

Reverence for Sacred Things

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Staha kwa ajili ya Vitu Vitakatifu

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Reverence for the sacred fosters genuine gratitude, expands true happiness, leads our minds to revelation, and brings greater joy to our lives.

In the book of Exodus, we travel with Moses to the slopes of Mount Horeb as he turned aside from his daily cares—something we all should be willing to do—to see the burning bush that was not consumed. As he approached, “God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And [God] said, ... put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” In great reverence, humility, and wonder, Moses removed his shoes and prepared himself to hear the word of the Lord and to experience His holy presence.

That sacred mountain epiphany was an experience filled with awe-inspiring reverence, connected Moses to his divine identity, and was, in fact, a key element of his transformation from a humble shepherd to a powerful prophet, leading him to walk a new path in life. Similarly, each of us can transform our discipleship into a higher pattern of spirituality by making the virtue of reverence a sacred part of our spiritual character.

The word *reverence* can be traced to the Latin *verberevereri*, which means to “stand in awe of.” In the gospel sense, this definition mingles with a feeling or attitude of profound respect, love, and gratitude. Such expression for the sacred by those who have a contrite heart and deep devotion to

Staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu hukuza shukrani halisi, huongeza furaha ya kweli, huongoza akili zetu kwenye ufunuo, na huleta shangwe kuu kwenye maisha yetu.

Katika kitabu cha Kutoka, tunasafiri pamoja na Musa hadi kwenye miteremko ya Mlima Horebu alipokuwa alipogeuka kutoka kwenye shughuli zake za kila siku—kitu ambacho sisi sote tunapaswa kuwa radhi kufanya—ili kuona kichaka kinachowaka moto lakini hakikutekelea. Alipokuwa akikisogelea, “Mungu akamwita kutoka katikati ya kile kichaka, na akasema, Musa, Musa. Naye alisema, “Mimi hapa.” Naye [Mungu] akasema, ... “vua viatu vyako miguuni mwako; maana mahali hapo unaposimama ni nchi takatifu.” Kwa staha nyingi, unyenyekevu, na mshangao, Musa alivua viatu vyake na kujiandaa mwenyewe kusikia neno la Bwana na kupata uzoefu wa uwepo Wake mtakatifu.

Hilo onyesho takatifu la mlimani lilikuwa uzoefu uliojaa staha yenye kuvutia, iliyomuunganisha Musa na utambulisho wake wa kiungu na ukawa, kwa kweli, kipengele muhimu cha mabadiliko yake kutoka kuwa mchungaji mnyonge hadi kuwa nabii mwenye nguvu sana, ikimwongoza kutembea katika njia mpya katika maisha. Vivyo hivyo, kila mmoja wetu anaweza kubadilisha uanafunzi wetu kuwa mpangililo wa juu wa kiroho kwa kufanya maadili ya staha kuwa sehemu takatifu ya sifa yetu ya kiroho.

Nenostahalinaweza kufuatiliwa hadi kwenye kitenzi cha Kilatinirevereri, ambacho kinamaanisha “simama kwa heshima.” Katika hisia ya injili, maelezo haya yanaingiliana na hisia au mtazamo wa heshima kubwa, upendo, na shukrani. Dhihirisho kama hilo kwa ajili ya yaliyo ma-

God and Jesus Christ fosters increased joy in their souls.

Reverence for sacred things is the greatest manifestation of a vital spiritual quality; it is a by-product of our connection to holiness and reflects our love for and proximity to our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is also one of the most elevated experiences of the soul. Such virtue directs our thoughts, hearts, and lives toward Deity. In fact, reverence is not just an aspect of spirituality; it is the essence of it—the foundation upon which spirituality is built, creating a personal connection to the divine, as taught by our children when they sing, “When I am rev’rent, I know in my heart Heav’nly Father and Jesus are near.”

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are invited to cultivate the gift of reverence in our lives in order to open ourselves to a deeper communion with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, simultaneously strengthening our spiritual character. Had we more of such feelings in our hearts, there would be undoubtedly greater joy and delight in our lives, and there would be less room for sorrow and sadness. We must remember that showing reverence for sacred things gives meaning to much of what we do every day and strengthens our feeling of gratitude—inspiring awe, respect, and love for higher and holier things.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where showing reverence for sacred things is becoming increasingly uncommon. In fact, the world celebrates the irreverent, as any perusal of a tabloid magazine, television program, or the internet attests. The absence of respect for the sacred produces an increasing casualness in attitude and carelessness in conduct, which can rapidly spiral one generation into apathy and catapult the next generation into misery.

Irreverence can also lead us away from the bonds that covenants with God provide and diminish our sense of accountability before Deity. Consequently, we run the risk of caring only about our own comfort; satisfying our uncontrolled appetites; and ultimately arriving to the unholy place of despising sacred things, even God, and consequently our divine nature as

takatifu na wale walio na moyo uliopondeka na uchamungu wa kina kwa Mungu na Yesu Kristo hukuza ongezeko la shangwe katika nafsi zao.

Staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu ni dhihirisho kuu la sifa muhimu ya kiroho; ni zao la muunganiko wetu na utakatifu na huakisi upendo wetu kwa ajili ya na ukaribu wetu na Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Mwokozi wetu, Yesu Kristo. Pia ni mojawapo ya uzoefu ulioinuka wa nafsi. Maadili kama hayo huelekeza mawazo yetu, mioyo yetu, na maisha yetu kwa Mungu. Kwa kweli, staha si tu kipengele cha kiroho; hiki ni kiini chake—msingi ambao juu yake hali ya kiroho hujengwa, ukitengeneza muunganiko binafsi kwa uungu, kama tunavyofundishwa na watoto wetu wana-poimba, “Ninapokuwa na staha, ninajua moyoni mwangu Baba wa Mbinguni na Yesu wako karibu,”

Kama wanafunzi wa Yesu Kristo, tumealikwa kukuza kipawa cha staha katika maisha yetu ili tujifungue wenyewe kwenye ushirikiano wa kina na Mungu na Mwanawe, Yesu Kristo, wakati huo huo kuimarisha sifa yetu ya kiroho. Tungekuwa na hisia nyingi kama hizo katika mioyo yetu, kungekuwa na shangwe kubwa na furaha bila shaka katika maisha yetu, na kungekuwa na nafasi ndogo ya huzuni na majonzi. Lazima tukumbuke kwamba kuonyesha staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu hutoa maana kwa mengi ya kile tunachofanya kila siku na huimarisha hisia zetu za shukrani—heshima yenye mwongozo, heshima, na upendo kwa vitu vya juu na vitakatifu sana.

Cha kusikitisha, tunaishi katika ulimwengu ambapo kuonyesha staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu kunaongezeka kuwa si kawaida. Kwa kweli, ulimwengu husherehekea visivyokuwa na staha, kama vile kupitia jarida la vioja, vipindi vya runinga, au uthibitisho wa intaneti. Kukosekana kwa heshima kwa vile vilivyo vitakatifu huzaa ongezeko la uzembe katika mtazamo na utovu wa nidhamu, ambavyo kwa upesi vinaweza kuangusha kizazi kimoja katika kutojali na kukizamisha kizazi kijacho katika dhiki.

Kukosekana kwa staha pia hutuongoza sisi mbali na muunganiko ambao maagano na Mungu hutoa na kufifisha hisia yetu ya uwajibikaji wetu mbele ya Mungu. Matokeo yake, tunakuwa katika hatari ya kujali tu faraja yetu wenyewe, kuridhisha tamaa zetu zisizodhibitika; na hatimaye kufika sehemu zisizo takatifu za kubeza vitu vitakatifu, hata Mungu, na kama matokeo asili

children of Heavenly Father. Irreverence toward sacred things furthers the adversary's aims by disrupting our sensitive channels of revelation, which are crucial for our spiritual survival in our day.

The meaning and importance of reverence for what is sacred is well outlined throughout the scriptures. One instance in the Doctrine and Covenants would seem to indicate that reverence toward our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, is an essential virtue for those who attain the celestial kingdom.

As a church we strive to hold the Father and the Son in the utmost sacredness and respect in every aspect, including how we depict Their images. The guidance of the Holy Ghost is a crucial component in determining how these images should reflect the sacred nature, character, and godly attributes of the Father and of the Son. We are very careful to avoid portraying elements that could distract from our primary focus on our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and Their teachings, including how we apply advanced tools offered by technology, such as using artificial intelligence (AI) to generate content and images.

This same principle is applied to any source of information available through the official communication channels of the Church. Every lesson, book, manual, and message is carefully developed and approved under the direction of the Spirit to make sure we maintain the sacred virtue, values, and standards of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In a recent message for the young adults of the Church, Elder David A. Bednar taught, "To navigate the complex intersection of spirituality and technology, Latter-day Saints should humbly and prayerfully (1) identify gospel principles that can guide their use of artificial intelligence and (2) strive sincerely for the companionship of the Holy Ghost and the spiritual gift of revelation."

My dear brothers and sisters, as sophisticated as modern technology has become, it simply cannot simulate the wonder, awe, and amazement found in the kind of reverence born from the influence of the Holy Ghost. As followers of Christ, we need to be careful not to weaken our connection with God and His Son by using

yetu ya kiungu kama watoto wa Baba wa Mbinguni. Kukosekana kwa staha kwa vitu vitakatifu hukuza malengo ya adui kwa kuvuruga mikondo yetu ya utambuzi wa ufunuo ambao ni muhimu kwa ajili ya kunusurika kwetu kiroho katika siku yetu.

Maana na umuhimu wa staha kwa ajili ya kile kilicho kitakatifu imeelezwa vyema kote katika maandiko. Mfano mmoja katika Mafundisho na Maagano ungeonekana kuashiria kwamba staha kwa Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Mwanawe, Yesu Kristo, ni maadili muhimu kwa wale wanaoingia katika ufalme wa selestia.

Kama kanisa tunajitahidi kuwaweka Baba na Mwana katika utakatifu wa juu kabisa na heshima katika kila njia, ikijumuisha jinsi tunavyoonyesha picha Zao. Mwongozo wa Roho Mtakatifu ni sehemu muhimu katika kuamua jinsi picha hizi zinavyopaswa kuakisi asili takatifu, hulka, na sifa za kiungu za Baba na Mwana. Tunakuwa makini sana ili kuepukana na kuonyesha vipengele ambavyo vinaweza kutuvuruga kutoka kwenye fokasi yetu ya msingi juu ya Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Mwanawe, Yesu Kristo, na mafundisho Yao, ikijumuisha jinsi tunavyotumia vyombo vya hali ya juu vinavyotolewa na tekinolojia kama vile kutumia akili mnemba (AI) kutengeneza maudhui na picha.

Kanuni hii hii inatumika kwa chanzo chochote cha habari kinachopatikana kupitia mikondo yetu rasmi ya mawasiliano ya Kanisa. Kila somo, kitabu, kitabu cha kiada na ujumbe hutengenezwa kwa makini na kuidhinishwa chini ya maelekezo ya Roho ili kuhakikisha tunadumisha maadili matakatifu, thamani, na viwango vya injili ya Yesu Kristo. Katika ujumbe wa hivi karibuni kwa ajili ya vijana wakubwa wa Kanisa, Mzee David A. Bednar alifundisha, "Ili kuongoza njia katika mkingamano changamani wa kiroho na tekinolojia, Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho wanapaswa kwa unyenyekevu na kwa sala (1) kutambua kanuni za injili ambazo zinaweza kuongoza matumizi yao ya akili mnemba na (2) kujitahidi kwa dhati kwa ajili ya wenzi wa Roho Mtakatifu na kipawa cha kiroho cha ufunuo."

Kaka zangu na dada zangu wapendwa, kama vile tekinolojia ya kisasa inavyoweza kuwa ya uchangamano, kwa urahisi haiwezi kusiona maajabu, heshima, na mshangao unaopatikana katika aina ya staha inayozaliwa kutokana na ushawishi wa Roho Mtakatifu. Kama wafuasi wa Kristo, tunahitaji kuwa makini tusidhoofishe

AI-generated content and images inappropriately. We should remember that relying on a modern technological “arm of flesh” is an inadequate and disrespectful substitute for the inspiration, edification, and witness that can be received only through the power of the Holy Ghost. As Nephi declared: “O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh.”

In another revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith was instructed that temples erected unto the Lord should be a place of reverence to Him. Throughout his ministry, our dear prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, has strongly emphasized our worship in reverence in the sacred temple. In the house of the Lord, we are taught about entering into the holy presence of the Father and the Son. I have always found it instructive and even inspiring that one of the first things we do upon entering the temple and preparing ourselves to participate in the sacred ordinances there is to remove our shoes and change into our white clothing. Like Moses, if we are intentional, we can recognize that taking off our worldly shoes is the beginning of stepping onto holy ground and being transformed in higher and holier ways.

Brothers and sisters, we do not need to climb to the top of a mountain, like Moses did, to discover reverence for sacred things and convert our discipleship into a deeper level of spirituality and devotion. We can find it, for example, as we strive to protect our home environment from worldly influences. This can be accomplished by sincerely and fervently praying before our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ and seeking to better know our Savior through our diligent study of the word of God found in the scriptures and in the teachings of our prophets. Additionally, such spiritual transformation can come as we strive to honor the covenants we have made with the Lord by living in obedience to the commandments. These efforts can bring a quiet and certain stillness to our hearts. Focusing on such actions can surely help transform our homes into reverent places of spiritual refuge—personal sanctuaries of faith where the Spirit resides, much like the mountain experience of Moses.

muunganiko wetu na Mungu na Mwanawe kwa kutumia maudhui na picha zilizotengenzwa na Akili Mnemba isivyo sahihi. Tunapaswa kukumbuka kwamba kutegemea teknolojia ya kisasa ya “mkono wa mwanadamu” ni mbadala usiotosha na usio na heshima kwa ajili ya mwongozo, ujenzi wa maadili, na ushahidi ambao unaweza tu kupokelewa kupitia nguvu za Roho Mtakatifu. Kama vile Nephi alivyotamka, “Ewe Bwana, nimekuamini, na nitakuamini milele. Sitaweka tumaini langu kwenye mkono wa mwanadamu.”

Katika ufunuo mwingine, Nabii Joseph Smith alielekezwa kwamba mahekalu yaliyojengwa kwa ajili ya Bwana yanapaswa kuwa mahali pa staha Kwake. Kote katika huduma yake, nabii wetu mpendwa, Rais Russell M. Nelson, amesisitiza kwa nguvu sana kuabudu kwetu katika staha ndani ya hekalu takatifu. Katika nyumba ya Bwana, tunafundishwa kuhusu kuingia katika uwepo mtakatifu wa Baba na Mwana. Mimi daima nimepata hii kuwa ni yenye kuelekeza na yenye kuvutia kwamba mojawapo ya vitu vya kwanza tunavyofanya baada kuingia ndani ya hekalu na kujiandaa wenyewe ili kushiriki katika ibada takatifu hapo ni kuvua viatu vyetu na kubadilisha na kuvaa nguo nyeupe. Kama vile Musa, ikiwa tumekusudia, tunaweza kutambua kwamba kuvua viatu vyetu vya kiulimwengu ni mwanzo wa kukanyaga ardhi takatifu na kubadilishwa katika njia za juu sana na takatifu sana.

Akina kaka na akina dada, hatuhitaji kuwea juu ya mlima, kama vile Musa alivyofanya, ili kugundua staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu na kugeuza uanafunzi wetu kuwa kiwango cha kina cha mambo ya kiroho na kuabudu. Tunaweza kuipata, kwa mfano, tunapojitahidi kulinda mazingira ya nyumba zetu kutokana na vishawishi vya kiulimwengu. Hii inaweza kutimizwa kwa kusali kwa dhati na kwa ari mbele ya Baba yetu wa Mbinguni katika jina la Yesu Kristo na kutafuta kumjua vyema Mwokozi wetu kupitia kujifunza kwetu kwa bidii neno la Mungu linalopatikana katika maandiko na mafundisho ya manabii wetu. Kama nyongeza, mabadiliko kama hayo ya kiroho yanaweza kuja tunapojitahidi kuheshimu maagano tuliyofanya na Bwana kwa kuishi kwa utiifu wa amri. Juhudi hizi zinaweza kuleta utulivu na unyamavu fulani katika mioyo yetu. Kufokasi kwenye vitendo kama hivyo hakika tunaweza kubadilisha nyumba zetu kuwa mahali pa staha pa kimbilio la kiroho—mahali patakatifu pa binafsi pa imani ambapo

We can also experience such spiritual transformation as we faithfully participate in the Church's worship service, including tuning our hearts to the Lord through our sincere singing of sacred hymns. Turning aside—like Moses—from worldly distractions, especially our cell phones or anything not in harmony with this sacred moment, enables us to turn our full attention to partaking of the sacrament, with our minds and hearts focused on the Savior and His atoning sacrifice along with our own covenants. Such sacramental focus will foster a reverently renewing moment of our communion with the Savior and will make the Sabbath a delight and transform our life.

Ultimately, we can experience this spiritual change in our discipleship as we regularly worship in the mountain of the Lord's house—our holy temples—and strive to live with covenant confidence, especially when we face the trials of mortal life.

My wife and I have personally experienced some sacred mountain moments in reverence as we have strived to apply these principles in our life, which has caused a meaningful transformation in our discipleship. I remember like it was yesterday walking through the cemetery before burying our second child, who was born prematurely and did not survive, while my wife was still recovering in the hospital. I recall praying to God with great fervency and reverence, asking for help to cope with that challenging trial. In that instant, I received a clear and powerful spiritual assurance in my heart: Everything will be fine in our lives if my wife and I endure, holding on to the joy that comes from living the gospel of Jesus Christ. What seemed like an overwhelming, sorrowful challenge at the time turned into a sacred, reverent experience, a capstone that has helped sustain our faith and has given us confidence in the covenants we have made with the Lord and in His promises for me and my family.

My brothers and sisters, reverence for the sacred fosters genuine gratitude, expands true

Roho anaweza kuishi, zaidi kama vile uzoefu wa Musa mlimani.

Sisi pia tunaweza kupata uzoefu wa mabadiliko ya kiroho kama hayo tunaposhiriki kwa uaminifu katika ibada za kuabudu za Kanisani, ikijumuisha kugeuza mioyo yetu kwa Bwana kupitia kuimba kwetu kwa dhati nyimbo takatifu. Kugeuka—kama Musa—kutoka kwenye vivuruga mawazo vya kiulimwengu, hasa simu zetu za mkononi au kitu cho chote ambacho hakiwiani na wakati huu mtakatifu, hutuwezesha kugeuza kikamilifu usikivu wetu kwenye kupokea sakramenti, akili na mioyo yetu ikifokasi kwa Mwokozi na dhabihu Yake ya kulipia dhambi pamoja na maagano yetu wenyewe. Fokasi ya kisakramenti kama hiyo itakuza wakati wa staha wa kufanywa upya kwa ushirikiano wetu na Mwokozi na kutafanya Sabato kuwa shangwe na kubadilisha maisha yetu.

Hatimaye, tunaweza kupata uzoefu wa badiliko hili la kiroho katika uanafunzi wetu tunapoabudu mara kwa mara katika mlima wa nyumba ya Bwana—mahekalu yetu matakatifu—na kujitahidi kuishi kwa kujiamini kimaagano, hasa wakati tunapokabiliana na majaribu ya maisha ya duniani.

Mimi na mke wangu kwa namna binafsi tumepata uzoefu wa baadhi ya nyakati takatifu za mlimani katika staha kadiri tunavyojitahidi kutumia kanuni hizi katika maisha yetu, ambazo zimesababisha mabadiliko ya maana katika uanafunzi wetu. Ninakumbuka kama vile ilikuwa jana nikitembea makaburini kabla ya kumzika mtoto wetu wa pili, ambaye alizaliwa kabla ya wakati wake na hakunusurika, wakati huo mke wangu akiwa bado anaendelea kupata nafuu hospitalini. Ninakumbuka kusali kwa Mungu kwa dhati sana na staha, nikiomba msaada wa kustahimili jaribio lenye changamoto. Katika wasaa ule, nilipokea hakikisho la kiroho la wazi na la nguvu katika moyo wangu: kila kitu katika maisha yetu kitakuwa sawa ikiwa mimi na mke wangu tutavumilia, tukishikilia shangwe ambayo huja kwa kuishi injili ya Yesu Kristo. Kile kilichoonekana kama changamoto isiyo na suluhisho, yenye huzuni wakati huo ilibadilika kuwa uzoefu mtakatifu, wa staha, upeo ambao umesaidia kuhimili imani yetu na imetupa sisi kujiamini katika maagano tuliyofanya na Bwana na katika ahadi Zake kwangu na familia yangu.

Akina kaka na akina dada, staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu hukuza shukrani halisi, huongea-

happiness, leads our minds to revelation, and brings greater joy to our lives. It places our feet on holy ground and lifts our hearts to Deity.

I testify to you that as we strive to incorporate such virtue into our daily lives, we will be able to increase our humility, expand our understanding of God's will for us, and strengthen our confidence in the promises of the covenants we have made with the Lord. I witness that as we embrace this gift of reverence for sacred things—whether in the mountain of the Lord's house, in a meetinghouse, or in our own homes—we will be filled with astounding amazement and awe as we connect to the perfect love of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I reverently witness these truths in the sacred name of our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

za furaha ya kweli, huongoza akili zetu kwenye ufunuo, na huleta shangwe kuu kwenye maisha yetu. Inaiweka miguu yetu kwenye ardhi takatifu na inainua mioyo yetu kwa Mungu.

Ninashuhudia kwenu kwamba tunapojitahidi kuunganisha maadili kama hayo katika maisha yetu ya kila siku, tutaweza kuongeza unyenyekevu wetu, kuongeza uelewa wetu wa mapenzi ya Mungu kwa ajili yetu, na kuimarisha kujiamini kwetu katika ahadi za maagano tuliyoifanya na Bwana. Ninashuhudia kwamba tunapokumbatia kipawa cha staha kwa ajili ya vitu vitakatifu—iwe ni katika mlima wa nyumba ya Bwana, katika jengo la mkutano, au katika nyumba yetu wenyewe—tutajazwa na mshangao wa ajabu na heshima tunapounganika na upendo mkamilifu wa Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Yesu Kristo. Kwa staha ninashuhudia kweli hizi katika jina takatifu la Mwokozi na Mkombozi wetu, Yesu Kristo, amina.