



7. What it Means to be Grateful to Allaah

Delivered by His Eminence
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All praise is due to Allaah, the Most Kind, the Bestower of mercy. He is perfect in every way and I praise Him for His never-ending favours. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner. He is pleased when His servants are grateful to Him and He promises them magnificent rewards for being grateful. I further bear witness that our leader and Prophet, Muhammad, is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger. He was a role model for all who are grateful to and mindful of their Lord, the Most Generous. O Allaah, grant Your commendation and protection to Your worshipping servant and Messenger, Muhammad, as well as to his family, Companions, and all who continue to follow their path until the Day of Recompense.

Servants of Allaah, you must observe taqwaa of Allaah [by fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions]. You must also remember that you will have to stand before Him on a day about which there is no doubt. It will be “the day when every individual will see what his own hands have sent forth, and the person who persisted in rejecting the truth from Allaah will say, ‘How much I wish I had been mere dust.’”¹ It will be “the day when no person will be able to avail anyone else in any way, and all control and command on that day will belong to Allaah alone.”²

Dear Muslims, among the remarkable favours Allaah bestowed upon His virtuous servants is that He blessed them with dignified traits that enable them to attain the highest of ranks and to rise in standing with their Lord. Among the most important of those traits is gratitude to Allaah. It refers to a servant of Allaah using his words to acknowledge his Lord’s favours and praise Him for them, using his heart to have love for his Lord and always be aware of those favours, and using his limbs to submit to and obey his Lord.

Gratitude is an indicator that one’s intellect is complete, heart is pure, and soul is healthy. In the Qur’aan, we find the instruction to be grateful. We also find the prohibition of being ungrateful, which refers to denying Allaah’s favours, refusing to acknowledge them, and using them in ways that displease Allaah. He said,

﴿ فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونَ ﴾

“You must make mention of Me. When you do so, I will make mention of you. Furthermore, you must offer Me due gratitude and not be ungrateful to Me.”³ In addition, Allaah commended those who are grateful by mentioning gratitude as a quality of His most virtuous servants. Allaah said about the Prophet Ibraaheem,

﴿ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴾

﴿ شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعَمِهِ ۚ أَحْبَبَهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾

¹ Soorah an-Naba’ (78):40.

² Soorah al-Infitaar (82):19.

³ Soorah al-Baqarah (2):152.



“Ibraaheem was indeed an exemplary leader who sincerely devoted himself to Allaah and did not worship anyone besides Him. Ibraaheem was grateful for Allaah’s blessings. Allaah favoured him and guided him to a straight path.”⁴ Allaah also said about His Prophet Nooh,

﴿إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا﴾

“He was a continually grateful worshipping servant”⁵, meaning that he offered Allaah much gratitude and praised Him throughout all circumstances. Allaah further mentioned that the grateful are the ones who benefit from the evidences He presents. He said,

﴿الْمَرَّةَ أَنْ الْفَلَكِ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ^٦

﴿إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ﴾

“Have you not considered that the ships sail through the sea by Allaah’s favour so that He may show you – mankind – some of His evidences? That indeed contains clear evidences for every person who perseveres and remains grateful.”⁶ Allaah also made gratitude a means to attaining more of His blessings, and preserving current ones. He said,

﴿لَنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ﴾

“If you are grateful, I will grant you more. However, if you are ungrateful, My punishment is certainly severe.”⁷

The fact that relatively few people are duly grateful to Allaah shows that the grateful are among Allaah’s most virtuous servants. Allaah said,

﴿اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُورُ﴾

“‘Family of Daawood, continue obeying Allaah so as to give Him due gratitude.’ However, few of My servants are consistently grateful.”⁸ We also find that the Prophet Muhammad (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) followed the path of the previous Prophets in remaining grateful to Allaah throughout all circumstances, and his gratitude was manifest in his actions. In the Two Saheeh collections, we find that al-Mugheerah ibn Shu’bah (may Allaah be pleased with him) mentioned that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) would stand to pray at night to the extent that cracks appeared on his feet. He was asked how come he did that although Allaah had forgiven any past or future sins that might ever emanate from him, and he replied, “Should I not then be a continually grateful worshipping servant?”⁹

The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) would also invoke Allaah to make him grateful. Ahmad, Aboo Daawood, at-Tirmitheeh, and an-Nasaa’ee collected a hadeeth from ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with both of them) which mentions that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) would supplicate using the following words:

⁴ Soorah an-Nahl (16):120-121.

⁵ Soorah al-Israa’ (17):3.

⁶ Soorah Luqmaan (31):31.

⁷ Soorah Ibraaheem (14):7.

⁸ Soorah Saba’ (34):13.

⁹ See Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (4837), Saheeh Muslim (2820).



رَبِّ أَعْنِي وَلَا تَعَنْ عَلَيَّ، وَأَنْصُرْنِي وَلَا تَنْصُرْ عَلَيَّ، وَأَمْكُرْ لِي وَلَا تَمْكُرْ عَلَيَّ، وَاهْدِنِي وَيَسِّرْ الْهُدَى لِي،
وَأَنْصُرْنِي عَلَى مَنْ بَعَى عَلَيَّ، رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي لَكَ شَكَارًا، لَكَ ذَكَرًا، لَكَ رَهَابًا، لَكَ مَطَوَاعًا، لَكَ مُخْبِتًا، إِلَيْكَ أَوَاهًا
مُنِيًّا...

“My Lord, assist me and do not assist against me. Grant me victory and do not grant victory over me. Plot in my favour and do not plot against me. Guide me and facilitate the means to guidance for me. Grant me victory over those who transgress against me. My Lord, make me constantly grateful to You, constantly mentioning and remembering You, constantly fearful of You, constantly obedient to You, constantly humble before You, and constantly repentant to You...” to the end of the hadeeth.¹⁰

The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) also once addressed Mu’aath ibn Jabal, one of his Companions, and told him, “Mu’aath, I swear by Allaah that the love I have for you is very great. Therefore, Mu’aath, I advise you to not neglect to say at the end of each prayer,

اللَّهُمَّ أَعْنِي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ، وَشُكْرِكَ، وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

‘O Allaah, I implore You to assist me in making mention of You, being grateful to You, and worshipping You in the best way.’” This was collected by Aboo Daawood and an-Nasaa’ee with a saheeh chain of narration.¹¹

Servants of Allaah, falling short in the gratitude we owe to Allaah for His blessings comes about due to either being ignorant about Allaah or due to being heedless and forgetful concerning our duty to Him.

Thus, one of the means to being grateful is examining one’s own circumstances and recognizing the things he has been blessed with which others do not have. Some of the scholars have pointed out that there certain blessings every single servant of Allaah has been granted – whether in his physique, conduct, family, children, property, dwelling, locale, company, relatives, status, and all other things that are beloved to him – and if any of those were removed from him and substituted with things that others have, he would not be pleased. This is especially the case in relation to blessings having to do with eemaan, the Qur’aan, the Sunnah, knowledge of Islaam, health, time, security, and others as well. In that regard, we find in a hadeeth collected by at-Tirmitheeh and ibn Maajah with a hasan chain of narration from the companion ‘Ubaydullaah ibn Mihsan (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “If any one of you reaches the morning with his family and dwelling safe, with his health intact, and possessing his provision for that day, it is as though everything in the world was gathered and given to him.”¹²

Another means to being grateful is considering the circumstances of others who have less than oneself in terms of wealth, children, health, and all other things of this world that are beloved to people. A hadeeth collected by Muslim from Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) mentions that Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “Look at those who have less than you, and do not look at those who have more. Following that course is best in order for you to not belittle Allaah’s blessings.”¹³

Servants of Allaah, this is very important training which the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) provided us with. It produces tranquility within the heart as well as

¹⁰ See Jaami’ at-Tirmitheeh (3551), Sunan Abee Daawood (1510), Sunan ibn Maajah (3830). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.

¹¹ Sunan Abee Daawood (1522). Graded saheeh by al-Albaanee.

¹² Jaami’ at-Tirmitheeh (2346), Sunan ibn Maajah (4141). Graded hasan by al-Albaanee.

¹³ Saheeh Muslim (2963).



peace in life by protecting one from becoming unsettled in his thinking, internally disturbed, deprived of happiness, beset with grievances, and afflicted with ailments that destroy the body, detract from wellbeing, and upset life overall.

With that being said, we must also understand that gratitude to Allaah – the Lord of all creation – is not a duty that is specific to those who enjoy various blessings. In fact, gratitude to Allaah is also a duty to be fulfilled by those experiencing adversity, whether it be poverty, illness, or losing loved ones. Every adversity contains four things that bring happiness to any discerning servant of Allaah, which would then lead him to be grateful to Allaah. [1] First is that the adversity which occurred could have been worse, and the degree at which it took place is in fact a blessing for which Allaah deserves gratitude. [2] Second is that the adversity did not affect one's Islaam, and no adversity could be worse than that. [3] Third is that when a person perseveres through any adversity he faces, that is a means to reward from Allaah, attaining high standing with Him, and being pardoned for sins. These factors change any adversity to a situation of mercy and blessing. Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim collected that Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudree and Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with both of them) narrated that Allaah's Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, "Any time a Muslim experiences difficulty, illness, worry, sorrow, harm, or distress – even a mere thorn that may prick him – that is a means to having some of his sins forgiven."¹⁴ [4] Fourth is that the adversity experienced by a person is something that was decreed by Allaah, recorded in the Preserved Tablet, and it was something that would have inevitably happened. Thus, the individual has to submit to facing it and be pleased with doing so in order to obey Allaah. When a person is pleased in that way, Allaah has promised that He would be pleased with that person. A hadeeth was collected by at-Tirmitheeh and ibn Maajah with a hasan chain of narration from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) who narrated that Allaah's Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, "The magnitude of one's reward is indeed proportional to the magnitude of adversity one may experience. When Allaah loves a people, He certainly tests them with adversity. Those who are pleased will end up having Allaah pleased with them, but those who are angered will end up having Allaah angry with them."¹⁵

Servants of Allaah, observe taqwaa of Allaah and strive your utmost to fulfil the duty you have of being grateful to Allaah with your heart, your words, and your limbs. Doing that comprises the gratitude that Allaah loves and is pleased with. You being grateful to Him is what He is pleased with for you. May Allaah enable all of us to glean benefit from the guidance of His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). I say this much and I beseech Allaah, the Most Magnificent and Majestic, to forgive the sins of myself, you, and all who submit to Him in Islaam. Allaah is indeed the continually forgiving, the bestower of mercy.



Indeed, all praise is due to Allaah. We praise Him, seek His assistance, and ask His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evils of our own selves and the evil results of our actions. If Allaah guides someone, none can lead that person astray; and if Allaah leaves someone astray, none can guide him. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is Allaah's worshipping servant and Messenger. O Allaah, grant Your commendation and protection to Your worshipping servant and Messenger, Muhammad, as well as to His family and Companions.

¹⁴ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (5641), Saheeh Muslim (2573).

¹⁵ Jaami' at-Tirmitheeh (2396), Sunan ibn Maajah (4031). Graded hasan by al-Albaanee.



Servants of Allaah, it preceded that our Lord instructed us to be grateful to Him when He said, **“You must make mention of Me. When you do so, I will make mention of you. Furthermore, you must offer Me due gratitude and not be ungrateful to Me.”**¹⁶ This command actually contains a remarkable blessing from Allaah to us. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy upon him) explained¹⁷ that Allaah’s servant is the one who reaps the benefits of that gratitude both in this world and the hereafter, not Allaah. The servant is the one who benefits from being grateful as Allaah, the Most Exalted, told us that His Prophet Sulaymaan said,

﴿وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّيَ عَنِّي كَرِيمٌ﴾

“When someone is grateful, his gratitude will be to his own betterment; but when someone is ungrateful, his ingratitude will be to his own detriment. My Lord certainly has no needs, and He is Most Kind and Generous.”¹⁸ Hence, gratitude a servant offers to Allaah is, in fact, an act of kindness that he extends to his own self. The servant’s gratitude is not any sort of repayment he offers to recompense his Lord for the favours bestowed. No one can ever repay our Lord, the Most Exalted, for any of His favours, not even the smallest of them. Our Lord is the One who bestows all favours. He is the One who created gratitude, the grateful, and the things to be grateful for. Thus, none can ever praise Him sufficiently. He is the One who extends kindness to His servants by bestowing His blessings, and also by guiding them to be grateful to Him. Any blessing Allaah grants us requires that we be grateful to Him. Furthermore, as part of Allaah completing His favours and kindness to us, He loves His servants who offer Him due gratitude, He is pleased with them because of it, He commends them as a result of it, and its benefit returns to the servants themselves and not to Allaah. All of this together represents insurmountable kindness: Allaah grants you blessings, guides you to be grateful for them, is pleased with you for doing that, makes you the one who benefits from the gratitude you offer, and also makes that gratitude a means to having continued blessings from Allaah as well as an increase in them. Recognizing this is sufficient for any discerning individual to infer what lies beyond it as well. This is some of what was mentioned by ibn al-Qayyim in his book, Madaarij as-Saalikeen, as it relates to being grateful to Allaah.

Servants of Allaah, continue to observe taqwaa of Allaah and be grateful to Him throughout all circumstances. When you do that, your life will be one that is wholesome, matters will be set in order for you, and you will attain even more goodness from your Lord. In addition, always remember that Allaah, the Most Exalted, instructed you to invoke Him to grant commendation and protection to His Messenger who was the best individual among all of creation. Allaah, who is perfect in every way, said in the finest and most truthful of speech,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا﴾

“Indeed, Allaah grants His commendation to the Prophet, and the angels invoke Allaah to grant him even further commendation. People of eemaan, invoke Allaah to grant the Prophet commendation and to grant him protection as well.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Soorah al-Baqarah (2):152.

¹⁷ See Madaarij as-Saalikeen (2/241-242).

¹⁸ Soorah an-Naml (27):40.

¹⁹ Soorah al-Ahzaab (33):56.