Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

48) Piety and Blessings

One of the other cases, in which no one thinks he should observe Taqwa but he is really duty-bound to be careful of it, is the God's infinite blessings. It is a sign of God's grace, bounties, and His hidden and open favors. About these blessings God has said: ***"And if you would count Allah's favors, you will not be able to number them."***[1]

Therefore, it is impossible to count God's blessings. How can human beings count those blessings when they do not know about one thousandth of the blessings given to them, or about the creatures around them, and the extent of the Divine blessings that have encompassed the world?

The late Mohaddith Qumi says: "It is impossible to know the different blessings of God, but man would better ponder over a single blessing to understand his own inability."

He says: "When you intend to put a morsel of bread into your mouth, look at the process it has gone through. This morsel could not be prepared without this world having a sound system, for wheat does not grow without the help of the four seasons, a combination of temperaments, winds, rains, and interaction of some stars with others in a certain direction. "

When wheat is grown, the tools of milling are needed. This is not possible without having access to iron found in the heart of mountains, and the finding of iron in mountains is not possible without having access of other instruments for excavating and taking off the iron. Following this, the four elements of water, fire, wind and earth should gather to produce this morsel of bread.

How this morsel of bread is used and absorbed by the body requires knowing anatomy and medicine. It is then that you will understand the meaning of ***"And if you would count Allah's favors, you will not be able to number them."***

This morsel of bread is one of the apparent blessings of God, whereas there are both apparent and hidden blessings of God and human beings know a little about this matter.

There are such great blessings as prophethood and Imamate which God has repeatedly mentioned in the holly Quran.

Raghib Isfahani has called it practical heavy blessing, for “Minnah” is of two kinds: practical and verbal.

“Practical” is one of the features of God who has practically blessed His servants, like guidance, prophethood and imamate. “Verbal” is in relation to human beings which is blamed in the Holy Quran and traditions. In this relation, God says: ***“O you who believe! Do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury.”***[2]

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported as saying: “Reproaching ruins benevolence”.[3]

On the Prophet’s mission, God says: ***“Certainly Allah conferred a benefit upon the believers when He raised among them an Apostle from among themselves, reciting to them and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom, although before that they were in manifest errors.”***[4]

About other blessings too, God advises the apostles to remind people of the days of Allah. This is seen in the state of Prophet Moses (a.s.) when God says: ***“And certainly We sent Musa with our communications, saying: Bring forth your people from other darkness into light and remind them of the days of Allah; most surely there are signs in this for every patient, grateful one. And when Musa said to his people: call to mind Allah’s favor to you when He delivered you from Pharaoh’s folk, who subjected you to severe torment and slew your sons and spared your women.”***[5]

Skeikh Toosi, in his Amaali, has related a tradition about the companions of the Messenger of Allah (SAW): “Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Abdurrahman, Abu Ubaydah, Imam Ali and some of the Muhajireen and Ansar were present in a gathering when the Quranic sura of “Luqman” was recited until this verse: “…and made complete to you His favor outwardly and inwardly”[6] and then the Quranic sura of “Ibrahim” was recited up to this verse: ***“…and remind them of the days of Allah”***,[7] the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: ‘The days of Allah are His blessings, trials and the stories of the former generations.”

Turning to those who were present, the Holy Prophet (SAW) said: “I have been entrusted to advise you about the fear of slumber and negligence. Actually, Allah revealed to me to remind you of His blessings and to inform you of His Book which He has given to you.” Then, he recited: ***“…and made complete to you His favor.”*** Then, the Holy Prophet (SAW) said: “Tell me what is the first blessing that God has given to you and through it He tried you?”

All the companions started contemplating and each one mentioned a blessing. Hearing all the answers, the Holy Prophet (SAW) turned to Ali, saying: “They have given their answers. Now, you give your answer!”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “O messenger of Allah! May my parents be sacrificed for you! What should I say except that God has guided us through you!”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “Say it! What is the first blessing that God tried you with and made complete to you His favor?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “God, highly glorified, created me and I was a thing not worth mentioning.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the second?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He was kind to me that He created me alive not dead.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the third?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “Praise be to Allah! He created me in the best form and the best balanced shape.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the forth?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He made me thoughtful not negligent.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the fifth?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He gave me senses to get whatever I want and made for me a shining lamp.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the sixth one?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He guided me to His religion and did not mislead me.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the seventh?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He made an eternal life for me with no end.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the seventh?”

Imam Ali (a.s.) said, “He made me a master and not a slave.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the ninth?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He subjugated for me the heavens and the earth and what thereis in and between them.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is the tenth?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “He made us males with guardianship over our wives, and not make us women.”

The Holy prophet (SAW) said: “You said the truth. What is next?”

Imam Ali (AS) said: “God’s blessings are numerous. God has said: ***“And if you would count Allah’s favor, you will not be able to number them.”***

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) smiled and said: “Be delighted with wisdom, be delighted with Knowledge O Abul Hasan! You are the heir of my knowledge and the explainer to my nation what they

disagree on. Whoever loves you for your faith and follows your path is guided to the right path, and whoever turns away from your guidance, becomes your enemy, and leaves you alone, there will be no share for him on the Day of Judgments."[8]

What we have mentioned are just a few of God's abundant blessings which Imam Ali (AS) counted. The Lord of the universe has made prophets to remind people of those blessings. The Holy prophet (SAW) has said: "I have the mission to admonish you not to be misled by prolonged desires. Take lessons from former generations, observe Taqwa in using the blessings, use them in their right places, and avoid excessiveness."

Imam Reza (AS) has been reported as saying: "O people, fear Allah in the blessings He has given to you. Do not keep them away from you by disobeying Him, but make them continual by obeying and thanking Him for His blessings and favors."[9]

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported as saying: "The least of gratitude to the Giver of blessings is not to be disobeyed with His own blessings."[10]

The blessings, which the Lord of the universe has given to His servants, can be classified into continued and discontinued, inward and outward or material and spiritual ones.

Human beings should benefit from these blessings in their right places or they shall be called to account. There are verses and traditions in which the word "Taqwa" has been used directly, but they refer to Taqwa indirectly and implicitly, like the following verse: ***"And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that."***[11]

Most of the prohibitions mentioned in the Quranic verses and traditions have the same meaning that concerns Taqwa. Therefore, whether they are inward or outward, whether they are continued or discontinued, it means to make use of blessings in the actual way they have been created for. If they are used rightly, then they are appreciated, and if not, it will be ingratitude. In this relation, God says: ***"...and very few of My servants are grateful."***[12]

Gratefulness, as the scholars of ethics have said, is realized by a heart that perceives the blessing, a tongue that thanks the Giver of the blessing, and other parts of the body that make use of the blessings in their proper places. This is because firstly, most of people do not mind the blessings; secondly, they do not thank God for the blessings; and thirdly they make use of blessings in committing sins.

The heart that God has created as a source of intuition, understanding, and knowledge is involved in committing sins. The tongue that God has created for acknowledging, remembering, and offering prayers for Him is involved in backbiting and slandering. The ears that must be used for learning maxims, advice, knowledge and sound words are involved in committing sins. The limbs created for serving Islam and Muslims, propagating of religion and meeting the needs of Muslims are involved in thieving, beating and

harming others.

There are other blessings such as trees, fruits and natural resources that may be misused. It is for this reason that God has said: ***"Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the boons*** (***blessing***)***."***[13]

According to the saying of Imam Reza (AS), it is that we shall be questioned about the blessings of Imamate and the love for the Ahlul Bayt on the Day of Judgment.

1. Qur'an,16:18.
2. Qur'an, 2:264.
3. Ghurar al-Hikam.
4. Qur'an, 3:164
5. Qur'an, 14:5-6.
6. Qur'an, 31:20.
7. Qur'an, 14:5.
8. Bihar al-Hikam, vol. 67, p. 20.
9. Safeenat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 673.
10. Ghurar al-Hikam.
11. Qur'an, 17:36.
12. Qur'an, 34:13.
13. Qur'an, 102:8.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/taqwa-piety-advice-ahl-al-bayt-sayyed-hussain-sheikh-al-islami-tooyserkani/48-piety-and-blessings#comment-0