking after him. He turned his face towards them and asked why they were following him. They answered that they had just liked to walk after him. He asked them to leave, and said: “To walk with a rider corrupts the moralities of that rider and causes humility to the walker<sup>7</sup>.”

As he passed by a group of needy people who were having bits of bread that was put on a shirt, Imam al-Hussein (a) greeted them. When they invited him to their meal, he responded and sat with them. He said: “I would like to eat with you except that your food is alms<sup>8</sup>.” He invited them to his house, served them food, and gave them dresses and some money<sup>9</sup>.

In his journey to Khurasan, Imam ar-Rida (a) ordered to make a dining table and gathered all his servants, including the black ones, to eat with him. I suggested to him to use another dining table for the slaves. He answered: “What is this wording? The Lord is one, mother is one, father is one, and each one will be rewarded according to his own deeds<sup>10</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup>. Quoted from Qurb ul-Isnad. A similar narrative is recorded in Ilal ush-Sharaayi.

<sup>2</sup>. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.

<sup>3</sup>. Quoted from al-Kafi.

<sup>4</sup>. Quoted from al-Kafi.

<sup>5</sup>. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 p. 415.

<sup>6</sup>. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari was one of the heroes of Islam and the four closest friends of Amir ul-Mu'minin (a) who supported him in the tragedy of the usurpation of his leadership. He was well known of his courage and revolutionary. Othman ibn Affan, the third caliph, banished him to a village because of his public protestation against the caliph's policy of preferring his relatives and kinsmen to the others where he died in a tragic situation, and that was an assertion of the Prophet's prediction to him.

<sup>7</sup>. Quoted from al-Barqj; al-Mahasin

<sup>8</sup>. According to the Islamic Sharia, it is unallowable for the Prophet's family to have or possess anything that is given as alms.

<sup>9</sup>. Quoted from Ibn Shahrashoub; al-Manaqib.

<sup>10</sup>. Quoted from al-Kafi.

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