

Aspects of Gratitude

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Achieve Noble Character

Aspects of Gratitude

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We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following book will discuss an important aspect of Noble Character namely, true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted.

According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, it is a duty on all Muslims to gain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to Achieve Noble Character.

Aspects of Gratitude

Gratitude can be considered one half of faith with patience making up the other half. Without this half one cannot obtain success in this world or in the next.

Gratitude can be split into three aspects. The first is when one only internally acknowledges the favour of Allah, the Exalted. The second aspect is when one verbally expresses gratitude. The final stage is physically showing it by using the blessings one possesses as prescribed by Allah, the Exalted. The last two stages are important as it inspires others to perform righteous deeds and help others. This is similar to donating charity openly or secretly. The latter ensures one does not show off thereby, destroying their deeds, and the former inspires others to act and donate also. As confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5129, whoever invites others towards good gets the same reward as doing the deed.

Unfortunately, showing gratitude via the tongue has lost all value as repeating words of gratitude have become nothing more than a habit. The heart is the starting point of gratitude but it is only truly useful when it is demonstrated through action. Many muslims have become infamous for showing gratitude through the tongue out of habit but failing to show it in actions. For example, the one who fails to donate charity will spend the day praising Allah, the Exalted, to others for the wealth He gave them yet they will not demonstrate this practically. The Devil fools them into believing that if they simply praise Allah, the Exalted, verbally they

have fulfilled His rights over them. This is nothing but misguidance that is fuelled by their lust over the material world.

The Holy Quran warns that most people are ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 100 Al Adiyat, verse 6:

“Indeed mankind, to his Lord, is ungrateful.”

The next verse of this chapter of the Holy Quran continues by declaring that every single person is a witness to their lack of gratitude towards Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 100 Al Adiyat, verse 7:

“And indeed, he is to that a witness.”

Meaning, that an outside witness is not required to prove their ingratitude towards Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to observe the countless blessings given to them by Allah, the Exalted, and how they use them in the incorrect way to understand this truth. From this one can easily assess how ungrateful they truly are to Allah, the Exalted. It does not make sense to people if one borrows something from another with the intention to use it against the giver. Then why is acceptable to use the blessings given by Allah, the Exalted, against His commands?

Some people very easily remember the hardships they face which causes them to become ungrateful but they fail to remember the countless blessings and times of ease they were granted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 18:

“And if you should count the favours of Allah, you could not enumerate them...”

They have adopted this mind-set as they always observe those who appear in a better position than them instead of following the advice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and observing those that possess fewer worldly blessings than them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513.

Those who are ungrateful have forgotten that a day will come when they will be presented in the court of Allah, the Exalted, in order for their actions to be judged. There is no one who will escape this reality yet the love of the material world has kept people heedless to this truth. This heedlessness has inspired them to use the blessings they possess according to their desires, which is ingratitude towards Allah, the Exalted.

People believe that a sign of a good person is that when they are aided by another they always remember their favour and struggle to show gratitude for it by mentioning it to others. But these muslims fail to

remember and show appreciation to the One who gave them countless blessings namely, Allah, the Exalted.

In this world one only achieves something after they become worthy through great struggle such as landing a job after spending years in education. But Allah, the Exalted, blessed mankind with countless blessings with no such effort yet some forget this fact and instead thank those people that gave them a step up in their worldly affairs.

When one fails to honour and respect these blessings then the opposite of the blessings begin to affect them such as poor health. The way the body becomes dirty and needs to be washed regularly one's soul also needs to be washed clean. One of the ways of doing this is honouring and using the blessings given to them in the correct way. This is the highest form of gratitude to Allah, the Exalted.

If one turns the pages of the Holy Quran they can observe how worldly blessings were used to destroy the past nations who became ungrateful. Meaning, they used the blessings of Allah, the Exalted, incorrectly. Water is the source of all life but when Pharaoh rejected the message brought by the Holy Prophet Mosa, peace be upon him, he and his army were drowned. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 40:

“So We took him and his soldiers and threw them into the sea.”

One cannot live without air but due to their ingratitude the nation of Aad were destroyed with it. Chapter 69 Al Haqqah, verse 6:

“And as for ‘Aad, they were destroyed by a screaming, violent wind.”

Muslims must learn from the mistakes of the past nations and use the blessings given to them in the correct way otherwise they will be used against them also. This punishment is already apparent in most muslim households. For example, a child is a special blessing but as parents fail to guide their children correctly they turn against them and turn their homes into Hell. These problems inspire people to turn towards con artists who claim to solve these problems for money. Muslims must avoid these people at all costs as they not only take people's money but they also jeopardize their faith.

A muslim must resist the temptation to complain during hardship and instead concentrate their minds on the countless blessings Allah, the Exalted, has given them. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 18:

“And if you should count the favours of Allah, you could not enumerate them...”

This will ensure that even if they lose a few blessings they will seem insignificant compared to the greater picture. The Devil inspires one to

focus their attention on a problem in such a way that the greater picture becomes blurred so that their single problem feels as if the world has ended. For example, back pain may seem as if it has completely ruined one's life but if they observe those who are physically disabled it will inspire them to become grateful. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing be upon him, encompassed this mentality in a single Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2513, by advising that one should always observe those who are lower than them in worldly status.

In the following verse the Holy Quran discusses how Allah, the Exalted, removes His mercy from a person in order to test them but instead of being patient the person becomes ungrateful. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 9:

“And if We give man a taste of mercy from Us and then We withdraw it from him, indeed, he is despairing and ungrateful.”

The next verse mentions those people who when rewarded by Allah, the Exalted, become boastful and claim the reward was achieved by their own intellect. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 10:

“But if We give him a taste of favour after hardship has touched him, he will surely say, "Bad times have left me." Indeed, he is exultant and boastful –“

The next verse informs muslims that when the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is removed they should not become ungrateful and depressed. Instead, be patient and in return Allah, the Exalted, will reward them with more mercy than before. And when a person is blessed they should become grateful by using the blessing in the correct way and refrain from boasting as this is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 11:

“Except for those who are patient and do righteous deeds; those will have forgiveness and great reward.”

It is vital to understand that being grateful and adopting all other good characteristics only benefits the person themselves as Allah, the Exalted, is independent of the creation. As advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6572, the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, does not change irrespective of if the creation obey Him or not. Their acts of obedience only change their own status. Understanding this can prevent a muslim adopting pride.

The following verse of the Holy Quran mentions a very simple but extremely important message to muslims. They must learn to be grateful for all their blessings and in response Allah, the Exalted, will undoubtedly give more. This is achieved when one uses each blessing they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. But if a muslim chooses to become ungrateful they will either lose their blessing or it will be turned against them and become a source of regret for them. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favour]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”

One should bear in mind that this does not mean a grateful person will be not tested with problems. Testing people has been the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, since the dawn of time. In fact, the stronger one's faith the more they are tested hence why the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were tested the most. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023. A muslim must remain patient and grateful during difficulties as this will unlock countless blessings for them in both worlds.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means have been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means

which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favour]...”

If a muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfil both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

To conclude, a muslim must strive to obtain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they can reach the highest level of gratitude. This involves sincerely using every blessing in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

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