

Sincerity and Humility

[Story n. 1](#)

Although we had a very close relationship with 'Allamah, not a single instance comes to mind of a situation in which he brought up a subject in the form of demonstrating [his knowledge] or that he presented some information without being asked a question.

Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani

[Story n. 2](#)

Our teacher one day told me “I have never seen any one more ascetic than this man ('Allamah). Despite being a treasure of knowledge and information, he still stands to pray in the final row of Ayatullah Milani's prayers amongst the travelers”.

Hujjat ul-Islam Musawi Hamadani

[Story n. 3](#)

Once when one of the scholars of the religious seminary (*Hawze Ilmiye*) of Qum was praising the great Tafsir al-Mizan in his presence, 'Allama said the following: “*Don't praise it lest I become pleased and my sincerity and good intention be destroyed*”.

[Story n. 4](#)

Every time I would meet 'Allamah, without exception I would try and bend to kiss his hand and he would hide his hand under his cloak. He would display such humility and shyness that we would be startled.

One day I said to him,

“We try to kiss your hand in order to benefit from your blessed presence, why do you withhold this from

us? Have you not heard of the hadith of Imam ‘Ali (as) that *‘whosoever teaches me one word, he has made me his servant’?*”

He replied, “Yes, it is a well-known narration and its text is agreed upon”.

I then said, “You are the one who has taught us so much and have thus caused us to be your servants over and over again. Is it not part of the etiquette of a servant that he kisses the hand of his master and thus receives blessings?”

With a charming smile ‘Allamah said, “We are all the servants of God Almighty”.

‘Allamah Husayni Tehrani

Story n. 5

In the month of Sha’ban 1411 H, ‘Allamah Tabataba’i visited Mashhad and came to our home. I gave him the library as his room so that he could use the books with ease. The time for Maghrib prayers arrived, and I spread a prayer mat for him and left the room so that he would start his prayers at which time I could return and pray behind him.

It was approximately fifteen minutes after Maghrib when he called for me. When I came near ‘Allamah said, “We will follow you” [that is, I want you to lead the prayers].

I said “I request that you please go ahead and pray yourself!” [that you lead the prayers]!”

He said “We [I] have this request”.

I replied “For forty years we have wanted to pray one set of prayers behind you, but it has not yet happened. Please accept”.

With a charming smile he said “Then it is not much to add one year in addition to those forty years”.

I said “I am your servant and your follower. If you order me I will carry out your order!” [to lead the prayers]

He said “I am not giving an order, this is just my request”.

‘Allamah Tehrani

Story n. 6

‘Allamah Tabataba’i was a world of greatness. Like a regular seminary (*hawza*) student he would sit on the ground near the courtyard of the school, and when it was nearly sunset, he would enter Madrasa Fayziyya. When it was prayer time, he would pray in congregation behind the Late Ayatullah Agha Hajj

Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Khansari as if he was just another one of the students.

He was so humble and well-mannered and made such an effort to maintain his etiquette that I repeatedly told him that in comparison to your level of propriety (*adab*) and consideration we look ill-mannered!

Never once in almost forty years was he seen resting his back against a pillow. Rather, in front of guests he would always maintain his etiquette and sit a little distance in front of the wall. I was his student and often went to his house and in observance of etiquette, I wanted to sit slightly lower than him, but it was impossible. ‘Allamah would rise and say “If that is the case, then I must sit either at the entrance or outside the room!”

‘Allamah Tehrani

Story n. 7

I used to participate in the higher level (*darse kharij*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and principles of jurisprudence (*usul*) classes of Hazrat Imam Khumayni (qs) and the philosophy classes of ‘Allamah Tabataba’i and was very attached to and loved both of these pious teachers very much. One day I invited both teachers to my room in Madrasa Hujjatiyya for lunch. They accepted my invitation and arrived at my room. I wanted to coerce the two teachers into a philosophical debate, but however much I tried I was not successful because they were completely free of any personal desire and thus avoided all types of academic argumentation.

In that session, if I addressed Imam Khumayni and asked him something, he would reply and ‘Allamah Tabataba’i would remain quiet and listen carefully. And if I asked ‘Allamah a question, he would reply and Imam (r) would remain quiet and listen carefully.

Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini

Story n. 8

In the course of the thirty years in which I had the honor of being in his presence, never did I hear him use the word “I” on its own. On the other hand, I heard him use the expression “I don’t know” many times in response to a question, the same expression that most people are reluctant to use. Yet, as a result of his extreme humbleness, this ocean of knowledge and wisdom used this expression with ease.

Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi

Story n. 9

One of the years when ‘Allamah had traveled to Mashhad, we went to his house to visit him. Because of a weak heart and according to the orders of his doctor, he was strictly forbidden from sitting on the ground. As soon as we entered, he rose from his mattress and offered it to us to sit on. I refused to sit, and for some time both he and I were left standing until he said, *“sit so that I can say something”!* I obeyed him out of politeness and sat. He too sat on the ground and then said, *“what I wanted to say is that it’s softer over there”.*

‘Allamah Tabataba’i’s son-in-law

Story n. 10

I had written a paper on Imamat and presented it to ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, saying, *“occasionally when you are tired of studying and discussion, in the name of relaxation or as they say, for a recess (zange tafrih) have a look at this paper of mine as well”.*

He kindly agreed and read the paper from beginning to end, word for word. After some time he said, *“I have seen it in its entirety”.* When I went to pick it up from him, he made an objection saying that in a particular place in the paper you have made a personal prayer only for yourself. I had narrated a hadith, and after the narration of the hadith and a commentary on it, I had written *“O God, bequeath the ability to understand the signs of God to this being”!*

He [‘Allamah] said, *“why have you made this personal prayer? Why have you not included others in your invocation for Divine sustenance?”* Then he said to me, *“as far as I am aware, I have never made a personal prayer only for myself”.*

Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli

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