252728 - True servitude to Allah (`ubudiyyah) is in feeling humility and acknowledging your need of Him

the question

Some doubts crossed my mind about feeling humility before Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, which is the idea that for a person to feel humility is a shortcoming that is not appropriate in any way, and that occurred to me on the basis of a wrong argument in this regard, which is: how can feeling humility be regarded as a kind of honour? I am afraid that the cause of this thinking may be some pride or arrogance in my heart. I say this because I want to deal with specious arguments and doubts, and Allah is my witness that I am humble and He is the Almighty, may He be Glorified.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Humbling oneself before Allah, may He be Exalted, means submitting to Him and feeling humility when standing before Him, acknowledging His full control and acknowledging your need for His help and support. For every individual is a slave of Allah and in need of Him and subject to His control in all respects, whilst He, may He be Glorified, is free of need and is the Almighty in every respect.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: True servitude to Allah (`ubudiyyah) may be achieved by attaining the utmost humility and submission, for the most perfect of people in servitude is the most perfect in humbling himself before Allah, in submitting to Him and obeying Him. The slave is the one who is humbled before his true Master in every respect, so he is humble because He is Almighty, humble because He is in control, humble because He is his Lord Who directs his affairs, and humble because of His generosity towards him and the blessings He bestows upon him. For the One Who bestows favours upon you has enslaved you and your heart

has become attached to Him and humbly devoted to Him, because of your need for Him with every breath you take, and your need for Him to bring benefits to you and ward off harm from you.

End quote from *Miftah Dar as-Sa`adah*, 1/289.

One of the best ways of expressing humility to Allah is prostrating before Him, may He be Exalted, beseeching Him and declaring your desperate need for Him.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The word sujud (prostration) is used to express the utmost humility and submission, which is the mindset of the one who prostrates.

End quote from *Jami` ar-Rasa'il: Risalah fi Qunut al-Ashya'*, 1/34.

The person who is humbled before Allah is humbled either by choice or by force. If he is not humbled by choice, then he is humbled by force and by compulsion, because of his need for Allah and his vulnerability and sickness. No individual, even if he is a disbeliever, can be free of having to submit to Allah, be humbled before Him and feel his need for Him, even if he denies that in his words.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: What is meant here is to highlight the fact that man's well-being cannot be attained unless he feels his great need for Allah, meaning that he acknowledges and admits that, and then develops the qualities that result from that, namely humility, submission and fear of Allah. Otherwise, all people need Allah, but some may consider themselves to be self-sufficient and think that they do not need Him, so they transgress, as Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {No! [But] indeed, man transgresses, because he considers himself self-sufficient} [Al-`Alaq 96:6-7].

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 1/50.

We think that you are a believer, and that you pray and offer supplication, and that cannot be done except with humility and submission, because true servitude is the utmost love combined with the utmost humility and submission.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: True servitude to Allah (`ubudiyyah) is based on two principles: the utmost love and the utmost humility and submission. The Arabs use the phrase *tareeq mu'abbad* to describe a smooth path which has been become smooth because so many feet have walked on it. The related word *ta`abbud* (worship, devotion) refers to humility and submission. If you love Allah but do not submit to Him, then you are not a true slave of His, and if you submit to Him but do not love Him, you are not a true slave of His, until you both love Him and submit to Him.

End quote from *Madarij as-Salikin*, 1/74.

How can the Shaytan make you think that you are not humbling yourself before Allah, or make you wonder whether you are humbling yourself to Him or not?

Can a man maintain well-being except through humbling himself and submitting to his Lord?

Can happiness be attained except through humbling oneself to Allah?

Can honour be attained except through striving to draw close to Allah?

Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Whoever seeks honour, then all honour belongs to Allah} [Fatir 35:10]. In other words, let him seek honour by obeying Allah, as Qatadah (may Allah have mercy on him) said.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Quran indicates that strength and honour belong to those who obey Allah and repent to Him, in several places, such as the verse in Surat Hud: {And O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in showers and increase you in strength [added] to your strength} [Hud 11:52]. And Allah says: {But all honour and power belong to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers} [Al-Munafiqun 63:8] and {So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you have the upper hand if you are [true] believers} [Al `Imran 3:139].

If the situation of the one who gives up sins, lowers his gaze, maintains his chastity and refrains

from other things that Allah has prohibited is that Allah will grant him light, knowledge, strength, honour and the love of Allah and His Messenger, then what do you think of the one who never comes near sins and never pays attention to them for even a moment or thinks of them; rather he strives in Allah's cause to make those who commit sins give them up? Are the two equal? Rather the latter will have many times more light, faith, honour, strength, love, authority and salvation in this world and the hereafter than the former, his condition will be greater and more sublime, and his light will be more complete and stronger…

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 15/400.

He also said:

Hence the one who follows his whims and desires will suffer humiliation: he will feel humiliated within himself and will feel weak and worthless. That is something that Allah has decreed for the one who disobeys Him, for Allah grants honour to the one who obeys Him, and He decrees humiliation for the one who disobeys Him, as He, may He be Exalted, says: {They (the hypocrites) say: "If we return to Madinah, indeed the more honourable will expel therefrom the meaner." But all honour and power belong to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers} [Al-Munafiqun 63:8] and {So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you have the upper hand if you are [true] believers} [Al `Imran 3:139]. Hence some of our shaykhs used to say: People seek honour by standing at the doors of kings, but they will never find it except by obeying and worshipping Allah. Al-Hasan al-Basri used to say: Even if they ride fine horses or trotting mules, the humiliation of sin never leaves them, for Allah insists that the one who disobeys Him should be humiliated. Whoever obeys Allah, He will bring him close to Him, but whoever disobeys Him, he is akin to the one who opposes Allah by disobeying Him. In the supplication of Qunoot it says: "…he is not humiliated whom You have befriended, nor is he honoured who is Your enemy…"

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 21/258.

You should understand that whoever shows arrogance towards Allah, He will humiliate him; whoever shows humility towards Him, He will raise him in status; and whoever refuses to humble

himself before Him willingly, Allah will cause him to suffer humiliation and be subjugated to others, so you will see him humiliated and enslaved to wealth, or a woman, or some transient worldly gain. This is the utmost humiliation and degradation.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {And your Lord says, “Call upon Me; I will respond to you.” Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible} [Ghafir 40:60] – that is, humiliated.

And Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Do you not see [i.e., know] that to Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the moving creatures and many of the people? But upon many the punishment has been justified. And he whom Allah humiliates - for him there is no bestower of honor. Indeed, Allah does what He wills} [Al-Hajj 22:18].

We think that the intrusive thoughts that you are facing are a temporary matter, and are not based on any specious argument, so you must resist them and try to push them from your mind. Praise Allah and give thanks to Him for making you one of those who have faith and are humble before Him, and let the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) be the greatest example to you, for his joy was in prayer; he would stand in prayer at night until his feet became swollen, and his Lord instructed him to be with those who prostrate. He is the best of those who humble themselves and submit to Allah, and this is the highest level of perfection; it is not a shortcoming as you imagine.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The more a person humbles himself before Allah, expresses his need for Him and submits to Him, the closer he will be to Him, and the more honoured and higher in status he will be. The happiest of people are those who attain the utmost level of servitude to Allah. As for the created being, as it is said: show your need of whoever you wish and you will become like his prisoner; show that you have no need of whoever you wish, and you will be his equal; show kindness to whoever you wish and you will be in control of him.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 1/39.

We ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to avert intrusive thoughts from you, and to increase you in love of Him, fear of Him, humility before Him and submission to Him.

And Allah knows best.