

Happiness, Misery, and Signs of Their People¹

From the signs of happiness and joy is that whenever a worshipper increases in knowledge, his humbleness and mercy increases. Whenever he increases in acts of worship, his fear and caution increases. Whenever he increases in age, his greed decreases. Whenever he increases in wealth, his generosity and spending increases. And whenever he increases in status and position, his nearness to the people increases as does his fulfilling their needs and being humble with them.

And from the signs of misery is that whenever a worshipper increases in knowledge, his pride and arrogance increases. Whenever he increases in acts of worship, his bragging increases as does his belittling of people while always giving himself the benefit of the doubt. And whenever he increases in status and position, his arrogance and ego increases.

All of these things are trials from Allaah and a test by which He tests His servants, and because of them, some people attain happiness and others become miserable.

Similarly, some things people honor and admire are also trials like possessions, authority, and wealth. Allaah says about His prophet, Sulaymaan, when he saw the throne of Bilqees in front of him:

﴿ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ﴾

This is from the favor of My Lord to test me whether I will be grateful or ungrateful.

[Soorah An-Naml, 27:40]

So, blessings are tests from Allaah that make apparent the gratitude of the grateful, and the ingratitude of the ungrateful. In the same way, hardships are also trials from Him (سُبْحَانَهُ); He tests by way of blessings and hardships.

¹ This article is taken from Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah's famous book, "Al-Fawaaid" (no. 112).

Allaah says:

﴿ فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ

رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ﴾

And as for man, when his Lord tests him and is generous to him and favors him, he says, “My Lord has honored me!” But when He tests him and restricts his provision, he says, “My Lord has humiliated me!”

[Soorah Al-Fajr, 89:15-16]

In other words, it's not the case that everyone I increase with honor and blessings, that's My way of honoring him. And everyone I tighten his sustenance and test him, it's not necessarily that I'm humiliating him.