

PRAISE BELONGS TO GOD

As-Sajjad (AS)

Praise belongs to God,
the First, without a first before Him,
the Last, without a last behind Him.
Beholders' eyes fall short of seeing Him,
describers' imaginations are not able to depict Him.

He originated the creatures through His power with an origination,
He devised them in accordance with His will with a devising.

Then He made them walk on the path of His desire,
He sent them out on the way of His love.
They cannot keep back
from that to which He has sent them forward,
nor can they go forward
to that from which He has kept them back.

He assigned from His provision to each of their spirits
a nourishment known and apportioned.
No decreaser decreases those whom He increases,
no increaser increases those of them whom He decreases.

Then for each spirit He strikes a fixed term in life,
for each He sets up a determined end;
he walks toward it through the days of his span,
he overtakes it through the years of his time.
Then, when he takes his final step
and embraces the reckoning of his span,
God seizes him to the abundant reward
or the feared punishment
to which He has called him,
That He may repay those who do evil for what they have done
and repay those who do good with goodness,
as justice from Him
(holy are His names, and manifest His boons).
He shall not be questioned as to what He does,
but they shall be questioned.

Praise belongs to God, for,
had He withheld from His servants the knowledge to praise Him
for the uninterrupted kindnesses
with which He has tried them
and the manifest favours
which He has lavished upon them,
they would have moved about in His kindnesses
without praising Him,
and spread themselves out in His provision
without thanking Him.
Had such been the case,
they would have left the bounds of humanity
for that of beastliness
and become as He has described in the firm text of His Book:
They are but as the cattle -- nay, but they are further astray from the way!.

Praise belongs to God, for
the true knowledge of Himself He has given to us,
the thanksgiving He has inspired us to offer Him,
the doors to knowing His Lordship He has opened for us,
the sincerity towards Him in professing His Unity
to which He has led us,
and the deviation and doubt in His Command
from which He has turned us aside;

a praise through
which we may be given long life
among those of His creatures who praise Him,
and overtake those who have gone ahead
toward His good pleasure and pardon;

a praise through which
He will illuminate for us the shadows of the interworld,
ease for us the path of the Resurrection,
and raise up our stations
at the standing places of the Witnesses
on the day when every soul will be repaid
for what it has earned -
they shall not be wronged;
the day a master shall avail nothing a client,
and they shall not be helped;

a praise
which will rise up from us to the highest of the 'Illiyun
in a book inscribed,
witnessed by those brought nigh,

a praise whereby
our eyes may be at rest when sight is dazzled,
our faces whitened when skins are blackened,

a praise through which
we may be released from God's painful Fire
and enter God's generous neighbourhood,

a praise by which
we may jostle the angels brought nigh
and join the prophets, the envoys,
in a House of Permanence that does not remove,
the Place of His Generosity that does not change.

Praise belongs to God,
who chose for us the good qualities of creation,
granted us the agreeable things of provision,
and appointed for us excellence
through domination over all creation;
every one of His creatures submits to us
through His power
and comes to obey us
through His might.

Praise belongs to God,
who locked for us the gate of need
except toward Him.
So how can we praise Him?
When can we thank Him?
Indeed, when?

Praise belongs to God,
who placed within us the organs of expansion,
assigned for us the agents of contraction,
gave us to enjoy the spirits of life,
fixed within us the limbs of works,
nourished us with the agreeable things of provision,
freed us from need through His bounty,
and gave us possessions through His kindness.

Then He commanded us that He might test our obedience
and prohibited us that He might try our thanksgiving.
So we turned against the path of His commandments
and mounted the backs of His warnings.
Yet He hurried us not to His punishment,
nor hastened us on to His vengeance.
No, He went slowly with us through His mercy,
in generosity,
and awaited our return through His clemency,
in mildness.

Praise belongs to God,
who showed us the way to repentance,
which we would not have won save through His bounty.
Had we nothing to count as His bounty but this,
His trial of us would have been good,
His beneficence toward us great,
His bounty upon us immense.
For such was not His wont in repentance
with those who went before us.
He has lifted up from us
what we have not the strength to bear,
charged us only to our capacity,
imposed upon us nothing but ease,
and left none of us with an argument or excuse.
So the perisher among us is he who perishes in spite of Him
and the felicitous among us he who beseeches Him.

And praise belongs to God
with all the praises of
His angels closest to Him,
His creatures most noble in His eyes,
and His praisers most pleasing to Him;
a praise that may surpass other praises
as our Lord surpasses all His creatures.

Then to Him belongs praise,
in place of His every favour upon us
and upon all His servants, past and still remaining,
to the number of all things His knowledge encompasses,
and in place of each of His favours,
their number doubling and redoubling always and forever,
to the Day of Resurrection;

a praise whose bound has no utmost end,
whose number has no reckoning,
whose limit cannot be reached,
whose period cannot be cut off;

a praise which will become
a link to His obedience and pardon,
a tie to His good pleasure,
a means to His forgiveness,
a path to His Garden,
a protector against His vengeance,
a security against His wrath,
an aid to obeying Him,
a barrier against disobeying Him,
a help in fulfilling His right and His duties;

a praise that will make us felicitous
among His felicitous friends,
and bring us into the ranks
of those martyred by the swords of His enemies.

He is a Friend, Praiseworthy!