

The secret to everlasting blessings

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His Royal Highness

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, He promised his righteous servants paradise, commanded them to call the people to His way and towards gratitude for His blessings. Allah (جَلَّ وَعَلَا) has ensured that the grateful person has an increase (from His Favour), and he made gratefulness one of the main reasons for the continuation of blessings.

Dear reader, between your hands is this book, in which the author, His Royal Highness, Dr. Faisal bin Mishal bin Saud bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud (may Allah protect him) speaks about the secret to everlasting blessings by way of gratitude, clarifying the issue with Islamic evidences from the Qur'an, the Sunnah and opinions of the scholars in an unique and unprecedented way. We ask Allah to benefit the people with it, and add it to his scales of good deeds.

The Islamic Centre of Da'wa, Guidance and Community Education in Al Muraydisiyyah (Qassim – Saudi Arabia) has chosen to publish this book, and in order to encourage its readership a competition was setup around it. Then the Centre decided to translate this book into the English language in order to reach a global audience and increase the number of people that benefit from this work. I was assigned this project by the management committee of the Islamic Centre, and so I went to the city of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) – may Allah bless its residents, where I have a brother in Islam from the Islamic University of Madinah (may Allah protect it). He's name is Muhammad Edson – may Allah grant him success, and not only does he have an excellent command of the English language, but he's also a student of knowledge and a graduate from the Faculty of Share'ah. So, under my supervision, he translated the book (which you're currently reading) and the questions that were set around it for the competition.

In conclusion, I extend my sincere thanks to this noble Prince whose job and enormous responsibility did not prevent him from calling to

Islam and spreading goodness between the people. May Allah put this wonderful work in his scale of good deeds the day he meets Him, and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and all his family and companions.

Board member in charge of the office of cooperation in Al Muraydisiyyah:

Sulaiman bin Mohammed bin Shaia Al Mansour.

Thursday 10/07/1433 Hijri

Allah (Exalted is He) says:

﴿ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا ﴾ إبراهيم: ٣٤

﴿ and if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them... ﴾ (Qur'an 14:34)

﴿ وَمَا يَكُفُّمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ ﴾ النحل: ٥٣

﴿ And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah... ﴾ (Qur'an 16:53)

﴿ كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ، بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ ﴾ سبأ: ١٥

﴿ Eat of the provision of your Lord, and be grateful to Him, a fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord. ﴾ (Qur'an 34:15)

﴿ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ﴾ إبراهيم: ٧

﴿ If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings)... ﴾ (Qur'an 14:7)

﴿ فَأَذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴾ البقرة: ١٥٢

﴿ Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying, etc.). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me. ﴾ (Qur'an 2:152)

So we ask You O Allah, that You help us remember You, to give You thanks, and to perform Your worship in the best manner.

Allah (Exalted is He) says:

﴿ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ﴾ الأعراف: ٤٣

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has guided us to this, never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allah had guided us!﴾ (Qur'an 7:43)

Allah (Exalted is He) says:

﴿ رَبَّنَا لَا تُغِثْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴾ آل عمران: ٨

﴿(They say): "Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower.﴾ (Qur'an 3:8)

Presentation

To all Muslim servants that ask Allah for continuous blessings , to everyone who wants to know the type of gratitude that brings about everlasting blessings, to whom Allah has bestowed blessings upon, which only Allah, the Generous, really knows the true extent of them, and finally to those who wish that Allah increases their blessings and makes them everlasting.

This book is the effort of a person on whom Allah has bestowed many blessings, and he confesses to its abundance in quality and quantity. I humbly ask that Allah , my Lord – The Great and Almighty – benefits others with it, and I also ask that He makes me and them from those who if tested show patience, if given blessings show gratitude, and that he forgives our sins, conceals our faults, for truly, He is the All-Hearer and Responsive.

Our Lord, all praise belongs to You

O Allah, our Lord, all praise belongs to You, for having created us and provided for us, for having guided us and taught us, and for having saved us and dispelled from us our worries and grief.

All praise belongs to You for the blessing of eeman (faith), and all praise belongs to You for the blessing of Islam, and all praise belongs to you for the blessing of Qur'an, and all praise belongs to You for the blessings of the family, wealth and health.

You Suppressed our enemies and increased our wealth, extended for us our safety, reunited our factions, given us excellent health, and given us all that we asked for.

So, all praises and thanks be to You for that.

All praise belongs to You for all the blessings You have bestowed upon us, the newer blessings or the past blessings, secretly or openly, specific or general, living or dead, for those who are present or for those who are absent. We praise you until you are pleased (with our praises), and all praise belongs to you if you become content.

And may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions.¹

¹ Iman ibn Qayyim (رحمته الله) said : in his precious book *Uddatu Al Sabirin wa dhakhiratu Al Shaakirin* p. 163: "Hassan Al Basri (رحمته الله) used to start his speeches by saying: "Praise be to Allah, O Allah our Lord... and he would say the above supplications"

Praising Allah

All praise and thanks are Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds. A praise that is fitting of His majestic Face and great sovereignty, by the multitude of His creation, by His Pleasure, by the extent of His Words, and by the weight of His Throne.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the tongues mention Him.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the tongue speaks, and the Athan(call to prayer) is called.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times of weighing by the scales, and the Qur'an is read.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of feathers and camel hairs, and sand grains and stones.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of time the eye lashes, hairs, and folds of the foam of the sea.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of steps the feet have taken, and the pens have written.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the rows have been arranged, and writing of the letters.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of heavens and what they shade, and the earths and what they covered.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the night and day follow one another.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the servants perform prayer, and by the multitude of times the servants perform the fast, and by the multitude of times the pilgrims (performing Hajj and Umrah) say the Talbiya.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times servants perform Tawaf, and by the multitude of times servants perform As-Sa'y.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the sun rises, and the moon appears.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of times the sun and the moon set.

All praise and thanks are Allah's by the multitude of what has happened, and what is currently happening, and what will happen.

All praise and thanks are Allah's until He is Pleased, and all praise and thanks are Allah's if He is Content, and all praise and thanks are Allah's after He is Content. Glory is to Allah and praise is to Him, glory is to Allah the Exalted, there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, and there is no might and no power except by Allah's leave, the Exalted.

I seek forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, there is no deity worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, the Eternal, and I turn to Allah in repentance.

And may Allah's peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and all his family and companions.

Introduction

Praise be to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His favorite servant, Muhammad ibn Abdullah and to his household and his companions.

Indeed, the blessings of Allah (جَلِيلُهُ) upon His servants are many, and the most important of these blessings: is the blessing of being guided to Islam, and what a great blessing it is, it is above all other blessings, even the servant with his weak understanding stands baffled and amazed before all these blessings, open-mouthed. Indeed, only Allah, who has granted them can count them all.

As is well known, all the blessings come from Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), and as such, then surely the servant should strive to achieve these blessings continuously, and the continuation of these blessings can only be achieved after achieving another blessing – gratefulness. This has been mentioned clearly in Allah’s saying:

﴿لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ﴾ إبراهيم: ٧

﴿If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings)...﴾ (Qur’an 14:7)². So, gratitude, is the secret to everlasting blessings and their continuation, and he who is inspired to be grateful, is not deprived from an increase in blessings.

² Iman As-Shawkani (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) in *Fath al Qadeer* (3/98) and Iman As-Suyuti (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) in *Al-Durr Al-Manthur* (5/7) said: On the authority of ibn Abi Hatim who narrated that Al-Rabigh said about Allah’s saying ﴿If you give thanks I will give you more (of My Blessings) but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily! My Punishment is indeed severe.﴾: “ Moses (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) said that his Lord (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) said that if they are grateful for the blessings He increases them from his grace, and expands their wealth, and shows them off to the whole world, and increases them in His obedience.”

Gratitude is one of the highest achievable ranks, Allah demands it, prohibited its opposite, praised the people of gratitude, described the “special ones” from His creation with this attribute, made it (one of) the purpose of His creation, promised the grateful ones a kind reward, made it one of the reasons for the increase in His Grace, and He informed us that the grateful are those who benefit from Verses, gave them a name derived from his own name, for indeed Allah – Glorified be He, is Al-Shakur (The Most Grateful).

Gratefulness for the blessings is evidence to the moral integrity of the human nature, goodness should be thanked, because gratefulness is the result of having a righteous *fitra* (someone’s nature and natural disposition). No one can draw himself from this worship unless he is fully deprived of all goodness - May Allah forbid.

For the above mentioned, I wanted to discuss this valuable subject, as these are fundamental issues, in my view, to purify and clean the souls. The soul that thanks Allah’s blessings, also keeps an eye on the way he uses these blessings without carelessness, condescending other humans and without using the blessings to harm others. This can purify the soul, motivate it to perform righteous deeds, manage the blessings of Allah in a good manner so the blessings increase, are further blessed, people will be satisfied with them and their owner, and people will provide assistance to him when needed. This (in turn) will rebuild the community links and wealth can grow safely in those communities.

On one hand, it can be observed that some people when they thank Allah (Exalted is He), they usually just say “Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah)” or “Al-Shukr lillah (all gratitude belongs to Allah)”, without acting on it or without doing righteous deeds that would be true evidence for their gratefulness to Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) for His blessings.

On the other hand, we see others who show thankfulness and praise Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) with their words, and at the same time use these

blessings that Allah gave them in sinful ways, which contradicts his own saying that he is grateful to Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ).

For this reason i have focused in this book on correcting this wrong understanding (of gratitude) in some people, and to call them to the true way to show gratitude to Allah for His blessings, combining between words and actions, and to warn against using the blessings of Allah to commit sins. We ask Allah to make us from those who if are gifted (blessings) will show gratitude, and (of those who) if they are tested (with afflictions) show patience, and (of those who) if they make a mistake ask for Allah's forgiveness.

Finally, if there is something right in this modest book, it is from Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ) only, and if there is something wrong it is from me and Satan. Allah and His Prophet are blameless. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and all his household and companions.

The author

20/8/1418 Hijri

Gratitude (its definition and true meaning)

The linguistic meaning of the word gratitude (in the Arabic language): the appearance, as we say “a grateful beast” if it becomes fatty in excess of the feed given to it, and gratitude is opposite of denial.³

The word “gratitude” is cited in the Qur’an 77 times, either in the form of a verb, a noun, in its plural form, in its singular form, and in its exaggerated form, showing the true importance of this moral ethic in the lives of people.

The idiomatic meaning of the word “gratitude”:

The scholars (may Allah have mercy upon them), have differed with regards to the meaning of the word “gratitude”. However, one of the best definitions is that of Dhu Nun al Misri Abu Al Faidh (رحمة الله), he said: “Gratitude to anyone who is above you is (accomplished) by showing obedience to him, and gratitude to someone of your level is shown by rewarding him, and to those who are below you is by kindness towards them.”⁴

Sahl ibn Abdullah said: “Gratitude: is to persevere in obedience, together with abandoning sins, secretly or openly.”⁵

³ And because of that Allah (Exalted is He), compares in the Quran between gratitude and denial (as its opposite), as in His Saying (Exalted is He), ﴿And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: "If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allâh), I will give you more (of My Blessings), but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily! My Punishment is indeed severe.﴾ (Qur’an 14:7) And in His Saying (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ): ﴿If you disbelieve, then verily, Allah is not in need of you, He likes not disbelief for His slaves. And if you are grateful (by being believers), He is pleased therewith for you.﴾ (Qur’an 39:7)

⁴ *Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran*, Al Qurtubi (1/397)

⁵ *Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran*, Al Qurtubi (1/398)

Gratitude was also defined as “the adherence of the heart to loving The Giver, (the adherence) of the limbs to His obedience, and by making one’s tongue occupied with dhikr (rememberance) and His praise.”⁶

Al Junaid has said: “Gratitude is to not disobey Allah with the blessings he has given you”⁷

Al Shibly said: “Gratitude is humility, adherence to good deeds, not following the lusts, and obedience to the Compeller (Exalted is He)”⁸

By combining the above sayings about the definition of the word gratitude, we can summarize them into the following meaning:

Praising the Giver for His Graces, and confessing to the neglect of ‘al shakir’ (the receiver of the blessings) to the Giver.

The true meaning of gratitude

Let's try to reflect on the true meaning of gratitude, and on the sayings of the scholars about it, in order not to misunderstand it, and to not go through our lives with an incorrect understanding of it.

So what is the true meaning of gratitude?

Imam Al Qurtubi(رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “ The true meaning of gratitude is: confessing to the Blessing of the Giver, and not to disobey Him using the blessings He has bestowed upon you.” And with regards to this, it is said in a poem “ You were given from his favor so that you, obey

⁶ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim (2/612)

⁷ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim (2/612)

⁸ *Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran*, Al Qurtubi (1/398)

him and show gratitude. But you did not show gratitude for his blessing but you, used it (blessing) to disobey him”

Imam Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “ The true meaning of gratitude is shown by the appearance of traces of the blessing of Allah in the words of His servant, in the form of praise and acknowledgement, and on his the heart, in the form of love and magnification, and on his limbs in the form of obedience and submission.”⁹

So it is now obvious to you that the true meaning of gratitude is: acknowledgement of the blessing inwardly, talking about it openly, and using it only in what pleases its giver.

For example: The one who Allah has blessed him with riches, should show gratitude by doing what is compulsory upon him, such as paying the Zakaat (poor-due tax), giving in charity, strengthening the ties of kinship, by giving to righteous causes, but also not forgetting to spend it on himself, his family and relatives.

And Al Hassan Al Basri (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)said with regards to this: “This money was given to you lawfully, so don't let it be a heartbreak for you, and know, that the day of judgement can be a day of heartbreak, and the most heartbroken man is he who sees his good deeds in the scales of

⁹ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim (2/611)

someone else, its inheritor will be happy with it, but its collector will be miserable, a feeling of sorrow that will not leave him.”¹⁰

The virtues of gratefulness

Gratitude has many virtues and benefits. The Qur’an and the Sunnah are full of examples and explanations of its virtue, illustrating them to motivate the hearts to be grateful and obedient to Allah, following are some of these virtues:

1. Gratitude is equal to half of all faith.

The faith of the servant is not complete without it, as was mentioned by many of the pious predecessors such as Abdullah ibn Maso’ud (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) when he said: “Faith has two halves, patience and gratitude.” And the proof of this saying is that Allah has combined between the two in His Saying:

﴿ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴾ الشورى: ٣٣

﴿Truly, therein are evidences, proofs and signs for every patient, thankful (person).﴾ (Qur’an 14:5, 31:31, 34:19, 43:33)

and in other places in His Book.

Iman Ibn Qayyim (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) wrote a book called Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin addressing this meaning, and said: “Gratitude is of the highest levels of faith achievable, it's superior to the grade of pleasure, as pleasure is part of gratitude, and gratitude forms half of the faith: faith having two halves: patience and gratitude.”¹¹

¹⁰ *Al-Hekam Al-Jami'ah* by Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmood, p. 505-512

¹¹ *Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin*, p. 88

2. Gratitude is the way to the pleasure of Allah.

If the servant is continuous in his gratitude, Allah will be pleased with him, and will accept it from him, so to attain the pleasure of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) the servant must be grateful, Allah (Exalted is He) says:

﴿وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ﴾ الزمر: ٧

﴿And if you are grateful (by being believers), He is pleased therewith for you.﴾ (Qur'an 39:7)

3. Gratitude is the companion of worship.

Indeed, gratitude is a sign of how sincere one's worship is, and because of that they are mentioned in Qur'an together many times, like in Allah's saying:

﴿وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ﴾ سبأ: ١٣

﴿But few of My slaves are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 34:13)

And He said:

﴿وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ﴾ البقرة: ١٧٢

﴿and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship﴾.
(Qur'an 2:172)

And He Said:

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوهُ وَأَشْكُرُوا لَهُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾ العنكبوت: ١٧

﴿and worship Him (Alone), and be grateful to Him. To Him (Alone) you will be brought back.﴾ (Qur'an 29:17)

So, He informed us that he who worships Him is he who is grateful to Him, and he who is ungrateful is not considered one of the worshippers.

4. Gratitude is one of the qualities of the Prophets.

Indeed Allah has mentioned that gratitude was one of the greatest forms of worship, in which the leader of the Monotheists, Ibrahim(عليه السلام) (Abraham) was concerned with, after his concern with tawheed (monotheism), indeed Allah praised him for it, as He (Exalted is He) says:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾ النحل: ١٢٠ - ١٢١

﴿صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾ النحل: ١٢٠ - ١٢١

﴿Verily, Ibrâhim (Abraham) was an Ummah (a leader having all the good righteous qualities), or a nation, obedient to Allah, Hanif (i.e. to worship none but Allah), and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikûn (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and those who joined partners with Allah). (He was) thankful for His (Allah's) Graces﴾ (Qur'an 16:120-121).

So, Allah described him as:

- An Ummah: who is a leader having all the good righteous qualities.
- Qaanit: i.e. constantly obedient to Allah.
- Hanif who worships none but Allah.

Then He concluded these qualities by Saying that Ibrahim (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) was thankful for Allah's blessings. So, He made gratefulness one of the main goals of His beloved slave.¹²

And He (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said that Ibrahim said:

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴾ إبراهيم: ٣٩

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has given me in old age Ismâ'il (Ishmael) and Ishâque (Isaac). Verily! My Lord is indeed the All-Hearer of invocations.﴾ (Qur'an 14:39).

And Dawud (David) and Sulaiman (Solomon) (عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ) said:

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ النمل: ١٥

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has preferred us above many of His believing slaves!﴾ (Qur'an 27:15).

And Sulaiman (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) said when Allah bestowed His graces upon him:

﴿ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴾ النمل: ٤٠

¹² Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin, p. 97

﴿This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for (the good of) his ownself, and whoever is ungrateful, (he is ungrateful only for the loss of his ownself). Certainly! My Lord is Rich (Free of all wants), Bountiful.﴾ (Qur'an 27:40).¹³

And He ordered His servant Musa (Moses) (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) to show gratitude for the blessings of Prophethood, Messengership, and 'taklim' (speaking to Allah directly). Allah Says:

﴿ قَالَ يَمْوَسَّىٰ إِنِّي اصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ بِرِسَالَاتِي وَبِكَلِمِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾

الأعراف: ١٤٤

﴿(Allah) said: "O Musa (Moses) I have chosen you above men by My Messages, and by My speaking (to you). So hold that which I have given you and be of the grateful﴾ (Qur'an 7:144)¹⁴

Another example is that which Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) mentioned about His Prophet Noah (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), when Allah drowned his people and saved him and the believers that were with him in the ship, so Allah ordered him to be of the grateful, Allah said:

﴿ فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلِكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّنا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾ المؤمنون: ٢٨

﴿And when you have embarked on the ship, you and whoever is with you, then say: "All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has saved

¹³ Please see book: *Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin*, p. 96

¹⁴ Please see book: *Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin*, p. 96

us from the people who are Zâlimûn (i.e. oppressors, wrong-doers, polytheists, those who join others in worship with Allah, etc.)﴾

(*Qur'an* 23:28)

So, he (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) was a grateful slave, and when the people come to him on the Day of Resurrection (asking him to intercede before Allah), they'll say to him: " Allah called you a “grateful slave”¹⁵, referring to His saying:

﴿ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا﴾ (الإسراء: ٣)

﴿O offspring of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Nûh (Noah)! Verily, he was a grateful slave.﴾ (*Qur'an* 17:3)

Ibn Qayyim (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “Allah's specific mention of Noah here, by calling the servants as his progeny, shows the importance of following him (Noah), as he is their second father, for Allah hasn't given the creation any progeny but from the progeny of Noah (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ), as He said:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُ هُمُ الْبَاقِينَ﴾ (الصفافات: ٧٧)

﴿And, his progeny, them We made the survivors (i.e. Shem, Ham and Japheth)﴾ (*Qur'an* 37:77). So He ordered the progeny of Noah to follow his example, because indeed, he was a grateful servant.

¹⁵ Bukhari, *Kitab Ahadith Al Anbiya*, hadith no. 3092

Muslim, *Kitab Al Eeman*, hadith no. 287, on the authority of Abu Hurairah

And the leader of mankind, Muhammad (ﷺ) used to offer night prayers till his feet became swollen. Somebody said, to him, “Allah has forgiven you, your faults of the past and those to follow.” On that, he said:

“Shouldn't I be a thankful slave of Allah”¹⁶

And so, he (ﷺ) singled out his beloved companion with an advice so important, that it should be written gold. It was narrated by Mu`adh bin Jabal (ﷺ) that the Prophet (ﷺ) advised him:

“O Mu`adh, By Allah, I love you and advise you not to miss supplicating after every Salat (prayer) saying: `Allahumma a`inni `ala dhikrika wa shukrika, wa husni `ibadatika,' (O Allah, help me remember You, express gratitude to You and worship You in the best manner)”¹⁷.

He (ﷺ) also used to supplicate and say:

“Allahumma ij'alni sha-karan laka dha-karan laka”(O Allah make of those who are very grateful to you and remember you constantly)¹⁸

¹⁶ Bukhari, *Kitab Al Jum`ah*, hadith no. 1062

Muslim, *Kitab Sifat al-qiyamah wa'l janna wa'n-nar*, hadith no. 5044 on the authority of Al-Mughira bin Shu'ba (ﷺ)

¹⁷ Abu Dawud, *Kitab As-Salat*, hadith no. 1301. An-Nasa'I, *Kitab As-Sahu*, hadith no. 1286

¹⁸ Tirmidhi, *Kitab Ad-Da`wat*, hadith no. 3474 classified as *hassan-sahih*

Abu Dawood, *Kitab As-Salat*, hadith no. 1291, both on the authority of Al `Abbas bin Abdul Mutalib (ﷺ)

And because of this, the scholars say that gratitude is of two kinds:

1. General gratitude, for the blessings of food, clothing, drink and body strength.
2. Specific gratitude, for the blessings of monotheism, faith, and strength of the heart.¹⁹

5. Gratefulness is a characteristic of the people of paradise.

When one ponders about the people of paradise, and the blessings Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has bestowed upon them, it is clear that they praise Allah in many places through their journey to paradise:

- When Allah (Exalted is He) descends to judge between the servants, and says:

﴿وَأَمْتَنُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ يس: ٥٩

﴿(It will be said): "And O you Al-Mujrimûn (criminals, polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in the Islâmic Monotheism, wicked evil ones, etc.)! Get you apart this Day (from the believers)﴾ (Qur'an 36:59).

Then those who deserve to be punished will fall into the Fire. So the believers, after crossing As-Sirat (a bridge will that is laid across Hellfire) and seeing other people's demise as they fall down, will say:

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بَجَّنا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾﴾ المؤمنون: ٢٨

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are Zâlimûn (i.e. oppressors, wrong-doers, polytheists, those who join others in worship with Allah, etc.)﴾ (Qur'an 23:28)

¹⁹ Madarij as-Salikin, 2/612

- When they are washed in the river of life and cleansed from the filth of this world, and take a good look at Paradise, their eyes sparkle and they say:

﴿ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ﴾ الأعراف: ٤٣

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has guided us to this, never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allah had guided us!﴾ (Qur'an 7:43)

- When they settle into their homes filled with unimaginable blessings, companions with beautiful, big, and lustrous eyes awaiting them, and enter their houses below which rivers flow, they say:

﴿ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴾ فاطر: ٣٤

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has removed from us (all) grief. Verily, our Lord is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (good deeds and to recompense). 35. Who, out of His Grace, has lodged us in a home that will last forever...﴾ (Qur'an 35:34-35)²⁰. We ask Allah from his Grace.

6. Gratitude is the secret to everlasting blessings.

Blessings are from Allah, and He bestowed them on His creatures as a trial for them, therefore he who denies them, will be deprived of them, and they may be left with him as a trial for him, then they'll go away as if they were not present by a single dipping into the Hell Fire, May Allah protect us from it. On the other hand, he who is grateful, Allah

²⁰ *Tambehul Ghafileen*, p. 132, Faqih Abu Lais Samarqandi

will preserve them, make them continuous, and increase them for him, as gratefulness is always associated with an increase in blessings, as He (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) said:

﴿لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ﴾ إبراهيم: ٧

﴿If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings), but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily! My Punishment is indeed severe.﴾
(*Qur'an 14:7*)

i.e. if you show thanks for My Favour, I'll give you more of My Grace.”²¹

So, Allah made gratitude a sign for the increase in blessings, and vice versa, and this is a truthful promise from Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ), and therefore it must be.

Allah does not bestow gratefulness upon his servant other than He bestows upon him a continuous increase in blessings, and helps him preserve them (that is why they used to call ‘gratitude’ as ‘the protector’ as it preserves the present blessings, and ‘the fetcher’ as it brings about the missed blessings.

It was narrated that Ali (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: “Blessings are tied to gratefulness, and gratefulness is tied to an increase (in blessings), and the increase won't be cut until the slave stops being grateful.”

Umar bin Abd El-Azeez (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: “The blessings of Allah come by way of gratitude towards Him.”²²

²¹ *Al-Jami' Leahkam Al-Quran*, Al-Qurtoby, 9/343

²² *Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin*, p. 98

Ja'far bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Al-Hussein said to Sufian Ath-Thawry (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): “If Allah gives you a blessing, and you want it to be everlasting, you should increase in praise and thanksgiving, for Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says in the Qur’an:

﴿لِيَنْ شَكَّرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ﴾ إبراهيم: ٧

﴿If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings)﴾ (Qur’an 14:7)²³

And al-Mughirah bin Shou'bah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: “Be grateful to the one who gives you, and give to who is grateful to you, as there's no continuation of the blessings if they're denied, and there's no vanishing of them if they're thanked for.”

And it was said: “If you can't reward, at least be grateful”²⁴.

And Sulaimân At-Taymy (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: “Allah has bestowed blessings upon His servants according to their obedience and commanded them to show gratefulness to Him only according to their ability, so any show of gratitude, even if little, can be a cause of more blessings, even great ones.”

A righteous way of life can only be achieved by gratefulness, as the souls of people become purified by turning to Allah, attain piety by being grateful, and become at peace with their Lord. For Allah is ever present, and the blessings increase by showing gratitude.²⁵

²³ Please see *Al-Durr Al-Manthur*, (5/8)

²⁴ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim, 4/2089

²⁵ *Fi Dhilal Al Qur'an*, 4/2089

It was narrated that Ali ibn Abi Talib (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: “Thank the Bestower on you, as the blessings don't vanish if they're thanked for, and don't continue if they're denied. Gratitude increases the blessings and protects from calamities”²⁶

So, when you notice that your situation is not improving , increase in gratitude so that you may see an increase from Allah (The Generous), for Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) suffices for you, and that is a glad tiding for the believer in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter there's:

“what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and the mind of no man has conceived.”²⁷

That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He pleases. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

The reward of the grateful

The reward of the grateful is unlimited, and to reinforce this point, Allah (Exalted is He), has reserved a lot of the rewards under His Will. Like the Saying of Allah (Exalted is He) :

²⁶ *Al-Durr Al-Manthur*, 5/8

²⁷ This is a small portion of a hadith narrated by Bukhari in Kitab bad' Al khalq , hadith no. 3005. Muslim in Sifat al Jannah wa Na'imihaa wa ahleha, hadith no. 5050, on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that he said: The Messenger of Allâh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, “Allâh, the Exalted, has said: “I have prepared for my righteous slaves what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and the mind of no man has conceived.” If you wish, recite:

﴿ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ السجدة: ١٧

﴿No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.﴾
(*Qur'an 32:17*)”

﴿ فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۖ إِنْ شَاءَ ﴾ التوبة: ٢٨

﴿Allah will enrich you if He will, out of His Bounty.﴾ (Qur'an 9:28)

And He indicated that He answers the supplications of those who ask from Him if He wishes, He Says:

﴿ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ ﴾ الأنعام: ٤١

﴿If He will, He would remove that (distress) for which you call upon Him﴾ (Qur'an 6:41)

And His Provisions are also under His Will, Allah (Exalted is He) says:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾ البقرة: ٢١٢

﴿And Allah gives (of His Bounty, Blessings, Favours, Honours, etc. on the Day of Resurrection) to whom He wills without limit﴾ (Qur'an 2:212).

And the above also applies to His Forgiveness, as Allah (Exalted is He), says:

﴿ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾ آل عمران: ١٢٩

﴿He forgives whom He wills﴾ (Qur'an 3:129)

The same also applies to repentance, He (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says:

﴿ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾ التوبة: ١٥

﴿Allah accepts the repentance of whom He wills﴾ (Qur'an 9:15)

And when He mentioned the reward of gratefulness, He did not set a limit to it, He (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

﴿وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ ^{آل عمران: ١٤٤}

﴿and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 3:144)

﴿وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ ^{آل عمران: ١٤٥}

﴿And We shall reward the grateful﴾ (Qur'an 3:145)

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) made the reward dependent on gratitude, and the increase of His blessings unlimited, like there is also not limit to gratefulness, so when the enemy of Allah, Satan, realised the importance of gratitude, and that it is one of the highest forms of worship, he made one of his main goals to keep people away from it, he says :

﴿ثُمَّ لَأَتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ﴾ ^{الأعراف: ١٧}

﴿Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones (i.e. they will not be dutiful to You).﴾ (Qur'an 7:17)²⁸

So, gratitude is one of the acts of obedience which enjoy the highest reward, it's one of the highest ranks achievable, and so the grateful, patient believer has been given all the good in prosperity and in adversity, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

²⁸ Please see *Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin*, p. 95-96

“How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is good for him in everything and this applies only to a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him”²⁹.

Can the blessings be counted?

It's well known that the blessings can't be counted, as Allah mentions in two places in His Book:

﴿وَمَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّا إِنْسَانٌ لَّظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ﴾ إبراهيم: ٣٤

﴿and if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Verily! Man is indeed an extreme wrong-doer, a disbeliever (an extreme ingrate, denies Allah's Blessings by disbelief, by worshipping others besides Allah, and by disobeying Allah and His Prophet Muhammad)﴾ (Qur'an 14:34)

﴿وَإِن تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا إِنَّا اللَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ النحل: ١٨

﴿And if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Truly! Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ (Qur'an 16:18)

So, if we decided to count the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon us in order to show gratitude and reward Him (Exalted is He), we seek the impossible. Allah has made it easy for His servants by not

²⁹ Narrated by Ahmad and Muslim.

asking them to waste their whole lives trying to count the blessings bestowed upon them, as is clear in the two verses of Surat Ibrahim and An-Nahl. Now ponder the ending of these two verses:

1. The first verse describes the nature of the one who is bestowed upon, which is injustice and disbelief.
2. The second verse describes the nature of the Bestower of blessings, who forgives and is Merciful to people, and His blessings upon them cannot be counted, and therefore He ended the verse with His Saying:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ النحل: ١٨

﴿Truly! Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ i.e. he knows of your shortcomings even if you try hard, and He knows of your forgetfulness and carelessness, so therefore He forgives you if He knows that you have goodness in your heart, are ready to accept the truth and learn, and if you are grateful.

Verily, the blessings of Allah upon His servant cannot be counted or fully comprehended, so even if we tried to count them we would be unable to, therefore it is compulsory upon us to be grateful for what He has given and provided us, and what He, with His Mercy protected us from.

Abu Abdullah Al-Qurtoby (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said about Allah's Saying:

﴿وَأِنْ نَعَدُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصَوْنَ﴾ النحل: ١٨

﴿and if you count the Blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them﴾ (Qur'an 16:34)

i.e. you cannot endure counting them, and you won't count them because of how many they are, like the blessing of sight and hearing, the figure of the human body, and other blessings such as good health and provision, blessings that are truly infinite, and all these blessings are from Allah (Exalted is He), so why are you ungrateful after all these blessings are bestowed upon you? And why don't you use them in obeying Him?

﴿إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ﴾ (Qur'an 17:70)

﴿Verily! Man is indeed an extreme wrong-doer, a disbeliever (an extreme ingrate, denies Allah's Blessings by disbelief, by worshipping others besides Allah, and by disobeying Allah and His Prophet Muhammad)﴾ (Qur'an 14:34)³⁰,

And the reason for the inability to account for all the blessings is both because of their quantity and quality, hence, Sulaiman At-Taymy (رحمة الله) said: “Allah bestowed on His slaves according to His Majesty, and commanded them to thank Him according to their ability.”

Dawood (عليه السلام) said: “O my Lord! Show me Your most unapparent Blessing on me”, He said: “O Dawood! Take a breath”, so, Dawood took a breath, Allah said: “Who counts this blessing during the night and day?”

³⁰ Al-Jami' Leahkam Al-Quran, Al-Qurtoby, 9/379

As we already mentioned, it's impossible to count the blessings, so all that is left is for us to take a modest look at ourselves, confess to His Great Grace, and do our best relying on Him and asking Him for His Help and Guidance to thank Him for His Blessings. Even if we were to take a look at His Blessings in a general way, we could not comprehend their vastness:

How do we thank Allah (Exalted is He), for His Blessings?

Gratitude to Allah for His blessings are of 3 types:

1. Gratitude with the heart.

By loving the Giver (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), and submitting to Him with acknowledgement of His Blessings, because gratitude is based on five fundamental principles: submissiveness of the commender to the praised one, love for him, acknowledgement of his blessings, praising him for them, and not to use these blessings in what bestower dislikes.³¹

And in a hadith, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

³¹ *Madarij as-Salikin*, 2/611

“There are four things, that if one has gained them, he has been given the best of this world and the hereafter...” and he mentioned amongst them “A grateful heart”.³²

2. Gratitude with the tongue.

By acknowledging the blessings of Allah, constantly remembering and praising Him, speaking openly about these blessings, as per His (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) saying:

﴿وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ﴾ الضحى: ١١

﴿And proclaim the Grace of your Lord (i.e. the Prophethood and all other Graces).﴾ (Qur'an 93:11)

And Jabir (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“He who has been given a gift, should reward the giver for it if he can, and if not, he should praise him, as praising is thanksgiving, and concealing is denial, and he who claims that he has been given something in contrary to the truth, is like a person wearing two pieces of forged clothes.”³³ The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) mentioned

³² Tirmidhi, hadith no. 3019, classified as hassan, it was reported by more than one of the companions of the prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ), such as Anas and Jabir (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ).

³³ Tirmidhi, *Kitab Al-Birr wa Silat Ar-Rahem*, hadith no. 1957. Abu Dawud, *Kitab Al-Adaab*, hadith no. 4179, both on the authority of Jabir ibn Abdullah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ). Abu Eesa At-Tirmidhi classified the hadith as hassan. As for the sentence “and he who claims that he has been given something in contrary to the truth, is like a person wearing two pieces of forged clothes” was narrated by Bukhari, *Kitab An-Nikah*, hadith no. 4818, and Muslim, *Kitab Al-Libass wa Zina*, hadith no. 3973, but they used the word (*al-mutashabi'*) instead of (*al-muthalli*).

in this hadith the three types of creation: the thankful for the blessing, who praises Him for it, the one who denies and conceals it, and the person who claims that he has been given something in contrary to the truth. And it's narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Talking about the blessings of Allah is a type of gratitude.”^{34 35}

So we can summarize the above by saying that, talking about the blessings is a form of gratitude, and is praiseworthy if it isn't accompanied by arrogance, as it (arrogance) demolishes the good deeds, we seek refuge with Allah from that.

3. Gratitude with the limbs.

Like the work of the feet, hands, hearing, and vision. For example, gratitude for the blessing of money is by spending it in the way of Allah (Exalted is He), as gratefulness is not shown by the tongue only. If these limbs are used in obeying Allah, that is a show of gratitude to Him, as He described good deeds as a type of gratitude. He says:

³⁴ This is part of a hadith that was only narrated by Ahmad, hadith no. 18544. On the authority of Nu'man ibn Basheer (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) he said, the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “He who does not show gratitude for the smaller blessings does not show them for the bigger ones, and he who does not thank mankind does not thank Allah (Exalted is He), talking about the blessings of Allah is a type of gratitude, not doing so is *kufr* (denial), and the *jama'h* (community, collective) is a mercy, and *al-furqah* (sectarianism, disunity) is punishment.”

³⁵ *Madarij as-Salikin*, 2/615

﴿اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ (سبأ: ١٣)

﴿Work you, O family of Dâwud (David), with thanks! But few of My slaves are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 34:13)

And the real commender to his Lord, is he who confesses to His Blessings, is pleased with Allah (Exalted is He), and Allah is pleased with him, one of our righteous predecessors said about this meaning: “Perfect gratitude is achieved by 3 things:

- If Allah (Exalted is He), gives you something, you should praise Him for it.
- You should be pleased with what He gave you.
- As long as the benefit of this gift is with you, you shouldn't disobey Him.”

And if we take a close look at these numerous blessings, we will realise the extent of our ungratefulness. So many people are given blessings and are not mindful of their obligatory duties towards Allah, and so many are filled with blessings but they are sinful towards Him.

Gratitude with our limbs is of two types:

- a) Existent** – By using the blessings in obeying Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ).
- b) Nonexistent** – By not using the blessings in disobeying Allah.

For example, one of the biggest blessings is that of hearing and vision, gratitude for them is shown by using them in what pleases

Allah, so don't use them to look at or listen to what Allah has prohibited, because if you do so, then you have fallen short of your gratitude to Allah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“Allah loves to see the sign of His Bounties on His slave”³⁶

Summing up... Gratitude is not truly complete until it's done by three pillars: the tongue, heart, and limbs. He who falls short in one of them has denied the very foundation of gratitude.

People's gratefulness is of different levels depending on how well they use these basic pillars, and because of this it is said: Gratitude is of two kinds, Generic and Specific.

- 1. Generic gratitude**, is to praise with the tongue, and to acknowledge that the blessings are from Allah (Exalted is He).
- 2. Specific gratitude**, is to praise with the tongue, awareness of the heart, actions with the limbs, and to not use the tongue and the rest of the body to what is not permitted.

﴿ لِيَنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لِأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ﴾

³⁶ Narrated solely by Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2744 on the authority of Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ). Tirmidhi classified the hadith as *hassan*.

The factors that bring about Gratitude

Indeed, praise, gratitude and extolment of Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) has several factors leading to it, such as:

1. Being pleased with what has been decreed upon you.

If you are truly content with what Allah has given you in this worldly life, and believe that what whatever came upon you could never have missed you, and what missed you, could never have come upon you, and whatever has come upon you from Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) is good for you, you will live a happy and tranquil life. This contentment with the Qadr (Decree) will grant you, Allah willing, the ability to praise Allah for what He has given you and blessed you with. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “Whoever wakes up safely in his home, is healthy in his body and has provisions for his day, would have acquired all the worldly possessions he is in need of”³⁷

2. Reflecting upon the blessings Allah has given you.

Indeed, Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) has blessed you with good health, provided you with protection, bestowed upon you righteous offspring, gifted you stability, blessed you your parents being pleased with you, bestowed His Graces upon you, both apparent and hidden, and gave you vision and foresight.

³⁷ Tirmidhi, *Kitab Az-Zuhd*, hadith no. 2268. Ibn Majah, *Kitab Az-Zuhd*, hadith no. 4131 on the authority of Abdullah bin Mohsin (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ).

And He also bestowed upon you hearing and speech, good appearance, healthy limbs, other people's love for you, but most importantly he has blessed you with sound creed. There is no doubt that pondering upon these blessings has an effect on those who have healthy minds and sound nature, but this effect is only achieved by gratitude and praise.

3. Reflecting upon the state of other people with regards to the blessings.

There are those whose faith is weaker than yours, are less wealthy, and whose health is not as good. So reflect on how Allah has made you superior to them, gave you plenty of goodness, and preferred you to a lot of His creation, because that will instil in you gratitude to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) for what He has blessed you with.

And there are those whose faith is stronger and are more grateful to Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) than you, and above that, they might even be wealthier than you too, Allah has blessed them with the best of this world and the hereafter. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“How excellent is pure (halal) money in the hands of a righteous man.”³⁸

So, reflect upon what Allah has given to this person, and how Allah has made him superior to you, then take a good look at

³⁸ Part of a long hadith narrated by Ahmad in *Musnad As-Shameen* no. 17096 on the authority of 'Amr ibn al-'As (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ).

your shortcomings, as that is a good reason for you to truly thank your Lord, so that you may equal those who preceded you, and precede those who are inferior to you.

And there are those who are wealthier than you, even though they deny the blessings given to him and are negligent to Allah, so don't look at them and take them as an example, and don't let their abundance be a criterion to measure wealth or poorness or how pleased Allah is with them, as it might be a trial for them, followed by punishment.

It's true that they are rich with regards to money and health, however they have a weak soul, which can never get enough of worldly goods, even if the whole world in gold was given to them, because their souls are poor with regards to faith, gratitude, and they have a weak connection with Allah.

The real wealthy person is the one whose soul is rich, and if you take a close look at one of these supposedly wealthy people, you will find that he is miserable and unstable in his social life, and not at ease with himself. You will find that is he under a constant feeling of unrest, anxiety, and his heart and soul are very agitated. And may Allah bless he who said:

“I do not see happiness in gathering wealth, but he who is pious is the happy one.”

And our saying that you should not look at he who is above you, does not mean that you should not try to seek wealth, or be

ambitious, or that the Muslim should not aspire to improve his living standards, no, surely not. Like it was said
But what is required is the middle path, without injustice and harm, and to not place on himself a burden that he cannot bear by debts that will weigh heavily on his shoulders, for the sake of showing off in front of people, for that is not wisdom.³⁹

4. Lead an ascetic life in this world.

And reflect continuously on your inevitable fate, Paradise or Hellfire. You must truly believe without any doubt, and accustom yourself to waiting for the inevitable death at any moment, so, if you realize that, it'll make you lead a straight life, as he who has this attitude, will indeed be grateful, and will not be fooled by the decorations of this world and its adornments, and will not be misled by it.

Imam Ahmad (رحمته الله) was asked: “Can a man be ascetic while he has a million dinars? He said: “Yes.” They said: How? He said: “If he spends it according to the commands of Allah (Exalted is He) but if he lets it get to his heart, it'll control him.”

³⁹ Analysing this in the context of Islam, we can say the following:

- a) Look at those who are superior to you as regards to religion, to imitate them, and try to be equal or better than them.
- b) Meanwhile, as regards the affairs of this worldly life, look at those who are inferior to you so that you do not become arrogant, as arrogance eats up the good deeds.

It was narrated by Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلم) said: “Look at those who are below you, and do not look at those who are above you, for this will keep you from belittling Allâh's Favour on you.” Muslim, *Kitab Zuhd wa Raqaiq*, haith no. 5264.

O my Lord

﴿ أَعْمَلُواْ ءَالَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾

The types of gratitude

Gratitude is divided into two types according to the commender:

1. Gratitude of Allah (Exalted is He).
2. Gratitude of the creation.

Following is a short discussion about the two types, with a few examples to clarify the meaning.

First: Gratitude of Allah (Exalted is He).

Allah described himself as “Al-Shakur (Grateful)” as He (Exalted is He) says:

﴿ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴾ النساء: ١٤٧

﴿Why should Allah punish you if you have thanked (Him) and have believed in Him. And Allah is Ever All-Appreciative (of good), All-Knowing.﴾ (Qur'an 4:147)

and He says about Himself:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴾ الشورى: ٢٣

﴿Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (the deeds of those who are obedient to Him).﴾ (Qur'an 42:23)

and He says:

﴿إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ﴾ (فاطر: ٣٠)

﴿Verily! He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (good deeds and to recompense)﴾ (Qur'an 35:30)

and He says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾ (التغابن: ١٧)

﴿And Allah is Most Ready to appreciate and to reward, Most Forbearing﴾ (Qur'an 64:17).

Qatadah رحمه الله said: “There's no one who's more grateful than Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) and no one rewards goodness better than Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ).⁴⁰

The Gratitude of Allah, the Exalted, is on a different level, like that of His Patience, for he is most deserving of the attribute of gratefulness than any of His creation, indeed, He is the only one that has perfect gratitude, for He gives from His Grace to his servant and in turn inspires him on how to be grateful. And because Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) is the perfect Grateful one, the most beloved of His creation to Him is he who has the attribute of gratefulness, likewise, the most despised of His creation is he who ungrateful. And this is like the other perfect

⁴⁰ Al-Durr Al-Manthur, 1/389

names of Allah, for everything that Allah loves is related in some way with His perfect names and attributes and their implied meaning, and all that He dislikes is contrary to His perfect names and attributes.

Ibn Qayyim (رحمة الله) said: “Allah Has called Himself as “Shaakiran” (All-Appreciative of good) and “Shakur” (Grateful), and called the grateful ones by these two names, so He gave them from His attribute, and called them by His name, and what a great honour”⁴¹

Examples of the gratefulness of Allah (Exalted is He).

1. He has blessed His servants with the obligation of the Fast, and revelation of the Qur'an, then He blessed and had mercy upon them by lightening the command when there's difficulty, as He says:

﴿وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ البقرة: ١٥٨

﴿And whoever does good voluntarily, then verily, Allah is All-Recogniser, All-Knower.﴾ (Qur'an 2:158).

2. Allah is Grateful for even the smallest of good deeds and charities, no good deed is ever too small, and the reward of a single good deed is multiplied tenfold the like thereof to many folds, and Allah (Exalted is He), is the one that gave His servant the ability to do good for himself, so He is the Muhsin (The Benefactor) by giving them goodness and by giving them the

⁴¹ Tahdheeb Madarij as-Salikin, 2/612

ability to be grateful for it, therefore there is no one who is more grateful than Allah (Exalted is He).

An example of this is what the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst. The man said, ‘This (dog) is suffering from the same problem as that of mine.’ So he (went down the well), filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and watered the dog. Allah thanked him for his (good) deed and forgave him.”⁴² And on another narration the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“A prostitute was forgiven by Allah, because, passing by a panting dog near a well and seeing that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her shoe, and tying it with her head-cover she drew out some water for it. So, Allah forgave her because of that.”⁴³ How great is this gratefulness?!

3. He (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) forgave a man as he removed a thorny branch from the way of the Muslims, as was narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “While a man was going on a way, he saw a thorny branch and

⁴² Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah

⁴³ Narrated by Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurairah

removed it from the way and Allah became pleased by his action and forgave him for that.”⁴⁴

4. He (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) will remove the servant from Hellfire if there is good in him equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed , as it was narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“On the Day of Resurrection the people will surge with each other like waves, and then they will come to Adam and say, 'Please intercede for us with your Lord.' He will say, 'I am not fit for that but you'd better go to Abraham as he is the Khalil of the Beneficent.' They will go to Abraham and he will say, 'I am not fit for that, but you'd better go to Moses as he is the one to whom Allah spoke directly.' So they will go to Moses and he will say, 'I am not fit for that, but you'd better go to Jesus as he is a soul created by Allah and His Word.' (Be: And it was) they will go to Jesus and he will say, 'I am not fit for that, but you'd better go to Muhammad.'

They would come to me and I would say, 'I am for that.' Then I will ask for my Lord's permission, and it will be given, and then He will inspire me to praise Him with such praises as I do not know now. So I will praise Him with those praises and will fall down, prostrate before Him. Then it will be said, 'O

Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened

⁴⁴ Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Kitab As-Salat, hadith no. 615. Muslim, Kitab As-Salat, hadith no. 661

to; and ask, for your will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my followers! My followers!' And then it will be said, 'Go and take out of Hell (Fire) all those who have faith in their hearts, equal to the weight of a barley grain.' I will go and do so and return to praise Him with the same praises, and fall down (prostrate) before Him. Then it will be said, 'O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to, and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my followers! My followers!' It will be said, 'Go and take out of it all those who have faith in their hearts equal to the weight of a small ant or a mustard seed.' I will go and do so and return to praise Him with the same praises, and fall down in prostration before Him. It will be said, 'O, Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to, and ask, for you will be granted (your request); and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my followers!' Then He will say, 'Go and take out (all those) in whose hearts there is faith even to the lightest, lightest mustard seed. (Take them) out of the Fire.' I will go and do so." I then return for a fourth time and praise Him similarly and prostrate before Him, then He says to me the same as before 'O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, for you will be listened to; and ask, for you will be granted (your request): and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted .' I will say, 'O

Lord, allow me to intercede for whoever said, 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah.' Then Allah will say, 'By my Power, and my Majesty, and by My Supremacy, and by My Greatness, I will take out of Hell (Fire) whoever said: 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah.'»⁴⁵

5. He rewards His servant for the good actions he does in this world, and uses the servants good deeds as a means of alleviating his torment in the day of judgment, so He does not waste away any good deed the servant does, even though that servant might be one of the most despised of His creation.⁴⁶
6. Another example of His (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) Gratitude is that when the servant behaves in a certain situation in a way which pleases Him, He is Grateful to him, praises him, and informs the angels and His righteous servants, as He thanked the believing man of Fir'aun's

⁴⁵ Bukhari, *Kitab At-Tawheed*, hadith no. 6965. Muslim, *Kitab Al-Eeman*, hadith no. 284

⁴⁶ Like what happened to Abu Talib, the uncle of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). He used to protect the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), care for him, defend him himself with his money and family, but he died upon the religion of Abdu Al-Mutalib for fear that Quraish might dishonour him, even so, Allah (Exalted is He), is not unjust to anyone, so He differentiated him from those who plotted against Islam and the Muslims, indeed, He decreased his punishment in Hellfire even though he will dwell therein forever, and that is proof of His Justice and Gratitude for the good he did, like it was narrated in the hadith of Abbas ibn Abdu Al-Mutalib, he said O Messenger of Allah, did you benefit Abu Talib in anyway? For he used to protect you and get angry for your sake. He said: “Yes, the fire is only up to his ankles, and if it wasn’t for me he would be in the bottom of Hellfire.” Bukhari, *Kitab Al-Manaqib*, hadith no. 3594. Muslim, *Kitab Al-Eeman*, hadith no. 308

(Pharaoh) people, praised him, and remembered him between His servants.⁴⁷

And when Yusuf (Joseph) endured the hardship of prison, Allah thanked him by giving him full authority in the land, to take possession therein, as when or where he likes. Allah says:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ

الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يوسف: ٥٦

﴿Thus did We give full authority to Yûsuf (Joseph) in the land, to take possession therein, as when or where he likes. We bestow of Our Mercy on whom We please, and We make not to be lost the reward of Al-Muhsinûn (the good doers)﴾

(Qur'an 12:56)

So Allah changed Yusuf's (عليه السلام) hardship into ease, distress into happiness, fear into safety, fetters into freedom, and from humiliation before people into honor and high rank, that's his reward in this worldly life, as for the Hereafter, Allah Says:

﴿وَلَأَجْرُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ يوسف: ٥٧

﴿And verily, the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believe and used to fear Allah and keep their duty to Him (by abstaining from all kinds of sins and by performing all kinds of righteous good deeds)﴾ (Qur'an 12:57).

⁴⁷ See Surat Ghafir from verse 28-45 at the beginning of Allah's (Exalted is He) saying: ﴿So Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted (against him), while an evil torment encompassed Fir'aun's (Pharaoh) people.﴾

And it was in this way that Allah thanked Yusuf for his patience, faith and actions, and exchanged the his trials into a high rank in the land, and these glad tidings in the Hereafter are a reward for his faith, patience and ihsan (good deeds).⁴⁸

7. Another example of His (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) Gratitude, is if the servant spends something for Allah's Sake, He multiplies it many times over, and it's He who guides him to present, and thanks him for it. For example, when the martyrs presented their bodies for His Sake, Allah (Exalted is He) thanked them through putting their spirits inside green birds which fly in Paradise when and where they like, until the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁹

It was narrated on the authority of Anas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“There is no blessing that Allah bestows upon his servant, for which the slave says: Praise be to Allah, except that the praise that the slave gave (to Allah) is greater than that which he took (the blessing)”

And when Sulaimân (Peace be upon him) slaughtered the horses angrily as they occupied and prevented him from remembering

⁴⁸ *Fi Dhilal Al Qur'an*, Sayyid Qutb (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), 4/2014

⁴⁹ And when Ja'far bin Abi Talib (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) was killed in His Way, and his hands were cut, He thanked him through giving him two wings by which he flies in Paradise, as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) mentioned, and Al-Bukhari(3931) narrated that Abd Allâh bin Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) used to greet Abdu Allâh bin Ja'far (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) saying: "Peace be upon you, O son of the owner of the two wings!"

Allah, the Exalted, He replaced them for him by the wind which was subjected to him.

8. Another form of Allah's Gratefulness to His servants is that He praises him between His Angels in the highest of places, and thanks him for his good deeds. Because of this when His Prophets (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) put their honour on the line for His sake when facing their enemies, and were insulted as a result, Allah reward them by Himself and His Angels, sending Salat (Graces, Honours, Blessings, Mercy, etc.) upon them, and granted them the best of praises in the heavens and between His creation.
9. Another example of Allah's Gratefulness is that if His servant leaves something he likes for His sake, Allah gives (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) him something better in return, like what happened with the Sahabah (the companions of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ)) when they left their wealth and homes from Makkah to perform Hijra to Madinah for His sake, He opened for them in return the lands and gave them power therein.

Gratitude of the creation

Gratitude of the creation is of two types:

Gratitude from the creation to Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ):

This form of gratitude is one of the obligations that Allah has commanded His servants to perform, and He also ordered us to remember and thank Him, Allah says:

﴿ فَأَذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴾ البقرة: ١٥٢

﴿Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying, etc.). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me.﴾ (Qur'an 2:152)

and His saying:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴾ البقرة: ١٧٢

﴿O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islâmic Monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah﴾ (Qur'an 2:172)

and His Saying:

﴿ وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ ﴾ النحل: ١١٤

﴿And be grateful for the Graces of Allah.﴾ (Qur'an 16:114)

and He Says:

﴿كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ، بَلَدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ﴾^٤ سبأ: ١٥

﴿Eat of the provision of your Lord, and be grateful to Him, a fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord.﴾ (Qur'an 34:15)

And there're many citations related to this meaning in the Qur'an, as it's not permitted for the servant to fall short when it comes to gratefulness to his Lord, because we cannot pay back Allah's blessing with our own, and how would that be, seeing that we are poor and in need of Allah, so it is obligatory upon us to meet His blessings, which cannot be counted, by gratitude, and that is indeed a mercy from Allah, for if He command us to be grateful for all the blessings he has given us, we would be unable to.

And the most grateful of all creation to Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) is he who is most knowledgeable about Him, the leader of mankind – Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Abu Bakrah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said that the Prophet used to fall down in prostration, grateful to Allah, when something that made him happy occurred.

Gratitude from the creation to one another:

This form of gratitude is for any good action the servants do for one another, indeed, it is part of being grateful to Allah (Exalted is He). It was narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “Whoever doesn't thank the people, doesn't

thank Allah”⁵⁰. And this is clear evidence that the one who thinks himself better than his brothers, and is not grateful to them for the good they do to him, is amongst the furthest ones from gratitude to his Lord.

Al-Khattaby (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) explained the meaning of “Whoever doesn't thank the people, doesn't thank Allah” by saying: “This hadith has two meanings:

Firstly: Whoever has a habit of denying people’s blessings and of being ungrateful to them, usually also has a habit of denying Allah’s blessings and is ungrateful to Him.

Secondly: Allah (Exalted is He), does not accept the gratitude of a servant for His blessings if that servant is ungrateful to people, and denies their blessings upon him, because the two are related to one another.”⁵¹

Gratitude from the creation to each other, is by rewarding him, praising him among people, or by praying for him. On the authority of Aisha (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “He who does good should be rewarded, if he is unable to reward him, he should remember him, for he who remembers him has indeed thanked him,

⁵⁰At-Tirmidhi, *Kitab Al-Birr wa As-Silat*, hadith no. 1877. He classified the hadith as *hassan-sahih*. Abu Dawood, *Kitab Al-Adaab*, hadith no. 4177. There are versions of this hadith using similar phrases, such as “The most grateful of mankind to Allah (Exalted is He) is the most grateful to His creation” and “He is not considered grateful to Allah, if he is not grateful to His creation”. Please see Ibn Muflih, *Al-Adabal-Shar’iyyah*.

⁵¹ Please see *Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Quran*, Al Qurtubi, 1/398

and if he is unable to, he should pray for him.” It is narrated on the authority of Usamah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “He who is favoured by another and says to his benefactor: ‘Jazak-Allah khairan (may Allah reward you with goodness)’ indeed praised (the benefactor) satisfactorily.”

This is how others from the creation should be thanked for the good they do⁵², not doing so is considered harsh, and it is reported that Imam Ahmed (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) considered it to be one of the major sins⁵³ because the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has threatened with Hellfire those who are ungrateful to their partners, like it was reported by Bukhari and Muslim that he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “O women folk! You should give charity and be diligent in seeking Allah's forgiveness because I have seen (i.e., on the Night of the Ascension to the highest heavens) that most of the dwellers of the Hell are women.” A woman amongst them said: ‘Why is it that the majority of the dwellers of Hell are women?’ The Prophet replied, “You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands.”

And one of the ways they are ungrateful to their husbands is by saying: “You’ve never done anything for me.”

⁵² What if the benefactor is a disbeliever? It was reported by Ibn Muflih in his book *Al-Adab al-Shar'iyah*, 1/315 that a man said to Sa'id ibn Jubair (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ): ‘The Majussi (Fire worshippers) has been good to be, should I thank him?’ He replied: ‘Yes.’

⁵³ *Al-Adab al-Shar'iyah*, 1/314, Ibn Muflih

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim said: “This is the punishment for the denial of the blessings of the husband, which in fact is a blessing from Allah, so imagine the punishment for the denial of the blessings of Allah Himself ?!”

And it desirable that the person who requires a favor from another be kind in his request, pick the most beautiful and pleasant words, and if the favor is done for him, he should praise Allah, commend the giver and pray for him. If the favor requested is not realized, he should praise Allah, and find an excuse for his brother.

Muhammad bin Wasi' (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), a pious scholar from Al-Basra, went to Qutaibah bin Muslim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), and said to him: “I came to you asking for a need I have asked Allah for it before you, so, if you give it to me, I'll praise Allah and thank you, and if not, I'll praise Allah, and excuse you.” So, he gave him his need.

And another one said: “Indeed, I came to you for a great need, as you're a generous Prince and a great man.”

Gratitude to others is to be shown not only if they give you money, but you should benefit them in any way you can, like fulfilling a need, good intercession, and supplicating for them in their absence.

The difference between Allah's Gratitude to His servants and the servant's gratitude to Allah

There's no comparison between the Gratitude of Allah to His servants and the gratitude of the servants to Allah, as the Gratitude of Allah is proportionate to His Majesty, Generosity, and Perfect Mercy which embraces all things. The differences are many, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) is Grateful to His servant for the good he does to himself, as for the servant he is grateful only for the good others do for him.
2. Allah's (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) Gratitude is perfect in every way, as for the servant's gratitude, is always lacking, relative to what he was given, and not permanent.
3. The servant's gratitude is usually in return for some good done to him, or if he has benefited from something, however, Allah's Gratitude to His servant is not only if the servant does a good deed, indeed, it can be quite the contrary. It might be a gift from Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), and this is from his perfect wisdom and fairness, Exalted is He.
4. The creation gets a benefit from the gratefulness of others to him, while Allah gets no benefit from the gratefulness of the servants to Him, Allah says:

﴿وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ﴾ (النمل: ٤٠)

﴿And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for (the good of) his ownself.﴾ (Qur'an 27:40)

Indeed, it is the servant that benefits, as he is the one in need of blessings in this world, and in the Hereafter he is in need of recompense and the reward for being grateful.

The above also applies to denial and ungratefulness, it does not affect Allah in anyway, for His Self, is Rich (Free of all wants) and Owner of all Praise, not because people praise Him or thank Him for His blessings, and because of this Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

﴿وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِن تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا فَأِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ﴾ (إبراهيم: ٨)

﴿And Musa (Moses) said: If you disbelieve, you and all on earth together, then verily! Allah is Rich (Free of all wants), Owner of all Praise.﴾ (Qur'an 14:8)

i.e. if you and all creation deny the blessings of Allah and are not grateful ﴿then verily! Allah﴾ (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is ﴿Rich (Free of all wants)﴾ not in need of your gratefulness, and this does not diminish Him in anyway, ﴿Owner of all Praise﴾ His Self is worthy of Praise, because of the abundance of His Blessings, even if you or the Angels don't thank Him or praise Him.⁵⁴

Imam Ibn Qayyim (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “The blessings that the Lord(عَزَّوَجَلَّ) gives to His servants is a gift and kindness to him, a favour, not because He is in need of him, not to pay him back, not to seek

⁵⁴ Fath Al Qadir, 3/96

his help, not to increase what He already has, not to gain glory after being deprived, not to increase His Strength after being weak, Exalted is He and Praise be to Him. Allah's command to His servants to be grateful is another form of blessing upon them, as the benefits of gratefulness return to the servant in this world and in the Hereafter, not to Allah, for it is the servant who benefits from his own gratefulness, like in Allah's saying:

﴿وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ﴾ النمل: ٤٠

﴿And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for (the good of) his ownself.﴾ (Qur'an 27:40)

So, the servants gratitude is in reality doing good to himself in this world and in the Hereafter, for he has done good to his own self by his gratefulness to Allah, not that he is paying back his Lord.

It is impossible for anyone to pay back Allah's blessings, not even some of them, not even the smallest of His Blessings, for Allah is the Granter and Giver, The Creator of gratitude, and also (The Creator) of the ways to thank Him, as it is not possible for anyone to enumerate His Blessings, for he is Al-Muhsin (the One who gives all good) to His servant for by way of His Blessings, and gave him with the ability to be grateful, so his gratefulness is a blessing that Allah gave him, that in turns needs also to be thanked, and so on, and so forth.

And from the perfection of His Blessings, Exalted is He, and His great charity and generosity, is the fact that He blesses you and then gives you the means to show gratefulness for them, and is pleased with you, then he gives you the reward for being grateful, and makes it a reason for the continuation of His Blessings upon you, and their increase.⁵⁵

The categories of people with regards to gratitude

The Qur'an has revealed, and the Sunnah explained, the different types of people with regards to their observance of this lofty form of worship (Gratitude), it's possible to summarize them into three categories:

1. Those who are grateful.
2. Those who are rarely grateful.
3. Those who are not grateful.

The first category: Those who are grateful.

They are few – we ask Allah to make us one of them, and the Qur'anic text, in numerous places, comes with evidence of how few they are, like the saying of Allah:

⁵⁵ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim, 2/616

﴿ وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾ ﴿١٣﴾ سبأ: ١٣

﴿But few of My slaves are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 34:13)⁵⁶

And those few are the most noble of people, and they are the ones who get the increase and good reward, like Allah's saying:

﴿ وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ ﴾ إبراهيم: ٧

﴿And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings)﴾ (Qur'an 14:7)

And Allah says after mentioning the saving of Lut (Lot) (عليه السلام):

﴿ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴾ القمر: ٣٥

﴿As a Favour from Us, thus do We reward him who gives thanks (by obeying Us).﴾ (Qur'an 54:35)

And He (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

﴿ وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾ آل عمران: ١٤٤

﴿and Allah will give reward to those who are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 3:144)

﴿ وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾ آل عمران: ١٤٥

⁵⁶ (Saba': 13)

And He Says: ﴿And We shall reward the grateful﴾ (Qur'an 3:145)

As mentioned before, those are a minority “and them being a minority in this world shows that they are special to Allah”⁵⁷.

And Imam Ahmad narrated that Umar bin Al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) heard a man saying: “O Allah! Make me of the minority.” Umar said: “What do you mean?”, he said: “Allah says:

﴿وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُونَ﴾ سبأ: ١٣

﴿But few of My slaves are grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 34:13)”

The second category: Those who are rarely grateful.

They thank Allah (Exalted is He), but only for short, spaced periods, and for only some of the blessings, as He says after mentioning some of His blessings:

﴿قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ الملك: ٢٣

﴿Little thanks you give.﴾ (Qur'an 67:23).

All this after Allah has reminded them of His Blessings, their vastness, and their benefits, Allah says:

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ الملك: ٢٣

⁵⁷ Madarij al Salikeen, Ibn al Qayim , 2/610

﴿Say (unto them, O Muhammad) it is He Who has created you, and endowed you with hearing (ears), seeing (eyes), and hearts. Little thanks you give.﴾ (Qur'an 67:23)

The third category: Those who do not show any gratitude.

This is a characteristic of the majority of creation, Allah Says in three places the Qur'an:

﴿وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ﴾

﴿yet most of mankind give no thanks.﴾ (Qur'an 2:243, 12:138, 40:61)

And in two other places He says:

﴿وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ﴾

﴿yet most of them give no thanks.﴾ (Qur'an 10:60, 27:73)

Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says in Surat Al-A'raf:

﴿وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ﴾ (الأعراف: ١٧)

﴿and You will not find most of them as thankful ones.﴾ (Qur'an 7:16)

This type of creation is the most despised to Allah (عَزَّجَلَّ) as Allah (Exalted is He), has categorized mankind into grateful and ungrateful, and the most beloved of things to Him is gratefulness and those who are grateful, Allah says:

﴿ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴾ (الإنسان: ٣)

﴿Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.﴾ (Qur'an 76:3)

And He (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says:

﴿ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴾ (البقرة: ١٥٢)

﴿and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me.﴾ (Qur'an 2:152)

And the denial of those people may be due to their ignorance of the value of the blessing, or of its Giver, or their disbelief in Allah, we seek refuge with Allah, as He says:

﴿ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا ﴾ (الإسراء: ٨٩)

﴿but most mankind refuse (the truth and accept nothing) but disbelief.﴾ (Qur'an 17:89)

So, He explained that the reason for their refusal is their denial of the blessings, as gratefulness is the opposite of ungratefulness, and the vast of amount of disbelievers makes it clear how few in numbers the grateful ones are.

This divine depiction of the situation of mankind gives a strong sense of sorrow for the servants who deny the blessings of Allah upon them, and truly Man is indeed an extreme wrong-doer and a disbeliever, you

bless him from head to toe with good health, wealth, children, safety, only for him not to be grateful and recognize its Giver.

The punishment for being ungrateful

As mentioned before, gratitude to the Giver (Exalted is He), is mandatory upon everyone, and whosoever neglects this duty, gets punished in a number of ways, the most important of which are:

1. **Weakness of faith** – for gratitude, as mentioned earlier, equates to half of faith, so ungratefulness or just a reduction in gratitude, is inconsistent with the completeness of faith, and as a result the one of is ungrateful is characterized with ‘kufur’ (literally it means ‘disbelief’ but here it means ungratefulness), because kufur and shukr (gratitude) are opposites, therefore when Allah blessed Sulaiman (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) (Solomon) with innumerable blessings he said:

﴿ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ﴾ النمل: ٤٠

﴿This is by the Grace of my Lord to test me whether I am grateful (shukr) or ungrateful!(kufur)﴾ (Qur’an 27:40)

And the meaning of ‘kufur’(disbelief) here is ungratefulness, not the disbelief in Allah that removes one the religion.

2. **Removal of the blessing and affliction with punishment** –
The punishment might be in this world or in the Hereafter, however Allah wills, but it will occur, because denial and

ungratefulness for Allah's blessings does not go unpunished. How many countries were flourishing with goodness, but when the people denied the blessings of Allah, Allah removed the blessings from them. Allah says:

﴿وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ

بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ فَأَذَقَهَا اللَّهُ لِيَاسَ الْجُوعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ النحل: ١١٢

﴿And Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it denied the favors of Allah . So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing.﴾ (Qur'an 16:112)

And He - The Exalted, says:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ آيَةٌ جَنَّتَانِ عَنْ يَمِينٍ وَشِمَالٍ كُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لَهُمْ بَلَدَهُ

طَيِّبَةً وَرَبِّ غَفُورٌ ﴿١٥﴾ فَأَعْرَضُوا فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنَاهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتِ أُكُلٍ

خَمَطٍ وَأَثَلٍ وَشَيْءٍ مِّن سِدْرٍ قَلِيلٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوا وَهَلْ يُجْزَى إِلَّا الْكُفُورُ ﴿١٧﴾ سبأ:

١٥ - ١٧

﴿Indeed there was for Saba' (Sheba) a sign in their dwelling place, - two gardens on the right hand and on the left (and it was said to them): Eat of the provision of your Lord, and be grateful

to Him, a fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord. 16. But they turned away (from the obedience of Allah), so We sent against them Sail Al-'Arim (flood released from the dam), and We converted their two gardens into gardens producing bitter bad fruit, and tamarisks, and some few lote-trees.17. Like this We requited them because they were ungrateful disbelievers. And never do We requit in such a way except those who are ungrateful, (disbelievers) ﴿ (Qur'an 34:15-17).

This is an example of a village that had safety, peace, and had been blessed. They used these blessings in sinful ways, not in the obedience of Allah, and on top of that were not grateful for them and were disobedient to their Lord, and denied His Blessings, so Allah changed their safety into fear, and made its people live in hunger and thirst, for He is the Most Just of the judges.

Al-Hassan Al-Basry (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): “Surely, if Allah isn't thanked, He changes the blessing into punishment.”⁵⁸

And these numerous blessings that we are immersed in, like safety, stability, and a life of ease and comfort, if they are not thanked by words, actions and all our body parts, they may be taken from us, for indeed, gratefulness makes for everlasting blessings.

- 3. Continuation of the blessing, but with no benefit** – or the wiping out of any effect it has on its people, nations, individuals

⁵⁸ Ad-Dorr Almanthour ,1/369

and families. And the reduction of the blessing is proportional to the reduction in gratitude, as the recompense is proportional to the deeds.

﴿ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ ﴾ الأحقاف: ١٥

﴿My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents﴾ (Qur'an 46:15)

Means and ways to thank Allah for His Blessings

There plenty of means and ways to be grateful to Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) for His Blessings, below are some examples:

Renewal of the gratitude for the blessings of Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) and the ability that He gave us to be grateful, therefore it was reported that Dawud said: “O my Lord! How can I be grateful to You, while my gratefulness to You is in itself a new Blessing of You upon me?” He said: “Now, you thanked me, O Dawud!”⁵⁹

1. **To believe that Allah is the Giver of blessings**, and that He only deserves to be worshipped, shown gratitude, and be praised. It was reported that Musa (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) said: “O my Lord, You Created Adam with your own Hands, You blew into him from your Own Spirit, You made the Angels bow before him,

⁵⁹ Al-Jami' Leahkam Al-Quran, Al-Qurtoby, (Ibrahim: 34)

You taught him the names of all things, and You done many other things, so how can he possibly thank you? Allah said to him: “He learnt all that from Me, so (just) the fact that he knows that, is a form of gratitude to Me” And there is no blessing in the heavens and earth other than it is from Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ).⁶⁰

2. **Saying “Al-hamdu lillah” (Praise be to Allah),** Anas ibn Malik (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “Allah will be pleased with His slave who praises Him (i.e., says Al-hamdu lillah.i.e. All the praises and thanks be to Allah) when he eats and praises Him when he drinks.”⁶¹

And it was narrated by ibn Abi Dunya and Al-Baihaqi in the book *Shu`ab al-Iman* (The branches of faith) that Aisha(رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) said: “When Nuh (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) used to leave the bathroom he used to say: “All praise be to Allah for making me experience its pleasure, and preserved in me its benefits, and removed from me its harm”

Salman Al-Farisi (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: “When Nuh (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) used to put on clothes, tasted food, or ate or drank, he used to say ‘Al-hamdu lillah’ (Praise be to Allah), so he was named ‘A grateful servant’⁶²

And it was narrated that one of our righteous ancestors said: “He whom Allah bestowed on many blessings, should increase his

⁶⁰ *Al-Jami' Leahkam Al-Quran*, Al-Qurtoby, 1/398. See also *Tanbeeh al-Ghafileen* by Samarqandi, p. 230.

⁶¹ Muslim, *Kitab Ad-Dhikr wa Ad-Du'a wa At-Taubah wa Al-Istigfar*

⁶² *Al-Durr Al-Manthur* , 5/236-237

praising of Allah, as gratefulness isn't accomplished but by praising the Giver and by mentioning His blessings"⁶³

A'bd bin Abi Nuh said: "A man said to me: 'how many times did you deal with Him – Blessed is He, by doing things He dislikes, and He dealt with you with what you like?' I said: 'I cannot enumerate the times I've done it.' He said: 'Have you ever turned to Him with a worry and He betrayed you?' I said: 'No, I swear by Allah. Indeed He was good to me and helped me.' He said 'Have you ever asked him, and he denied you?' I said: 'Has He ever forbidden me something that I've asked Him for? I've never asked Him for something other than He gave it to me, and I've never turned to Him for help other than He helped me.' He said: 'Can you imagine if someone from mankind did just some of these things for you, how would you repay him?' I said: 'I could not repay him or reward him' so he said: 'Your Lord is more deserved and worthy of your devotion in thanking him, and the Giver (to you) of all the previous and recent blessings, and I swear by Allah that being grateful to Him is easier than repaying another human being... So why don't you say 'Al-hamdulillah' (Praise be to Allah) sincerely from your heart, for He (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) is pleased with His servants when they praise Him.

3. **Arming oneself with Islamic knowledge**, taken from the Qur'an, the Sunnah of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), the sayings

⁶³ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim (2/61)

of his companions and of the righteous predecessors, because ignorance brings about ungratefulness, and blinds one from seeing the blessings, as for Islamic knowledge, it enlightens the vision, and guides one to the blessings.

4. **Being good towards others**, because the blessing of Allah upon you is a favor unto you, so you should thank Allah for these blessings by being good to others, especially those below you, such as the poor and their like. It was narrated that Idris (عليه السلام) said: “It will not be possible for anyone to thank Allah for His Blessings, other than by being grateful to others, so he should do good to others like The Creator did good to him, so if you want the continuation of the blessing of Allah upon you, always be charitable to the poor.”

5. **Showing the blessings**, by allowing others to see signs of the blessings upon you, because he who conceals the blessings has indeed denied their existence, and whoever shows them and spreads them has indeed shown gratitude, and this is taken from his (صلى الله عليه وعلى آله وسلم) saying:

“If Allah gives a blessing to a servant, He likes to see signs of His blessing upon His servant.”⁶⁴ It is said with regards to this meaning⁶⁵:

⁶⁴ Hadith classified as *sahih* narrated by Ibn S’ad 4/291 on the authority of Imran bin Hussain (رضي الله عنه). Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2819, on the authority of Abdullah bin Umar (رضي الله عنهما).

⁶⁵ *Madarij al Salikeen*, Ibn al Qayim, 2/613

It is a great loss that my gratitude is silent,
 For what you've done for me and that your kindness speaks,
 And I see what you do for me then I conceal it,
 Indeed I feel like a thief of a generous man
 But I would like to point out here that he who Allah's (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) blessings are manifest upon him, should not show too much of them, because the evil eye is a fact, and showing off the blessings is pleasant to the self, but when shown to a envious person it ruffles his insides with rage, so he, when faced with tribulations becomes distressed, and when he is happy he is affected by the evil eye. And the prudent person hides things all the time, so don't be of those who reveal everything and cannot keep their secrets, until he spreads them to the wrong person, and it can be that a single word that comes out of a person's mouth might bring about his demise.⁶⁶

6. **The exchange of advice for the sake of Allah** through enjoining the good and forbidding the evil with wisdom, fair preaching and arguing with them in a good way.
7. Help one another in virtue, righteousness and piety, according to Allah's Saying:

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالنَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ﴾ المائدة: ٢

⁶⁶ Said al Khatir, Ibn Al-Jawzy , p. 178

﴿Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa (virtue, righteousness and piety); but do not help one another in sin and transgression﴾ (Qur'an 5:2)

To endure patiently any harm related to that, Allah (Exalted is He), says:

﴿وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ

وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾ الْعَصْرِ: ١ - ٣

﴿By Al-'Asr (the time). 2. Verily! Man is in loss, 3. Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'rûf) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the sufferings, harms, and injuries which one may encounter in Allah's Cause during preaching His religion of Islamic Monotheism or Jihâd, etc.).﴾ (Qur'an 103:1-3)

8. **Increasing in good actions**, and to abstain from what Allah has prohibited, because Allah – The Exalted, says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بَقِيَ حَتَّىٰ يَغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ﴾ الرَّعْد: ١١

﴿Verily, never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)﴾

(Qur'an 13:11)

So if they change themselves by being more obedient to Him, Allah will change their situation by increasing them in goodness and blessings.

The grateful, rich servant and the patient, poor one

Patience and gratitude are two very noble forms of worship, the servant cannot manage without them wherever he is, and the scholars have written much about which of the two is better⁶⁷, but one of the best sayings on this matter is what was written by the Imam of Knowledge, Shams Al-Deen Abu Abdullah ibn Al-Qayyim (رحمة الله), he said: “Indeed, patience and gratitude are two things that the servant cannot dispense with, be he rich or poor, healthy or sick, and this is the issue about the grateful, rich servant and the patient, poor one, which one is better?”.... then he goes on to say: “The best of them is the more pious one, and if they happen to be at the same level of piety, then they are equal before Allah, as Allah does not prefer a servant over another by richness or poorness, like He also does not prefer a servant over another by healthiness or affliction, but he prefers one over the other by piety, Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says:

⁶⁷ Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi said that the scholars have three opinions on this issue:

1. Patience is better
2. Gratitude is better
3. They are the same

﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَتَكُمْ﴾ الحجرات: ١٣

﴿Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has At-Taqwa [i.e. one of the Muttaqûn (pious)]﴾ (*Qur'an 49:13*)

And At-Taqwa (piety) is based on two pillars (patience and gratitude) and both the rich and poor are in need of both of them, so he who has the most complete form of patience and gratitude is the better one, and it is not permitted to prefer one over the other, other than by this criterion, because the poor servant might be more pious before Allah with his patience than the rich servant with his gratitude, and it is not correct to say: ‘This servant is better than the other because of his poorness’, like it’s not correct to say: ‘This servant by his gratitude is better than this one with his poorness’, or the opposite, but what should be said is: ‘The one who is strongest in performing his obligatory and optional actions is the better one, as preference is based on these two things, like Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says in a divine text (Hadith Al Qudsi), on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ), he said: The Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Verily, Allah (Exalted is He), said: “...and the most beloved thing with which My slave comes nearer to Me is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till

I love him.”⁶⁸ So whichever of the two is more steadfast in his obligations to Allah and does more Nawafil is the best one.

If it is argued that it has been firmly established that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“The poor of my people will enter (paradise) before the rich ones by half a day, and that equates to 500 years” we can say that this does not indicate superiority of the poor over the rich in rank, or that they are in a higher position, even though they preceded them in entering paradise, as the rich servant or the fair leader may be delayed because of his reckoning, so when he finally enters paradise his rank will be loftier and his level higher.”⁶⁹

We can summarize the above by saying that richness and poorness are two instruments, one is better than the other depending on how much faith and piety that servant has, as it was mentioned by the Leader of the faithful Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ): “ If patience and gratitude were like two camels, I would not care which one I rode.”⁷⁰

So both patience and gratitude are part of one another, one of them cannot be without the other, and when one of them is mentioned by itself, it just means that in that particular situation it was more evident than the other.

⁶⁸ Bukhari.

⁶⁹ *Uddatu Al Sabirin wa dhakhiratu Al Shaakirin*, p. 124-126

⁷⁰ *Uddatu Al Sabirin wa dhakhiratu Al Shaakirin*, p. 90

Then, on that Day, you shall be asked about the delight

This is a verse from surat At-Takaathur, and in it is clear evidence that the blessings of Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) were not given in vain, so everyone on whom Allah has bestowed blessings upon, be they in his worldly affairs or in his religion, will be asked whether he preserved or wasted them. Makhool (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) was asked about Allah's saying:

﴿ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ﴾ التكاثر: ٨

﴿Then, on that Day, you shall be asked about the delight (you indulged in, in this world)!﴾ (Qur'an 102:8)

So he replied: “The delight is a cold drink, shady houses, full bellies, good appearance, and calm sleep.”⁷¹

Mujahid (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “It's every delight in this worldly life.”, and Ibn Abbas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) said about Allah's saying:

﴿Then, on that Day, you shall be asked about the delight (you indulged in, in this world)!﴾ (Qur'an 102:8)

“The delights are healthy bodies, ears, and eyes.”

And the explanation given above by the pious predecessors (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ), is not limited to what they said, but it encompasses all types of

⁷¹ Tafseer Ibn Katheer, Surat At-Takaathur

blessings, and what ibn Abbas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) said and Makool and Mujahid (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا), pointed to, is just part of it, indeed, they only intended to alert to the highest one by mentioning the lowest, and the numerous one by mentioning the few.

And to know the value of the blessing given to you, reflect on this hadith, and compare your state with the state of those mentioned in it. It was narrated by Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that the Messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) went out (of his house) one day or one night, and there he found Abu Bakr and Umar also. He said: What has brought you out of your houses at this hour? They said: Allah's Messenger, it is hunger. Thereupon he said: By Him in Whose Hand is my life, what has brought you out has brought me out too; get up. They got up along with him. and (all of them) came to the house of an Ansari, but he was not at home. When his wife saw him she said: Most welcome, and Allah's Messenger (may peace be Upon him) said to her: Where is so and so? She said: He has gone to get some fresh water for us. When the Ansari came and he saw Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) and his two Companions, he said: Praise be to Allah, no one has more honourable guests today than I (have). He then went out and brought them a bunch of ripe dates, dry dates and fresh dates, and said: Eat some of them. He then took hold of his long knife (for slaughtering a goat or a sheep). Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said to him: Beware of killing a milch animal. He slaughtered a sheep for them and after they had eaten of it and of the bunch and drank, and when they had taken their

fill and had been fully satisfied with the drink, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to Abu Bakr and Umar: By Him in Whose Hand is my life, you will certainly be questioned about this bounty on the Day of judgment. Hunger brought you out of your house, then you did not return until this bounty came to you.”⁷²

Allahuakbar (God is The Greatest), they will be asked about this meal that only comes about sometimes, it was even reported by Aisha (رضي الله عنها) that a fire was not lit (to cook food) in the house of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) for three months, and that he (ﷺ) used to tie two stones around his stomach because of hunger.

So imagine what kind of questions will we, who are swimming in blessings be asked!?

Was it not only sometime ago that this country (Saudi Arabia) used to be one of the poorest and our grandfathers used to eat dry and old dates, and used to travel to the neighboring countries away from their families years on end in search of a living, and were sometimes victims of bandits?

Then Allah filled its contradicting parties with tawheed (monotheism), reconciled between the hearts of its people after they were in conflict, pours goodness upon them, and brought forth from the land numerous blessings, to the point that it is now the destination for all that seek livelihood and increase in wealth...

⁷² Muslim

Does hunger these days make any of us leave his house to seek sustenance? Which one of us goes a day without any food in his table? Even the cats have increased in number and have become fat with the leftovers that have filled the streets. Should we then not be grateful servants? We ask Allah to make us of the Grateful and of the ones who are in constant remembrance.

The types of blessings

The conversation about the blessings is a long one, because of their multitude, and because it's impossible to count them, but they can be categorized with regards to their generality and comprehensiveness into three types:

1. General blessings that encompass all of creation.
2. Blessings similar to the general ones, encompassing only some of the creation.
3. Special blessings encompassing only the self.

Firstly: General blessings that encompass all of creation.

The blessings that benefit everyone in the world, pious ones and sinful ones, believers and disbelievers, mankind and jinns, even the many universes:

First example: Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has mentioned in Surat Nuh (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) by His saying:

﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لِتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَا جًا ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ نوح: ١٩ - ٢٠

﴿And Allah has made for you the earth wide spread (an expanse). 20. That you may go about therein in broad roads.﴾ (Qur'an 71:19-20)

Second example: And He – The Exalted, says in Surat An-Naba':

﴿الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ﴿١٤﴾ ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَفَّااقًا ﴿١٦﴾﴾
﴿النَّبأ: ٦ - ١٦﴾

﴿Have We not made the earth as a bed, 7. And the mountains as pegs? 8. And We have created you in pairs (male and female, tall and short, good and bad, etc.). 9. And have made your sleep as a thing for rest. 10. And have made the night as a covering (through its darkness),11. And have made the day for livelihood.12. And We have built above you seven strong (heavens),13. And have made (therein) a shining lamp (sun).14. And have sent down from the rainy clouds abundant water.15. That We may produce therewith corn and vegetations,16. And gardens of thick growth.﴾ (Qur'an 78:6-16)

Third example: What has been mentioned with regards to the orderliness of the night and day, as He says:

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِضِيَاءٍ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٧١﴾﴾
﴿القصص: ٧١﴾

﴿Say (O Muhammad): Tell me! If Allah made night continuous for you till the Day of Resurrection, who is an ilâh (a god) besides Allah who could bring you light? Will you not then hear?﴾ (Qur'an 28:71)

If the darkness was continuous, we would be anxious, and partially deprived of the blessing of vision and color discrimination, and the contrary is also true. Allah Says:

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ تَسْكُنُونَ﴾

فِيهِ أَفَلَا تَبْصُرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ القصص: ٧٢

﴿Tell me! If Allah made day continuous for you till the Day of Resurrection, who is an ilâh (a god) besides Allah who could bring you night wherein you rest? Will you not then see?﴾ (Qur'an 28:72)

Likewise, if daylight was continuous, this world and its people would never become tranquil, indeed they would go crazy, their body would become strained, till the earth closes in on them in spite of its vastness and their souls confines them, but the blessings of Allah are extensive, and His great mercy obliges us to thank Him (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) for them, and it is He who says:

﴿وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ القصص: ٧٣

﴿It is out of His Mercy that He has put for you night and day, that you may rest therein (i.e. during the night) and that you may seek of His

Bounty (i.e. during the day), and in order that you may be grateful. ﴿
(*Qur'an* 28:73)

Fourth example: The sun and its exact distance from the earth, if it were closer it would burn all its plantations, the water of the seas would evaporate, and all the creation would come to an end. On the other hand, if it were further away, people would be cold, and this cold would freeze the milk in the breasts, the blood in the veins, and destroy the plantations from the intensity of the cold and poison, so Exalted is the Most Generous, the Giver of all good, the All-Wise, the Most Merciful, the Most Beneficent.

Fifth example: The exact placement of mountains, and their maintenance so that the earth may be balanced and it does not shake its inhabitants.

Sixth example: The moon and its light, and the influence its has on the tides of the seas and oceans, making the ocean water flow like there were rivers flowing inside of them, and Allah knows the wisdom behind it.

Seventh example: The evaporation of the water in the seas and oceans, the moving of the clouds by Allah's Command, then the pouring of the rain where Allah so wishes making the earth come to life after it was barren, and Allah makes a way for the extra water through the rocks, purifying the water and making it drinkable to the thirsty, and He moves the water from one side of the land to the other.

Eight example: The different types of plants and fruits that feed mankind and animals alike, some harvest in summer and others in winter, and between the harvests, plantations that fit just right for the climate, the land and the water.

Ninth example: The trees and mountains and how Allah has distinguished them, the desert trees and how Allah has adorned them, the grass prairies and how Allah has made them special.

Tenth example: The sea and its treasures, from it comes out delicious fresh fish, precious shells, pearls and corals, creatures that can be used as a cure for diseases, its salt is a remedy for the body. Look at its waves as they go up and down like they are praising Allah, their Creator, expelling all the pollutants that are not needed by man to shore, were it not for them all dead fish and pollutants would stay in the sea, and Allah made these waves carry the big ships that plow through the billows of the sea, carrying people and goodness to distant lands which man otherwise would only be able to reach with great difficulty.

In the horizons are signs of Allah's existence,

Of which the smallest is that he has guided you,

And how many of His signs are there in the seas,

Wonder of wonders if your eyes would only care to ponder.

Then look at all that is around you, ponder and say:

﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا﴾ الأنبياء: ٢٢

﴿Had there been therein (in the heavens and the earth) gods besides Allah, then verily both would have been ruined.﴾ (Qur'an 21:22)

Exalted is He Who has created (everything), and then proportioned it, and Who destined and (then) guided, and He has power over all things.

Secondly: Blessings similar to the general ones, encompassing only some of the creation.

These blessings are less general than the above because: they are specific to a certain nation, group or country.

First example: The blessing of guidance. O son of Islam, Allah has chosen you over others for some blessings, the biggest of which is that He has guided you to the correct religion, and has opened your breast to Islam without any effort from you, nor harm or affliction. Allah has guided you to his true religion, while others have been misguided from it, and so you know the value of this blessing, imagine yourself as you are brought together with mankind to the place of reckoning and judgment between the servants, then look into Hellfire as it breathes out with anger and fury at the sinful and at the disbelievers, as they try to avoid its heat...

﴿رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ﴾ المؤمنون: ١٠٧

﴿Our Lord! Bring us out of this; if ever we return (to evil), then indeed we shall be Zâlimun: (polytheists, oppressors, unjust, and wrong-doers, etc.).﴾ (Qur'an 23:102)

At that point how will you feel? No doubt you will say:

﴿وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ﴾ الأعراف: ٤٣

﴿All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Who has guided us to this, never could we have found guidance, were it not that Allah had guided us!﴾ (Qur'an 7:43)

Bakr ibn Abdullah Al Mazani (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: “Whoever is Muslim, his body is healthy, has gathered the best blessings from this world, and the best of the Hereafter, as the best blessing in this world is good health, and the best blessing in the Hereafter is Islam.”

Abdul Malik ibn Marwan said: The servant does not say something that is more beloved to Him and is even better than thankfulness, than him saying: ‘All praise is to Allah Who has blessed us, and guided us to Islam.’

Second example: He made your country, and Islamic country, safe and secure, while people are snatched away all around it, and made us overflow with treasures, such as yellow, red and black gold, and Allah made it (i.e. black gold – oil) a fuel for people, moving their means of transport in the land, sea and air. But even more surprisingly, there are clothes, vessels and instruments too numerous

to count, and people could not have guided themselves to all this, if it were not by Allah's guidance, Exalted is He, the Owner of all Blessings.

Third example: People came to this Islamic country from all parts of the world, for their worldly and religious needs, so Allah has blessed us in this country with all kinds of people with different colored skins, too numerous to calculate.

Fourth example: Allah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) has blessed us with transportation and housing which we could not even imagine before. Read the Qur'an to see Allah's blessing upon us, His Goodness towards us, His Mercy upon us, and make an effort to be grateful to Allah for His blessings.

Thirdly: Special blessings encompassing only the self.

What we mean by the blessings on the self, is the perfection of our human body and the harmony inside it that makes one speechless, taking our breath away as we ponder in awe. Because of this Allah made a special mention in the Qur'an about the self, He says:

﴿ فِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾ الداريات: ٢٠ - ٢١

﴿And on the earth are signs for those who have Faith with certainty,
21. And also in your own selves. Will you not then see?﴾

(Qur'an 51:20-21)

And He says:

﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾ **فصلت: ٥٣**

﴿We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their
ownelves, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'an) is
the truth.﴾ (Qur'an 41:53)

If you take a close look at yourself, beginning with the body that you
can clearly see to your intellect and soul which you can't, you will
find many wonders, such as:

Beautiful appearance, as Allah as given you the most beautiful of
bodies, and blessed you with perfect intellect, your tongue is fluent, it
expresses what the eye sees, the ear ears and what goes through your
mind and what your soul feels. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) says:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا عَرَّفَكَ بَرِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي خَلَقَكَ فَسَوَّاكَ فَعَدَلَكَ ﴿٧﴾ فِي أَيِّ صُورَةٍ مَّا شَاءَ رَكَّبَكَ ﴿٨﴾﴾

الانفطار: ٦ - ٨

﴿O man! What has made you careless concerning your Lord, the Most
Generous? 7. Who created you, fashioned you perfectly, and gave you
due proportion; 8. In whatever form He willed, He put you together.﴾
(Qur'an 82:6-8)

And He Says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ النحل: ٧٨

﴿And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allah).﴾ (Qur'an 16:78)

And He says:

﴿أَلَمْ جَعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفْئِينَ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾ البلد: ٨ - ١٠

﴿Have We not made for him a pair of eyes? 9. And a tongue and a pair of lips? 10. And shown him the two ways (good and evil)?﴾ (Qur'an 90:8-10)

And in our bodies there are wonderful limbs, including the hands, with fingers perfectly arranged, with flexible joints and beautiful nails protecting the underlying flesh, so Exalted be The Creator.

The head which contains the brain, the master of the body, as it controls its functions, so, Allah, the Exalted, made it the highest organ in the body, so that the person can move it easily to avoid any danger, and He protected it by the hair, thick skin, bony skull, and the meninges with the cereprospinal fluid inside them, so, reflect on this perfect protection supplied by the Creator, Exalted is He and all the praises and thanks be to Him.

Imam Al Gazali (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) has pointed out in his book *As-Shukr* (Gratitude) how the liver depends on the heart and brain, and how each of these limbs is dependent on the other, and the ramification of the veins departing from the heart to the rest of the body, and by their help we get the feeling of touch throughout the body, and the bifurcation of the veins from the liver to the rest of the body, reaching by it food to the whole body. The placement of the limbs, the number of bones, veins, muscles, tendons, their interconnection, the cartilages, and all this requires a lot of things. Indeed, the human body has thousands of different muscles, veins and nerves, small and big, fine and thick, with many and few sections. All these have spectacular wisdom in them, and all these are blessings of Allah upon you, if one vein that was meant to move didn't, or if one that was meant to stay still moved. you would die you poor fellow. So look first at the blessings of Allah to give you the strength you need to be grateful, Allah willing.

All that has been mentioned is if we analyse the blessings with regards to its generality and what it encompasses, which simply cannot be counted or calculated.

If we analyse the blessings with regards to time and age, we will find astonishing stages of creation, in which there are numerous blessings, starting from pregnancy, birth, childhood, youth, manhood, to old age, each stage is distinguishable with many blessings, only Allah (Exalted is He), can count them all. So you can try different methods to count

them, but even these methods are too numerous for us to imagine, Indeed there is no Power or Might except by Allah – The Greatest.

Ibn Abi Dunya⁷³ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: Mahmood Al Warraq recited to me:

O Allah, help me to remember You and thank You and worship You well

The Finer Blessings which go unnoticed

Many people think that the blessings are just the ones the eye can see, like some of those that we previously mentioned, but there are other finer blessings that go unnoticed other than by those whom Allah has given foresight, so we would like to mentioned some of them here, as a reminder, and as a call for us to thank its Giver (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

- Allah has blessed you with Muslim parents that help you and educated you in virtue and piety. Look at the one that has converted to Islam, whose parents are not Muslim, what sorrow must his heart feel, and what deep pain must he feel, and what effort must he put to save his parents from Hellfire, ponder upon his feelings as he looks at others with envy!
- Shuraih (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said: “When a calamity happens to a servant, Allah blesses him with three things, firstly: that the trial is not in his faith,

⁷³ *Kitab As-Shurk*, Ibn Abi Dunya, p. 401

secondly: that it was not a bigger calamity, thirdly: that its occurrence was inevitable and it occurred and passed.”⁷⁴

- Look at those around you and ponder upon their condition, the fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and food, and the blessings you have, such as safe shelter, not fearing anyone but Allah – The Exalted.
- Whoever wishes to know the blessings of good health Allah has bestowed upon him should take a look at those afflicted with disease, loss of limbs and disabilities. He should go to the hospitals to see how many patients arrive, injured and weakened by wounds, or the numbers of blind and deaf people, or even both? Or how many poor people wishing they could have some calm sleep, or a rest from the pain? Then the value of Allah’s blessings become clear, looking at the our opposite number helps one understand better...

If just one of these limbs were lost, not even millions of dollars could compensate for it. A man came to Yunus ibn Ubayd complaining about his poverty, so Yunus said to him: ‘Would you be happy to exchange your sight for one hundred thousand dirhams?’ The man said: ‘No’. ‘What about one hundred thousand dirhams for both your hands?’ He said: ‘No’. ‘What about one hundred thousand dirhams for your leg?’ He said: ‘No’. So Yunus reminded him of some of Allah’s blessings upon him, then he said to him: ‘I see that you are a millionaire and you’re still complaining of poverty.’

⁷⁴ *Uddat As-Sabirin wa Dhakhirat Ash-Shakirin*, p. 100

It was reported that Fudhail ibn I'ad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) cried when he read Allah's saying:

﴿الْمَجْعَلُ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾﴾ البقرة: ٨ - ٩

﴿Have We not made for him a pair of eyes? 9. And a tongue and a pair of lips?﴾ (Qur'an 90:8-9)

When asked why he was crying, he replied: "Have you ever spent the night thanking Allah for giving you two eyes you can see from? Have you ever spent the night thanking Allah for giving you a tongue so that you can speak?" And he proceed to give many other similar examples.⁷⁵

- What the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) mentioned in a hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Muhsin (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ), in it he says: "Whoever wakes up safely in his home and is healthy in his body and has provisions for his day, would have acquired all the worldly possessions he is in need of"⁷⁶

Indeed, the blessing of safety, health and wealth are one of the biggest blessings Allah has bestowed upon His servants, he wakes up with no trial in his religion, his body, his wealth, or his family, lives in peace and happiness, leaves his house without fearing for himself, his family, which in turn makes him feel at ease in his job, which makes him produce more, increasing in turn the general output of the country.

⁷⁵ Jami' Al-Oloom wa Al-Hekam, 2/74-79

⁷⁶ At-Tirmidhi, Kitab Az-Zuhd, hadith no. 34. Ibn Majah, Kitab Az-Zuhd, hadith no. 6

Peace is one of the main reasons for a thriving economy, and an incentive for the rich to invest their money in this safe haven. Look at those countries who have no peace and how fear has spread because of crimes such as killing, theft, kidnappings, suicide bombings and terrorism. Ponder upon how their economy collapsed, their currencies plummeted in value after being at the top, which has led to their poverty, and the dispersion of their people, looking for a living, had they only been grateful it would have been better for them, but indeed kufr (ungratefulness) wipes out the goodness and removes the blessings.

- The blessing of clothing, transportation, and the abundance of food and the like, all seem to enjoy them, but few care to remember to show gratitude, even though these blessings are always with them, indeed the value of these blessings are not known until they are taken away.

Some of the pious predecessors used to said during Eid sermons:

“You have now become radiant like flowers whilst others have become dusty, people have started to weave and knit for you to dress, people have become givers and you takers, other people have become producers and you ride, people have become farmers and you just eat” he then cried, and the people cried with him.

- This blessing is one of the finer blessings which most people don't really think about: that when someone is going through some difficulty, Allah sends a poor person to knock on his door asking him for food so that he values the blessings he has.

➤ What the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned, and has promised a big reward from Allah, even though it's very easy to do, he (ﷺ) said:

“Sadaqa (giving in charity) is due on every joint of a person, every day the sun rises. Administering of justice between two men is also a Sadaqa. And assisting a man to ride upon his beast, or helping him load his luggage upon it, is a Sadaqa; and a good word is a Sadaqa; and every step that you take towards prayer is a Sadaqa, and removing of harmful things from the pathway is a Sadaqa.”⁷⁷

In the human body there are an amazing three hundred and sixty bones, of which two hundred and seventy five are visible, the rest are small and not visible.

Ibn Rajab said: “The meaning of the hadith is: That the assembly of these bones and their integrity is one of the biggest blessings that Allah has bestowed upon His servants, every bone needs to be thanked for through giving in charity.

As the servant may be unable to give so much in charity, Allah, the Generous, opened the gates of good for him, and made every of the mentioned deeds a charity. And the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“And it would suffice in place of all this, praying just two rakats of salat ad-doha.” And this ease from Allah is in itself a blessing.

➤ Allah has given the servant good health and wellness.

Wahab ibn Manbah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: “It was written in the wisdom of the family of Dawood: ‘Wellness is like a owning a secret

⁷⁷ Sahih Bukhari, *Kitab Al Jihad wa Siyar*, hadith no. 2989

kingdom.’ And it was narrated by Bukhari that Ibn Abbas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) reported the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “There are two blessings in which most people are in great loss: Good health and free time.” Allah will surely ask the servant about these blessings in the Day of Judgment, He says:

﴿ثُمَّ لَتُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ﴾ النكاث: ٨

﴿Then, on that Day, you shall be asked about the delight (you indulged in, in this world)!﴾ (Qur’an 102:8)

At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Hiban narrated that Abu Hurairah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “The first blessing that the servant will be asked about in the Day of Judgment, when it will be said to him: “Did We not give you a healthy body and quenched your thirst with cool water?”

Ibn Mas’ud (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said: “The blessings are: Peace and Health.”

Ibn Abbas (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) said: “The blessings are: Good health in the bodies, hearing and eyes, Allah asks the servants what did they use it for, and He knows better than their own selves what they used it for.”

Salam ibn Abi Muti’ said: “I went to visit a sick person, when I saw him complaining I said to him: ‘Look at the rejected people on the streets, remember those that don’t have shelter and no one to take them in...’ He said: ‘Then I visited him after that and I heard him say to himself: Remember the rejected people on the streets,

remember the one who doesn't have shelter and no one to take care of him”

And what now?

After we came to know and have a better perception of the blessings Allah bestowed upon us, and we have established in ourselves the need to ponder within us, and what is around us, and after clear evidence has been established, **what should we do?**

We should be grateful to Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى), do what is incumbent upon us, and turn to our Lord, our Creator – The Exalted, with practical gratefulness (not just with the tongue), continuous remembrance, and obedience without sinfulness.

Conclusion

That my Muslim brother was a short trip in which we entered in just some of the doors dealing with blessings, we took a quick look at its holders, and we saw many wonders, we stumbled upon some strange things, we saw the different types of commenders and how few they are in the world, and how is incumbent upon the Muslim to take a moment to look at himself, a small amount of time that could decrease his torment in the Day of Judgment. We have simplified, with Allah's help, the ways to be grateful for the blessings, for the one who would like to be grateful for his own benefit, and we have clarified the reality of gratefulness, how it's done, its beginning and its pillars.

Then we concluded with a different type of gratitude, unlike any other, and better than all others: Gratitude from top to bottom, gratitude from the Lord of blessings to His servants, and what an excellent conclusion it was.

I ask Allah (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى) that He gives me and you the ability to be grateful, perfect His worship, continually remember him, and to keep us firm with the word that stands firm in this world (i.e. we will keep on worshipping Allah Alone and none else), and in the Hereafter, and that He grants us His Mercy, indeed He is the Bestower, and to make us of those that if given are grateful, if tested are patient, and if are sinful ask for forgiveness, for these three things are the secret to happiness.

And I ask Him (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى) that he sets the affairs of the Muslims in order, give us understanding of the religion, make me and you succeed in thanking the blessings of Allah – The Exalted, use them in obeying him, benefiting His servants, indeed He is capable of all things.

And may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his companions.