



130826 - What is meant by showing humility and expressing one's need of Allah, and how can the Muslim attain that mindset?

the question

I read the book *Madarij as-Salikin* by Ibn al-Qayyim, who narrated from one of the devoted worshippers: I tried to draw close to Allah by means of all types of acts of worship and righteous deeds, but every path I found was too crowded, so I was not able to make any progress, until I found the path of humility and expressing one's need of Him. This turned out to be the quickest route to Him, and its gate was the widest; it was not crowded and there were no obstacles in the way. No sooner did I take my first step on that path but I found that Allah took me by the hand and brought me closer to Him. *Madarij as-Salikin*.

What is meant by the mindset of humility and realizing one's need of Allah that are mentioned here, which could allow one to attain that high status? In other words: is there any particular act of worship that could help more than others? For by Allah, we are in need and our faith is weak.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The purpose behind the creation of man is so that he will worship Allah alone, with no partner or associate, as Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{ And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me } [Adh-Dhariyat 51:56].

The essential parts of worship are: showing the utmost humility and submission, accompanied by the utmost love for Allah, may He be Exalted.



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

To be a true slave of Allah, one needs to have the utmost love for Him accompanied by the utmost humility before Him. These are the two pillars (of true servitude). All acts of worship should be based on these two pillars.

An-Nuniyyah, p. 35.

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

Worship (‘ibadah) consists of two fundamental elements: the utmost love and the utmost humility and submission. The Arabs speak of tariq mu`abbad, which refers to a road that has been made smooth (i.e., levelled or paved), and the word ta`abbud refers to showing humility and submission. So whoever you love but do not submit to him, you are not worshipping him, and whoever you submit to without love, you are not a worshipper of him, unless you both love him and submit to him.

Madarij as-Salikin, 1/74.

See also the answer to question no. [48973](#).

So in order for a person to attain that mindset of humility, he must realize that he is a slave to Allah alone, and every individual is controlled by Allah because Allah is his Lord and because Allah has been kind and generous to him.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Being a true slave of Allah is attained by feeling the utmost humility and submission to Him, and the truest slave of Allah is the one who is the most humble before Him, submits the most to Him and is the most obedient to Him. Every individual must develop that mindset of humility before his Lord for many reasons: he is subjugated to Him because of His might, he is subjugated to Him because of His control over him, he is subjugated to Him because He is his Lord and is in control of his affairs, and he is subjugated to Him because of His generosity and the blessings He bestows upon him. For the One Who bestows favours upon you turns you into a slave of His; your heart becomes attached to Him and



you will be humble towards Him. Thus a person will become a slave [of that Benefactor] because he needs Him with every breath that he takes to bring him everything that will benefit him and ward off everything that may harm him.

Miftah Dar as-Sa`adah, 1/289.

Humility may be demonstrated more in some acts of worship than in others. The main act of worship in which a person demonstrates his humility and submission to Allah is the obligatory prayer, and the movements and actions of the prayer vary in the level of humility and submission that they demonstrate. The part of the prayer in which the person demonstrates the greatest humility and submission to his Lord, may He be Exalted, is prostration.

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

The word *sujud* (prostration) is only used in the context of the utmost humility and submission, for this is how the one who prostrates appears to be.

Jami` ar-Rasail: Risalah fi Qunut al-Ashya' (1/34).

Secondly:

With regard to the mindset of feeling one's need for Allah, it is an important state of mind that a person may attain in many ways; perhaps the most significant of those ways are being a true slave of Allah (*`ubudiyyah*), supplication (*du`a'*), seeking the help of Allah, and putting one's trust in Him.

1.. Once a person attains the mindset of humility before his Lord, may He be Exalted, he will feel his need for Him and will realize that he cannot do without his Lord; rather by turning to Allah for what he needs, he will realize that he has no need for anyone else. Thus the utmost humility and the utmost sense of his need for Allah will develop as a result of his becoming a true slave of the Lord, may He be Exalted.

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



Muhammad ibn `Abdullah al-Farghani was asked how a person may attain the mindset of needing Allah, may He be Glorified, and how that will make him realize that he has no need of others, and he said: Once a person truly feels that he is in need of Allah, may He be Exalted, then he will truly feel that he has no need of anyone else, and when he feels that he has no need of anyone else, he will truly feel his need of Him. So we cannot say which of the two is of greater importance, because you cannot attain one without the other.

I say: Turning to Allah for help means that you need only Him, for they both mean the same thing; the more you realize that you need only Him and no one else, the more you will become a true slave of Allah. True servitude to Him means realizing that you need Him in all aspects of your life, and that means that you do not need anyone else besides Him.

Tariq al-Hijratayn, p.84.

2.. One of the signs of realising one's need for Allah, may He be Exalted is supplication (du`a'), especially when the one who calls upon Him describes the difficult situation that he is going through, as Musa (peace be upon him) said:

{O my Lord, I am in need of whatever good You may bestow upon me} [Al-Qasas 28:24].

And Allah, may He be Exalted, tells us about Ayyub (peace be upon him):

{And [remember] Ayyoob, when he called upon his Lord: Affliction has indeed befallen me, and You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy} [Al-Anbiya' 21:83].

One of the supplications of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was:

"Allahumma rahmataka arju fa la takilni ila nafsi tartfata `aynin wa aslih li sha'ni kullahu la ilaha illa anta (O Allah, for Your mercy I hope, so do not leave me to my own devices for an instant. Rectify all my affairs, there is no god worthy of worship except You)." Narrated by Abu Dawud (5090); classed as authentic (hasan) by al-Albani in Sahih Abi Dawud.

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



What is meant here is that a person's well-being is achieved by his realizing his utmost need for his Lord, meaning that when he attests to that and acknowledges it, and as a result of that he develops the mindset of humility, submission and fear of Allah. Otherwise all of creation is in need of Allah, but one of them may think in some ways that he has no need of Him, so he transgresses, as Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{Indeed, man transgresses all bounds

when he believes himself to be self-sufficient } [Al-`Alaq 96:7].

Majmu` al-Fatawa, 1/50.

3.. Another of the signs of realizing one's need for Allah, may He be Exalted, is when he seeks the help of his Lord and put his trust in Him.

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

Once this becomes clear, the more love a person has for Allah in his heart, the more his servitude to Allah (`ubdiyyah) will increase, and the more his servitude to Allah increases, the more his love for Allah will increase, and he will give Him precedence over all others. The heart has an inherent need for Allah in two aspects: worshipping Him, which is the ultimate aspiration of the heart, and seeking His help and putting his trust in Him. For a person cannot attain well-being, prosper, feel bliss, be happy, feel joy, be content, have peace of mind or feel secure except by worshipping his Lord, loving Him and turning to Him. On the other hand, if he attains all that could give him pleasure from other created beings, he will not be content or find peace of mind, because he has an inherent need for his Lord on the grounds that his Lord should be his object of worship, his beloved and his aspiration. By this means he will attain joy, happiness, pleasure, bliss, peace of mind and contentment.

But he cannot attain that except by the help of Allah, for no one will be able to help him achieve that except Allah. Thus he always needs to remember the true meaning of the words {*Iyyaka na`budu wa iyyaka nasta`in* (It is You we worship and You we ask for help)} [Al-Fatihah 1:5].



Al-`Ubudiyyah, p. 97.

The individual needs Allah, may He be Exalted, in everything, for his creation, his existence, his survival and his life, and in his pursuit of knowledge. He needs Him to guide him and enable him to do righteous deeds, to bring him that which will benefit him and ward off that which will harm him. This is the meaning of the words “*La hawla wa la quww ata illa Billah* (there is no power and no strength except with Allah).”

We ask Allah, may He be Exalted, to give us the mindset of feeling that we have no need of anyone else except Him.

And Allah knows best.