



Have we ever pondered over the lengthy, intricate, multi-stage processes that occur every day for our continued well-being and comfort?

Indeed, if we ponder over a 'simple' loaf of bread, we will realize that before the loaf landed in our hands, it underwent many processes and followed a lengthy supply chain. The journey of the loaf of bread commences with the farmer planting the wheat, thereafter caring for it and dedicatedly watering it over many months until harvest, then sending it to the mill where it is crushed into flour. From the mill, the flour is sent to the bakery where it is baked into loaves, then loaded onto trucks that transport it to the depots, and finally, it is delivered to the store shelves where we conveniently purchase it.

At the time when we hold a loaf in our hands, do we ever ponder over the fact that this loaf is the result of tens (or even hundreds) of people's effort and labour, over many months, yet we are able to casually pick it up and eat it, with barely any effort from our side?

It was perhaps only after the recent riots that ravaged parts of the country, creating a temporary food shortage, that many of us opened our eyes to the value of this great bounty of Allah Ta'ala. Likewise, during this trying period, we realized the value of 'basic' commodities such as flour, rice, milk, eggs, onions, etc. – many of which we had perhaps taken for granted previously.

Thus, one important lesson to be learnt from these events is the lesson of gratitude. What we enjoy is not the fruit of our labours, or the product of our intelligence. Rather, all the bounties that we enjoy are gifts of the Giver – Allah Ta'ala – which He bestows to whom He wishes. When even the millionaire, despite his money, could find no bread to purchase, and no fuel to fill the tank, then he realized that it is Allah Ta'ala alone who provides and blesses with bounties.

From this day onwards, whenever we are blessed with any bounty from Allah Ta'ala, be it eggs, bread, milk or any other 'ordinary' item, we must be thankful from the bottom of our hearts and recite "Alhamdulillah!" in all sincerity.

On one occasion, Abu Mu'aawiyah Al-Aswad was walking when he found fifteen beans lying discarded. Seeing this invaluable bounty, he picked the beans up, turned towards the qiblah, recited 'Alhamdulillah!' and praised Allah Ta'ala. He then made du'aa saying, "O my Rabb! Assist me to express gratitude to You for this food which You have given to me, for even if I had to continue reciting Your praises from the day the world was created until the Day of Qiyaamah, I would not be able to express adequate gratitude to You for (the bounty You have given me) today."

*(Hilyatul*

*Awliyaa vol. 7, pg. 9)*

In order for us to express appreciation and gratitude to Allah Ta'ala for His favour, we should first acknowledge and realize that Allah Ta'ala is the one who bestowed us with the favour. We should then thank and praise Him for all that He has given us. In the case where the favour or bounty was received via some person, then that person should be thanked as well.

Thereafter, once gratitude has been expressed with our hearts and tongues, we should next show appreciation by using the bounty in the correct manner and for the correct purposes which are pleasing to Allah Ta'ala, rather than wasting and squandering the bounty or using it for impermissible purposes. Hence, Sufyaan bin 'Uyaynah (rahimahullah) once said, "Expressing gratitude to Allah Ta'ala for His favour consists of one praising and thanking Him for the favour and thereafter using the favour to engage in His obedience. The one who uses the bounty of Allah Ta'ala to disobey Him is not grateful to Allah Ta'ala."

*(Hilyatul*

*Awliyaa vol.*

*6, pg. 124)*

Finally, one of the greatest virtues and benefits of expressing gratitude to Allah Ta'ala is that expressing gratitude causes one to receive even more bounties and favours from Allah Ta'ala. In this regard, the following advice which Imaam Ja'far Saadiq (rahimahullah) gave to Imaam Sufyaan Thauri (rahimahullah) is especially pertinent, as it not only mentions the vital ingredient of gratitude in the life of a believer, but also mentions other important aspects that should be upheld in these times of uncertainty and hardship. Imaam Ja'far Saadiq (rahimahullah) said:

"O Sufyaan! When Allah Ta'ala blesses you with any favour, and you wish that the favour

should remain and should not be taken away, then praise Allah Ta'ala in abundance and express appreciation to Him excessively. The reason is that Allah Ta'ala has mentioned in the Quraan Majeed, '*If you are grateful to Me, I will most definitely grant you more.*' (Surah Ebrahim v7)

If there is a delay in your sustenance coming to you, then engage in abundant istighfaar (repentance), as Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Quraan Majeed, '*Seek forgiveness from your Rabb, indeed He is Most-Forgiving. (If you repent to Him,) He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, and will help you with riches and sons, and will cause gardens to grow for you, and cause rivers to flow for you.*' (Surah Nooh v10 - 12)

O Sufyaan! When you are afflicted by any fear (or anxiety), from the side of the ruler or due to any other problem, then recite '*Laa howla wa laa quwwata illa billaah*' in abundance, as it is the key to salvation from difficulties and a treasure from the treasures of Jannah." (Hilyatul Awliyaa vol. 2, pg. 472)

*May Allah Ta'ala bless us all to appreciate His bounties, may He replace what we lost, grant us more than we had before, grant us ease from our difficulties, and may He bless us with His pleasure and Jannah, aameen.*

An important lesson to be learnt from the recent riots is the **LESSON OF GRATITUDE**, since we realized the value of basic commodities which we had perhaps **taken for granted** previously.



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