



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL
WHO ARE UNGRATEFUL TO ALLAH?

Are we always ungrateful to Allah?

I think most of the time we are. We forgot that Allah has Provided us with many things, the most important are:

1. Islam
2. Time to prepare for the Hereafter
3. Guidance to prepare for the Hereafter –the Qur’an, the best Messenger, etc
4. The tools to seek this Guidance – eyes, ears, hands, feet, brains, etc.

Allah Reminded us:

And He gave you of all that you asked for, 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, and by worshipping others besides Allah, and by disobeying Allah and His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). 14: 34

But after all these Blessings from Allah, why is mankind still ungrateful?

1. Forgetfulness of mankind

e.g. Adam (AS) - “And indeed We made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found on his part no firm will-power.” 20: 115

And when harm touches you upon the sea, those that you call upon besides Him vanish from you except Him (Allah Alone). But when He brings you safely to land, you turn away (from Him). And man is ever ungrateful. 17: 67

And when harm touches man, he invokes Us, lying down on his side, or sitting or standing. But when We have removed his harm from him, he passes on his way as if he had never invoked Us for a harm that touched him! Thus it seems fair to the *Musrifun* that which they used to do. 10: 12

Not too long ago we complained in February that it was too cold in winter with the snow, and you never get to see the sun, and everything looked so bleak and dreary in London etc.

In the past few weeks Allah Grants us the maximum sun – very warm temperature - and we were all complaining that it is too hot. We forgot that it was only a few months ago that we were complaining it was too cold. In December, we may forget again about the sun in summer and complained that it is cold and cloudy.

2. Love of the dunya

1. Woe to every slanderer and backbiter.
2. Who has gathered wealth and counted it,
3. He thinks that his wealth will make him last forever!
4. Nay! Verily, he will be thrown into the crushing Fire.

104: 1-4

1. The mutual rivalry for piling up of worldly things diverts you,
2. Until you visit the graves (i.e. till you die).

102: 1-2

Know that the life of this world is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children, as the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the tiller; afterwards it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes straw. But in the Hereafter (there is) a severe torment (for the disbelievers, evil-doers), and (there is) Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for the believers, good-doers), whereas the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment. 57: 20

Thawbaan رضي الله عنه (the freed slave of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) narrated that the Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

“Nations are about to unite (and call) each other to set upon you, just as diners are invited to a plate of food.” It was said: “Will it be because of our lack of numbers that day (i.e. will be small in number)?” He صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “Rather, you will be many on that day, but you will be like scum foam (that floats) on the river. Allaah will remove the fear of you from the hearts of your enemies and put Wahn into your hearts.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allaah, what is Wahn?” He صلى الله عليه وسلم said: **“Love for the dunya and hatred for death.”**

[Related by Abu Da’wud, 4297 and others – graded as saheeh by Al-Albani in ‘Silsilah as-Saheehah’, 958]

3. Shaytan

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)." 7: 17

[Iblis (Satan)] said: "O my Lord! Because you misled me, I shall indeed adorn the path of error for them (mankind) on the earth, and I shall mislead them all. Except Your chosen, (guided) slaves among them." 15: 39-40

4. Does not receive Guidance from Allah

"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); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily, My punishment is indeed severe'" [14:7]

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. 2: 152

5. Does not ponder over Allah's Blessings and creations

"It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape - and made your shapes beautiful -, and has provided for you Sustenance..." (Gafir 40:64)

"He Who created all things in the best way and He began the creation of man from clay" (al-Sajdah 32:7).

Allah Almighty says - for instance: "He Who created the seven heavens one above another: no want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of the Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again: seest thou any flaw? Again turn thy vision a second time: (thy) vision will come back to thee dull and discomfited, in a state worn out" (al-Mulk 67:3 - 4).

Also: "On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith; as also in your own selves: will yet not then see?" (al-Dhariyat 51:20 - 21).

6. Does not have tadabbur - ponder over the content of the Qur'an

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala) said in Surat Saad (38:29):

"(This is) a Book (the Qur'an) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses, and that men of understanding may remember."

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala) also said in Surat Muhammad (47:24):

"Do they not think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding)?"

CONSEQUENCES OF BEING UNGRATEFUL TO ALLAH

[14:8] And remember also the time when your Lord declared, 'If you are grateful, I will, surely, bestow more favours on you; but if you are ungrateful, then know that My punishment is severe indeed.'

[2:153] Therefore remember Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me.

[39:8] If you are ungrateful, surely Allah is Self-Sufficient being independent of you. And He is not pleased with ingratitude in His servants. But if you show gratefulness, He likes it in you. And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return; And He will inform you of what you have been doing. Surely, He knows full well all that is hidden in the breasts.

[4:148] Why should Allah punish you, if you are thankful and if you believe? And Allah is Appreciating, All-Knowing.

WHY SHOULD WE THANK ALLAH

1. We can never count Allah's Blessings:

Be ever grateful to Allah for everything that you possess including your wealth, health, status, intellectual abilities and life. Allah says:

"Is, then, He Who creates comparable to any that cannot create? Will you not, then, take heed? For should you try to count Allah's blessings, you could never compute them" (An-Nahl 16:17-19).

2. Shaytan's primary mission is to make human beings ungrateful:

From the very beginning of the human being's creation, the issue of gratefulness and thankfulness to Allah has been debated. After refusing to bow to Adam, Satan said:

"Then I will certainly come to them from before them and from behind them, and from the right-hand side and from the left-hand side, and You (Allah) shall not find most of them thankful." (Al-Araf 7:17)

3- The opposite of Shukr (gratitude) is Kufr (disbelief):

In many places in the Quran, Allah compares the terms *shukr* and *kufr*. "Then remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and do not reject Me" (Al-Baqarah 2:152).

Iman (belief) implies *shukr* or gratefulness as opposed to *kufr* or ungratefulness. A *kafir* or disbeliever is ungrateful to the Being Who has given him everything, whereas a Believer is one who is ever thankful for all that Allah has given him.

4- We thank Allah for our own benefit:

If you are ungrateful, Allah is unaffected. If you become grateful, then you have taken the first step towards becoming a true Believer. It is for this reason that the Prophet exhorted us to "Love Allah as we benefit from His grace" (*Tirmidhi*).

Allah reminds us: " And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for the benefit of his own self" (Luqman 31:12). "For surely if it was not for the grace of God on you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers" (Al-Baqarah 2:64).

5- True worship means sincere thankfulness to Allah:

Allah explained in the Quran that the only people who truly worship Him are those who give gratitude to Him, so those who are not among the people of gratitude are not among the people of *Ibadah* (worship and obedience). "... and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship" (Al-Baqarah 2:172).

6- Shukr leads to Allah's pleasure:

Allah has told us that His pleasure may be attained through gratitude. " If you are grateful, He is pleased with you..." (Az-Zumar 39:7).

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Allah is pleased with His

servant if, when he eats something, he thanks Allah for it, and when he drinks something, he thanks Allah for it" (Muslim).

7- Gratitude is a purpose of our creation:

"It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affection: that you may give thanks (to Allah)"(An-Nahl, 16:78).

8- Shukr is a quality of success in this life and in the Hereafter:

Ibn Abbas narrated that the Prophet said: "There are four qualities, whoever is given them has truly been given the best in this world and the next. They are: a grateful heart (that is thankful to Allah), a remembering tongue (that mentions Allah often), an enduring body (to persevere through the trials), and a faithful wife."

9- Being grateful and patient in times of difficulty:

Everything that happens to us - even events that we may consider to be personal afflictions or natural disasters-are from Allah. Therefore, in times of calamity and distress, there will be some good for us, provided we respond appropriately. The Prophet said:

"How wonderful is the case of a Believer! There is good for him in whatever happens to him -and none, apart from him, enjoys this blessing. If he receives some bounty, he is grateful to Allah and this bounty brings good to him. And if some adversity befalls him, he is patient, and this affliction, too, brings good to him" (Muslim).

10- Allah's Mercy is for all, but most people will remain ungrateful:

He shows and gives mercy to all, even those who continue to be ungrateful and rebellious towards Him: "Indeed God is the possessor of bounty for all people but most people do not give thanks." (Al-Baqarah 2: 243).

11- Most people subconsciously thank God:

Reflect upon your own life and you will find innumerable occasions when Allah's 'hand' has been holding you and helping you. So often, believers and even atheists

subconsciously use the expression 'Thank God', without realising the full implications of our words.

12- Shukr leads to abundance in Allah's favors:

If you appreciate Allah's favors, He has promised increased *Rahma* or mercy for you. Allah's reward for your gratitude is unlimited and unconditional. "If you are grateful, I will surely give you more and more" (Ibrahim 14:7).

Three ways to express Shukr:

The classical Muslim scholars have indicated Shukr can be shown in three ways:

- Shukr of the heart (Qalb), which is achieved by harboring and intending good for all of Allah's creation.
- Shukr of the tongue (Lisan), which involves celebrating the praises of Allah, such as utterance of Alhamdulillah, and expressing gratefulness to Allah with our tongue.
- Shukr of the limbs (Jawarih), which is fulfilled by using our external senses to do good. Every time Allah gives us a blessing, we must use it in a way that benefits humanity and that pleases Allah.

HOW TO THANK ALLAH

Firstly:

Thanks or gratitude means reciprocating kindness and giving praise to the one who has done good and kind things. The one who is most deserving of thanks and praise from people is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, because of the great favours and blessings that He has bestowed upon His slaves in both spiritual and worldly terms. Allah has commanded us to give thanks to Him for those blessings, and not to deny them. He says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Therefore remember Me (by praying, glorifying). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless favours on you) and never be ungrateful to Me" [2:152]

Secondly:

The greatest ones who obeyed this command, and gave thanks to their Lord until they deserved to be described as shaakir and shakoor (thankful) are the Prophets and Messengers (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, Ibrahim was an Ummah (a leader having all the good righteous qualities), or a nation, obedient to Allah, Haneef (i.e. to worship none but Allah), and he was not one of those who were Al-Mushrikoon (polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, and those who joined partners with Allah).

121. (He was) thankful for His (Allah’s) favours. He (Allah) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a Straight Path (Islamic Monotheism – neither Judaism nor Christianity)” [16:120, 121]

“O offspring of those whom We carried (in the ship) with Nûh (Noah)! Verily, he was a grateful slave” [17:3]

Thirdly:

Allah has mentioned some of the blessings that He has bestowed upon His slaves, and has commanded them to be grateful for them, and has told us that few of His slaves give thanks to Him:

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

1.

“O you who believe (in the Oneness of Allah – Islamic Monotheism)! Eat of the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He Whom you worship” [2:172]

2.

“And surely, We gave you authority on the earth and appointed for you therein provisions (for your life). Little thanks do you give” [7:10]

3.

“And among His Signs is this, that He sends the winds as glad tidings, giving you a taste of His Mercy (i.e. rain), and that the ships may sail at His Command, and that you may seek of His Bounty, in order that you may be thankful” [31:46]

4.

Among spiritual blessings, He mentions (interpretation of the meaning):

“O you who believe! When you intend to offer As-Salah (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of Janaba (i.e. after a sexual discharge), purify yourselves (bathe your whole body). But if you are ill or on a journey, or any of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (i.e. sexual intercourse), and you find no water, then perform Tayammum (dry ablution) with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands. Allah does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His favour to you that you may be thankful” [5:6]

and there are many other blessings. We have only mentioned some of these blessings here; listing all of them is impossible, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And He gave you of all that you asked for, and if you count the blessings of Allah, never will you be able to count them. Verily, man is indeed an extreme wrongdoer, a disbeliever (an extreme ingrate who denies Allah’s blessings by disbelief, and by worshipping others besides Allah, and by disobeying Allah and His Prophet Muhammad” [14:34]

Then Allah blessed us and forgave us our shortcomings in giving thanks for these blessings. He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if you would count the favours of Allah, never could you be able to count them. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” [16:18]

The Muslim is always asking his Lord to help him to give thanks to Him, because were it not for Allah’s helping His slave, he would not be able to give thanks. Hence it is prescribed in the saheeh Sunnah (authentic prophetic teachings) to ask for help from Allah to give thanks to Him.

It was narrated from Mu’aadh ibn Jabal that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) took his hand and said: “O Mu’aadh, by Allah I love you, by Allah I love you.” Then he said, “I advise you, O Mu’aadh, do not fail following every prayer to say: O Allah help me to remember You, thank You and worship You properly.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood and al-Nasaa’i .

Gratitude for blessings is a cause of them being increased, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“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); but if you are thankless (i.e. disbelievers), verily, My punishment is indeed severe’” [14:7]

Fourthly:

How can a person thank his Lord for His great blessings? His gratitude should fulfil all the necessary conditions, which are gratitude of the heart, gratitude of the tongue and gratitude of the physical faculties.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Gratitude may be in the heart, in submission and humility; on the tongue, in praise and acknowledgement; and in the physical faculties, by means of obedience and submission.

Madaarij al-Saalikeen (2/246)

The details of that:

1.

Gratitude of the heart: what is meant is that the heart senses the value of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon His slave, and fully acknowledges that the

one who has bestowed these great blessings is Allah alone, with no partner or associate. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whatever of blessings and good things you have, it is from Allah” [16:53].

This acknowledgement is not *mustahabb* (recommended), rather it is obligatory. Whoever attributes these blessings to anyone other than Allah has disbelieved.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sa’di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What man should do is attribute blessings to Allah and acknowledge them fully. Thus he will attain complete Tawheed. Whoever denies the blessings of Allah in his heart or on his tongue, is a *kafir* (disbeliever) and has nothing to do with Islam.

Whoever affirms in his heart that all blessings come from Allah alone, but verbally he sometimes attributes them to Allah and sometimes attributes them to himself, or his actions, or the efforts of someone else -- as happens on the lips of many people -- this is something that the person must repent from, and he should not attribute blessings to anyone except their Creator, and he must strive to make himself do that, because faith and Tawheed cannot be attained except by attributing blessings to Allah.

The gratitude which is the head of faith is based on three pillars: acknowledgement of the heart of all the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon him, and upon others, and talking about them; praising Allah for them; and using them to obey the One Who bestowed the blessings and to worship Him.

Al-Qawl al-Sadeed fi Maqaasid al-Tawheed (p. 140)

Allah says, describing the situation of one who denies attribution of blessings to Allah (interpretation of the meaning):

“They recognise the Grace of Allah, yet they deny it (by worshipping others besides Allah) and most of them are disbelievers (deny the Prophethood of Muhammad)” [16:83].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

i.e., they acknowledge that Allah is the One Who grants them that, and He is the One Who bestows that favour upon them, yet despite that they deny it, and worship others alongside Him, and attribute victory and provision to someone other than Him.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (4/592).

2.

As for gratitude of the tongue, it means acknowledging verbally - after believing in the heart- that the One Who grants blessing is indeed Allah, and keeping the tongue busy with praise of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

Allah says, explaining His blessings to His slave Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): “And He found you poor and made you rich (self-sufficient with self-contentment)?” [93:8]. Then He reminded him in return for that: “And

proclaim the grace of your Lord (i.e. the Prophethood and all other graces)" [al-Duha 93:11].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

i.e., as you were poor and in need, then Allah made you rich and independent of means: then speak of the blessing of Allah bestowed upon you.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (8/427).

It was narrated that Anas ibn Malik said: the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Allah is pleased with a person who eats some food and then praises Him for it, or who drinks some drink and then praises Him for it."

Narrated by Muslim

Abu'l-Abbas al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Praise here means gratitude, and we have seen above that praise may take the place of gratitude but gratitude may not take the place of praise. This indicates that gratitude for blessings -- even if they are few -- is a means of attaining the pleasure of Allah, may He be exalted, which is the noblest situation of the people of Paradise. When the people of Paradise say, "You have given to us what You have not given to anyone among Your creation," Allah will say to them: " Shall I not give you something better than that?" They will say, "What is it? Have You not brightened our faces, and admitted us to Paradise and saved us from Hell?" He will say, "I bestow My pleasure upon you, and I will never be angry with you after that."

Gratitude is a means of attaining that great honour because it implies acknowledgement of the Bestower of blessings and acknowledging Him alone as the Creator of that blessing and the One Who caused it to reach the recipient of the blessing, as an honour and favour from the Bestower, and that the recipient of the blessing is poor and is in need of that blessing, and cannot do without it. So this is an acknowledgement of the rights and bounty of Allah, and the duty and need of the slave. So Allah has caused the reward for that acknowledgement to be this great honour.

Al-Mufhim lima ashkala min Talkhees Kitaab Muslim (7/60, 61).

Hence some of the salaf (righteous predecessors) said: Whoever conceals a blessing has denied it, but whoever manifests it and spreads it has given thanks for it.

Ibn al-Qayyim said, commenting on that:

This is based on the words: "When Allah bestows a blessing upon a person, He loves the effect of His blessing to be seen on His slave."

Madaarij al-Saalikeen (2/246).

It was narrated from 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez (may Allah have mercy on him) that he said: Remind one another of blessings, for mentioning them is gratitude.

3.

Gratitude of the physical faculties means using one's physical faculties in obedience of Allah and keeping them from committing sins and acts of disobedience that Allah has forbidden.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“ ‘Work you, O family of Dawood (David), with thanks!’” [34:13]

It was narrated that ‘Aishah said: When the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) prayed, he would stand for so long that his feet became swollen. ‘Aishah said: O Messenger of Allah, are you doing this when Allah has forgiven your past and future sins? He said: “O ‘Aishah, should I not be a thankful slave?”

Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Ibn Battaal (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Tabari said: the correct view concerning that is that the person’s gratitude is affirming that this is from Allah and no one else, and affirmation of this fact is action, and it is confirmed by action. As for the affirmation which is contradicted by action, the one who does that does not deserve to be called grateful at all. But it may be called gratitude of the tongue. The evidence that this is true is the words of Allah (interpretation of the meaning): “ ‘Work you, O family of Dawood (David), with thanks!’” [34:13]. It is well known that He did not order them, when He said that to them, to affirm His blessings, because they did not deny that this was a favour from Him to them. Rather He commanded them to give thanks for His blessings by obeying Him in their actions. Similarly, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), when his feet swelled up as he was praying at night, said: “Should I not be a thankful slave?”

Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari.

Abu Haroon said: I entered upon Abu Hazim, and said to him: May Allah have mercy on you, what is the gratitude of the eyes? He said: If you see something good with them, you mention it, and if you see something bad with them, you conceal it. I said: What is the gratitude of the ears? He said: If you hear something good with them, you remember it, and if you hear something bad with them, you forget it.

Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Gratitude is of two degrees, one of which is obligatory, which is doing obligatory actions and avoiding haram (unlawful) things. This is essential and is sufficient as gratitude for these blessings.

Hence one of the salaf said:

Gratitude means giving up sin.

And one of them said: Gratitude means not using any blessing to help one to disobey Him.

Abu Hazim al-Zahid mentioned gratitude of all the physical faculties: (It means) refraining from sin, and using them to help one to do acts of obedience. Then he

said: As for the one who gives thanks with his tongue but does not give thanks with all of his physical faculties, his likeness is that of a man who has a cloak and takes hold of the edge of it, but does not put it on, so it is of no benefit to him against cold or heat or snow or rain.

The second degree of gratitude is that which is *mustahabb*, which is when, after doing obligatory actions and avoiding haram things, a person does supererogatory acts of worship. This is the degree of those who have gone ahead and closer to Allah.

Jaami' al-'Uloom wa'l-Hukam (p. 245, 246)

Summary:

In order to be grateful to your Lord for the blessings that He has bestowed upon you, you must acknowledge in your heart that the giver of these blessings and the Bestower is Allah, may He be exalted, so you venerate Him, attribute it to Him, and you acknowledge that with your tongue, so you give thanks to Him after waking from sleep for having given new life, and after eating and drinking for having provided you with them and bestowed them upon you, and so on with every blessing that you see in your life.

You give thanks with your physical faculties by not letting them see or hear any sin or evil, such as singing or gossip; you do not walk with your feet to haram places; you do not use your hands to commit evil, such as haram writing in a relationship with non-mahram women (one whom you can marry according to Islamic law), or writing haram contracts, or making or doing anything haram. Giving thanks with the physical faculties for blessings also includes using them to obey Allah, by reading Quran and books of knowledge, listening to beneficial and useful things, and so on with all the faculties which you should use in various kinds of obedience and worship.

Remember that gratitude for blessings is a blessing which needs to be given thanks for, so that one will continue to enjoy the blessings of his Lord, thanking his Lord for those blessings and praising Him for helping him to be among those who give thanks.