

Shukr : Gratitude



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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

“Seek a response to *du’aa’s* when the *iqaamah* for prayer is given and when rain is falling.”

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Sunni Waqf books

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<http://www.ummah.net/islam/taqwapalace>

Praise be to Allaah.



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What I ascertain is the strange rustle that had just spread on the evergreen foliage, a sound like the wind shaking the branches and making them shivering over me. I do not know why I took notice; it was a sound like many other sounds: a sound I had heard before. It was in the uppers outskirts of the rough oak of the garden where I last saw a rainbow disappear after the huge amount of water that had fallen on the muddy soil since the beginning of the afternoon.

The sun was warm but quivering. The rainbow had stayed there watching over the fields.

I was counting the blessings of Allaah when I suddenly heard it coming. It was like a hand that had spread the branches of the tree to see who lied beneath it. It was so real. I felt that Allaah Ta'alah was watching over me.

I suddenly thought about all the things we do not see. I thought about the 'alamīn, all the creatures that exist, that we cannot see: the tiny insects, the microbes, the jinns, the baby in its mother's human crib.

I put my hand on my neck and I felt my pulse beating. I closed my eyes to dance in the rhythm of it: Toc -- -- toum, toc -- -- toum!

Tap dance had been invented by people who were listening to what nobody paid attention to: to the rain smoothly hitting the cobblestone, the sharp clap of the heels slapping the street, the road sweeper brushing the paths and scrubbing the stones.

And so many quick and persistent noises that haunt our daily living: tip -- -- tap -- -- clock-- -- slash -- -- gurgle -- -- breathe -- -- sweep -- -- whistle -- -- vroom.

I found these sounds around here, away from the asphalt and the town inhabitants. Yes for the buzzing of the bees, the sweeping of the leaves, the sharp crash of branches that broke in the forest, the hubbub of the animals, the rustling of my scarf over my hair, the prolong breathing through my nose, the resounding deep sound of *du'aa's* coming from my throat.

This is the music of the land as there is a music of the street.

I tried to follow them, closing my eyes, hugging the trunk of the oak I was leaning against, my arms describing the curbed in the gesture of the dancer. I hummed the songs of nature. There was a tiny branch of tree near me. Following the sound of the wind and its direction, I let my arms curve along it just like the tai-chi practitioner who imagines his hands are sliding along a line. The magic was to shift the weight of the body to the right place like the child trying its first steps, losing its balance, regaining it, losing its balance and again regaining it. Each time I heard the crickets closer, then farther away, closer, then farther.

I put again my fingers on the artery, and this time I remembered all the things we rarely think about. Somewhere inside me there were my thoughts and my faith, my soul and

my dreams, the *surat* I had learned and the remembrance of the pillars of Islam I had followed. Inside me, there was the love I have for every Muslim creature. There were my stories built there and stored there for many years until Allaah Ta'alah let me unleash them and let them pour out for everyone to read.

There was also gratitude, an infinite gratitude that had grown like a plant inside me from the moment I had grown a new heart over the old one, from the moment on I followed *hidayah* (divine guidance).



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My heart said: Toc -- -- toum, toc -- -- toum very slowly as if I was asleep. My heart was talking to me and recording the time passing. It talked about how many hours I had spent taking care of it. It said I had exercised it to make it bigger and stronger. Not only this, I had purified it. I had performed a *hajj*. I had expelled forgetfulness from my heart while praying at night even for a ra'kaa. I had sowed the seeds of love and friendship in my heart by saying *Salam Alaikum* (peace be upon you) to people I knew and to those I did not know.

I had found rest in my heart by remembering Allaah (*dhikr*). I checked the goodness of this heart by the goodness of my intentions. My heart had turned in love, veneration and obedience to Allaah each time I said *Bismillaah* (in the name of Allaah). I had stopped joking excessively in order not to harden it and I had spoken words of faith in order to soften it. I had opened the heart of other people by kind words and I had refrained from intruding it by building a decent screen between us. The medicine of my heart was the Noble Qur'an and the company of good people.

“Yes, for people’s hearts are between two of the fingers of the Most Merciful and He turns them as He wills” (al-Tirmidhi: 2140)

And Allaah has caused light to enter my heart and I will not extinguish it with the darkness of sins.

I looked at the vacancy of the place as the oak tree had grown in a clearing. Overhead, there was nothing, just glades after glades overrun by brushwood and clump of trees.

The roses of youth were pouring like petals in my chest and I thought about old age.

The rays of the sun filtered through the clouds like lianas of light making my environment chilly or cozy each time the beams disappeared and reappeared, disappeared and reappeared. They seemed to beckon to me through the canopy of twigs over which my Lord resides. The light was gold and green and sometimes ricocheted over a rivulet trickling among the grass of the clearing.

And I thought about aging. And I thought that everything was gaining age as the world was getting older and no one could reverse this. So I looked at the only thing that was visible that I had, my body, and the only thing that I possessed on this earth

that is discernable for the eyes. I looked at how shadows and light shimmered on the skin as it shimmered on the glades and I thought that all of this was changing but that I could not see it, I could not feel it. I sighed. There was so many things that we do not perceive, much more that is unseen than that it can be perceived. Yet, our eyes are the ones we keep trusting.



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I kept my eyes ajar against the wind and I could feel the sun on my face, I could smell the fresh sap of the tree, I could sense a hair twisting over one of my cheeks that had been pulled out of my scarf by the wind and I could almost feel the presence of Allaah. I knew that He had created man and He knew what my

ownself whispered to me because he was nearer in that knowledge than my jugular vein (Qaaf, 50:16).

I imagined two angels sat each one on one of my shoulders and recording my deeds. I wondered what they would record at this precise minute. I knew that if I did something bad, my left angel would erase it from my deeds if only I sincerely repented right after committing it. They would come in succession, two on my shoulders, one before me and one behind me for the purpose of protecting me against what Allaah had not decreed for me. And I felt an immense gratitude since “verily in the remembrance of Allaah do hearts find rest” (Al-Ra’d, 13:18).

I thought about these angels and how beautiful they are known to be and how impressive in stature. I thought about how different in purpose and status they were and *how dhoo mirrah*, free from any defect, they were, unlike us humans.

I thought that some of the angels traveled throughout the world, seeking out gatherings of *dhikr* and when they found people remembering Allaah, “they would enfold them with their wings, stretching up to the lowest heaven,” and Allaah would say to them: “You are My witness that I have forgiven them” (Al-Bukharai, Al Fath, 6408)

These were words that talked to me, words of truth that took me into their arms and rocked me at the rhythm of my heart: Toc -- -- toum, toc -- -- toum.

I felt sated. Yes, gratitude, *Shukr*. I felt grateful.

And I thought again about the *Kiraaman Kaatibeen*, the Honourable scribes who write in the mother's womb our gender, our fate, our provision and our lifespan.

As I opened my eyes I could not help shivering at the idea that my entire destiny was already inside me and there was no way I could know about it because nobody was allowed to know the future. It was something inside me that was hard to catch something like music of the soul, an intuition. I also felt grateful for it. *Shukran!*

I smiled while reminding myself of the ahaadith: "Be content with what Allaah has given you, and you will be the richest of people."

I felt content with the dew that had fallen on my forehead while looking up at the sky. It was like a leaf of the tree had cried into my eyes out of gratitude to Allaah. I was joyful for my obedience to Allaah that was a favor from my Lord.

I was in awe before all the ordeals that had not befallen me. I was grateful for my health, *AlHamdulillaah*, for my passion of serving Him, *Sub'anallaah*, for having enough to eat, a place to sleep, a work and a companionship, *Allahu Akbar!*



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I was the richest person in the world because I was content with what Allaah had given me and He loved me because He had given me His religion.

Subhaan Allaah wa bi hamdih, what is a more beloved speech to Allaah than this one?

I dreamt about my most precious deed, the deed that was most beloved to Allaah: making a Muslim happy.

I would make my family happy, I thought, no matter what it takes! This simple wish had left so many chests; I felt grateful for making it grow inside me with my new heart.

I looked around once more and I recognized that I should beware of this world because it is sweet and tempting. There were so many things that whispered to our ears. Our companion the *jinn* who advise us wrong, I wanted to pray for it to become a Muslim.

If I renounced pleasure in worldly things by remembering Allaah, Allaah would surely love me. And I thought about what would bring me more benefit among the people because it was among the people that laid the most temptations.

Those who had a blessing were envied, those who had a noble descent felt pride, those who were the more daring in giving *fatwas* were more deserving of Hell, those who were beautiful felt superiority, those who were generous were extravagant, those who had a lot of knowledge were ungrateful. Also the most evil was in the tongue and it was among people that the tongue wagged.

I recalled the saying that advised us: “ Show disinterest in what people have and people will love you” and “show mercy

towards those who are on earth so that the One Who is in heaven will show mercy to you.” “Uphold ties with the one who cuts you off” and “forgive the one who does you wrong” and intercede because “the most grateful of people to Allaah are those who are most grateful to other people.”

I thought about how I could show my gratitude to my Lord and I remembered more.



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Reciting *Al-Fatihah* was equal in rewards to 600 *hasanahs* (good deeds). I could do it when I heard idle talk and nobody would know about it.

I could recite *Soorat-al-Ikhlās* as it was equivalent to one-third of the Noble Qur'aan and reciting it three times would be like reciting the whole *Kitaab al-Kareem*, and that would be better than listening to complaints.



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I could say *Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wahdahu laa sharreka lah, lahu' l-mulk wa lahu'l-hamd wa huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadeer*. So instead of backbiting, I would be considered as if I had freed eight slaves!

My sins could be forgiven just by saying a 100 times *Subhaan Allaahi wa bi hamdihi*

and *Subhaan Allaah il-'Azeem*, Glory and praise be to Allaah.

And this would be more beloved to me than all that the sun rises upon because these would be also the most beloved words to Allaah and the best of words. It would just take a minute and these words would disappear in my memory but they would be recorded somewhere secure.

Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah would be one of the treasures of Paradise that would help me counter any difficulties in a day I would need them and that was invisible to my eyes.



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I could send blessings on the Prophet (swas) by saying *Sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* in return for 10 times the blessing of saying it.

I would then travel through the stage of *'uboodiyyah*, the total enslavement to Allaah and His *Noor*.

I could offer sincere advice and show people the way to good deeds by reminding them about what they could do in a minute that would benefit them. These words would be our best way to remove stress and anxiety and to reach happiness and all these benefits would be denied to our eyes but obvious in the inside. And Allaah's *noor* would pour into our hearts and finally show on our face and in our speech and in our attitude. And we

would be rewarded and we would remain silent and we would be safe while the wrong doers would think if they speak up they would be rewarded and if they remained silent they would be the losers.

Yes, I thought, they are the losers who do not remember Allaah often, whether they speak up or remain silent. This because there was a world around us that we could not perceive but watched over us. There were other living creatures that studied us, recorded our deeds while we sought loneliness and never alone could we be.



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I searched for the direction of the Kaaba and prepared myself for *sujood al-shukr*, the prayer of gratitude that did not need any *wudhoo* and could be offered everywhere.

It was the same *tasbeeh* and *du'aa'* as are said when prostrating in prayer: *Subhaana Rabbiy al-A'laa* (Glory be to my Lord Most High), *Allaahumma laka sajadtu wa bika aamantu wa laka aslamtu, sajada wajhi lillahi khalaqahu wa sawwarahu wa shaqqa sam'ahu wa basarahu, tabaaraka Allaah ahsan ul-khaaliqeen* (O Allaah, unto You I prostrate, in You I believe and to You I submit. My face has prostrated to the One who created and formed it, and gave it hearing and sight. Blessed be Allaah, the best of creators). Then I made *du'aa'* as I liked.

And Allaah knows best. May Allaah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad. Ameen.



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