



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Every Steadfast, Appreciative Person

“These are lessons/proofs for every steadfast, appreciative person.” (14:5)

The phrase “*inna fī dhālika la-āyātin li-kulli ṣabbārin shakūr* (These are lessons/proofs for every steadfast, appreciative person)” appears word-for-word four times in the Quran: in verses 14:5, 31:31, 34:19, and 42:33.

Interestingly, the sum of these verses (14+5+31+31+34+19+42+33) is 209, which equals 19 x 11.

The repetition of this statement aims to deeply root it in the reader’s memory. Despite the varying contexts of these verses, this recurrent phrasing functions as a pedagogical device, teaching God’s immutable system.

This divine system ties the sincerity of faith to the acquisition of two fundamental qualities: patience and gratitude. These qualities do not refer to occasional reactions but rather to enduring dispositions of the soul. In their absence, the instructive signs of God remain inaccessible.

The two adjectives - *ṣabbār* and *shakūr* - are hyperbolic forms. They are built on intensive patterns (*ṣīghat*

al-mubālaghah), common in the Quranic lexicon, which express the permanence or intensity of a trait.

Ṣabbār derives from the root ṣ-b-r, connoting restraint, self-control, endurance, and steadfastness in adversity. The noun *ṣabr* literally means “to contain oneself.” In its intensive form, *ṣabbār* thus denotes an active, tenacious, unwavering patience.

Shakūr stems from the root š-k-r, which refers to thanking or being grateful. The intensive adjective describes a recurrent, deep, sincere gratitude directed towards the Benefactor.

In Quranic ethics, patience and gratitude are pillars of authentic submission. Their complementarity spans all moral circumstances. This reveals a profoundly dynamic conception of faith: the believer alternates between patience during adversity and gratitude during prosperity, thus remaining in the awareness of God in all conditions.

These qualities stand in contrast with ingratitude and impatience, which are linked to disbelief and straying. Notably, the term *kufr* originally means

both ingratitude and disbelief—two interlinked meanings, as the disbeliever is one who “covers up” or denies God’s favors.

The phrase *li-kulli ṣabbārin shakūr* appears in four distinct narrative contexts, showcasing its wide applicability. It serves as a rhetorical motif.

In 14:5–7 God recalls the mission of Moses, sent to bring the Children of Israel out from darkness into light. After the trial of slavery comes liberation. Moses exhorts His people to remember His favors with gratitude.

Through His messenger, God addresses His listeners, inviting them to become steadfast, appreciate persons (*ṣabbārin shakūrīn*) in order to understand the lessons of the sacred history. This process is an address formula (*intifāl*). This feature, characteristic of Qur’anic discourse, creates a direct connection between God, who speaks, and the believer, who is being addressed.

In 34:15–19 these verses narrate the decline of the people of Saba’ after a period of prosperity. They lost God’s blessings due to their ingratitude.

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The believer will learn from their downfall: he will see in this reversal a sign of divine justice, as God withdraws His blessings from the ungrateful. In other words, history becomes a mirror for those who read its moral consequences — and the steadfast, appreciative persons are those who possess this discernment (55:1-4).

31:31–32 and 42:32–33 depict sea travel and God's power over the elements. Natural phenomena manifest the signs of divine Providence.

Whoever observes the wonders of creation may perceive therein the signs of divine wisdom, yet many miss them. Faith, then, is not about external evidence, but internal receptivity. God's signs in nature are clear, but the sign (*āya*) only becomes evident in the heart of one who is spiritually disposed through patience and gratitude.

This repeated and rhythmic declaration of *li-kulli ṣabbārin shakūr* thus functions as a concluding moral lesson: the story of Moses, the fall of Saba', and a voyage at sea become parables whose interpretative key lies in the believer's virtues. Thus emerges, through the Quran's teachings, the archetype of the accomplished servant of God: one who worships God in both ease and trial, through thanksgiving and perseverance.

This serves three major functions:

Universalization: each example is elevated as a sign for all times.

Implicit exhortation: by valorizing the believer's virtues, the Quran invites emulation.

Thematic unification: by linking history, nature, and prophecy with the same refrain, the Quran offers a coherent vision of faith as a spiritual reading of the world.

Patience and gratitude are thus essential virtues of Islam. God Himself is Clement (*ḥalīm*, e.g., 2:225, 3:155, 9:114) and Appreciative (*shakūr*, e.g., 35:30, 42:23, 64:17). The complementarity of self-mastery and recognition

appears clearly in 64:17: ...*God is Appreciative (shakūrun), Clement (ḥalīmun).*

The terms *ṣabbār* and *ḥalīm* are related in that both include the notion of restraint. As a divine attribute, *ḥalīm* signifies that God does not punish hastily. Without this quality, humans would already be doomed.

What will God gain from punishing you, if you became appreciative and believed? God is Appreciative, Omniscient. (4:147)

In the Quran, patience is elevated to a spiritual ideal. It signifies gracious acceptance of God's decree over all things. In return, God promises His support to those who cultivate it: *God is with those who persevere steadfastly (2:153, 8:46). God loves those who persevere steadfastly. (3:146)*

The model of patience is the prophet Job, praised for his endurance and faithfulness in trial (38:41- 44): *We found him steadfast. What a good servant! He was a submitter. (38:44)*

To validate one's faith, a believer must endure hardships and offenses without excessive complaint, trusting God's desired outcome. This entails self-control (not rebelling against destiny), perseverance in effort (praying through hardship, repaying evil with good), endurance in suffering (illness, poverty, persecution), and unwavering obedience to God's laws.

We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast. When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to God, and to Him we are returning." (2:155-156)

With time, practicing patience leads the soul to a state of contentment or full acceptance (*riḍā*) of the divine will. The steadfast heart consents intimately to God's decree, believing there is a good reason behind every divine decision.

The Quran teaches us that God rewards gratitude with ever-increasing

blessings, the most precious of which is His closeness.

The more you thank Me, the more I give you. (14:7)

My Lord is always near, responsive. (11:61)

When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided. (2:286)

Gratitude is not limited to words uttered after a favor. To be grateful is to live in a state of permanent thankfulness—a continual wonder at all of God's gifts: existence, faith, breath, sustenance, and more.

With time, practicing gratitude brings the believer's soul to a state where the heart is filled with love and awe for the Benefactor, discerned behind every beauty in the world and every grace in his life.

Conclusion: *Ṣabbār shakūr* is not merely a moral attitude but a way of reading the world. The one who holds these two virtues sees in every event a sign from God, where the distracted man sees only chance. He discerns in creation the divine signature.

In this sense, patience and gratitude act as "spiritual eyes." Without them, the universe and our lives may not make sense. With them, every trial becomes an ascent, every blessing a reminder of the Benefactor.

Thus, the true believer is one who reads the world through his faith: in steadfastness and gratitude, he advances on the path of divine consciousness.

[2:152] You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.

[2:153] O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.

Lionel

Meditation

Meditation is the deliberate focusing of attention to bring about feelings of calm and heightened energy and awareness. God does not recommend or suggest that we meditate...It is a commandment. God commands us not once but twice.

[17:79] During the night, you shall meditate for extra credit, that your Lord may raise you to an honorable rank.

[50:40] During the night you shall meditate on His name, and after prostrating.

Extra credit in school was a great gift. It could be the difference between passing and failing a course. God is so Merciful; He commands us to earn extra credit by meditating. God wants the believers to succeed, to make it to heaven and receive an honorable rank.

Meditation is a trait of the believers.

[3:17] They are steadfast, truthful, submitting, charitable, and meditators at dawn.

[9:112] They are the repenters, the worshipers, the praisers, the meditators, the bowing and prostrating, the advocates of righteousness and forbidders of evil, and the keepers of GOD's laws. Give good news to such believers.

[25:64] In the privacy of the night, they meditate on their Lord, and fall prostrate.

We learn from 73:20 that some believers are seriously devoted to meditation.

[73:20] Your Lord knows that you meditate during two-thirds of the night, or half of it, or one-third of it, and so do some of those who believed with you. ...

Two-thirds of night? That could be 5 or 6 hours. I don't know about you and, God willing maybe I can get there some day by God's grace, but I am not disciplined to the point where I can meditate for that long. But God is so merciful. The verse continues: *[73:20] ... GOD has designed the night and the day, and He knows that you cannot always do this. He*

has pardoned you. Instead, you shall read what you can of the Quran. He knows that some of you may be ill, others may be traveling in pursuit of GOD's provisions, and others may be striving in the cause of GOD. You shall read what you can of it, and observe the contact prayers (Salat), give the obligatory charity (Zakat), and lend GOD a loan of righteousness. Whatever good you send ahead on behalf of your souls, you will find it at GOD far better and generously rewarded. And implore GOD for forgiveness. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.

There is a plethora of information on the internet on the benefits of meditation. I found websites listing from 12 benefits to 141 benefits. Such as: reduces stress, controls anxiety, promotes emotional health, improves sleep, helps control pain, increases focus and attention, and so many more.

There is lots of research on the benefits of meditation. If you happen to be trapped in the belly of a whale, meditation can get you out of that situation. We know from Quran it worked for Jonah.

[37:139-144] Jonah was one of the messengers. He escaped to the loaded ship. He rebelled and thus, he joined the losers. Consequently, the fish swallowed him, and he was the one to blame. If it were not that he resorted to meditation (on God), he would have stayed in its belly until the Day of Resurrection.

Now regarding how to meditate and what to meditate on, God gives us some commandments and suggestions.

[50:40] During the night you shall meditate on His name, and after prostrating.

So, we are commanded to meditate during the night on God's name. As we know there are many names for God. So we have many choices as to which name we would like to use. To Him belong the most beautiful names...The Most Gracious, Most Merciful, The King, The Peace, The Creator, The Sublime, The Forgiver...just to name a few.

We are commanded to meditate at night. *[73:2] Meditate during the night, except rarely.*

And God tells us *[73:6] The meditation at night is more effective, and more righteous.* We can certainly meditate during the day. But night is more effective, and it is a commandment to do so.

So how much time does it take to meditate effectively? Well, there are many opinions on that. Research has shown that short term meditation ranging from as little as 5-30 minutes can be effective. Even 1 to 2 minutes of meditation can be effective. It's certainly better than no minutes of meditation.

Meditation is a very personal experience and is different for everybody. You need to start slowly and build up. The biggest common denominator to meditation is controlled focused breathing. You need a quiet comfortable place. Then God will guide you to the best way to focus your thoughts on Him. He will be with you. *[26:218] Who sees you when you meditate during the night.*

In addition to meditation at night, verse 50:40 also mentions meditating on His name after prostrating. God is so merciful, He doesn't say how to or how long to meditate on His name, just to do it. So, in every prayer, after I say Salaam Alaykum, I go back into prostration and think about or say or breathe God's name. Usually it's for maybe 5-10 seconds. Sometimes more. But even if it's for 5 seconds, I can take comfort in knowing that I have fulfilled this commandment, and taken time to remember God.

May God continue to guide us and to help us to always be mindful of His presence and to know that He is always near. May God give us the strength and will to fulfill all His commandments including meditating at night on his name and after prostrating so we can be raised to an honorable rank in Paradise.

Bob

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Conference Report 2025

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[2:152] You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.

[14:7] Your Lord has decreed: "The more you thank Me, the more I give you." But if you turn unappreciative, then My retribution is severe.

The 40th annual conference of United Submitters International was held from August 1-3, 2025 in Dallas, TX. 40th! That's an amazing accomplishment. It was wonderful to see how many people who had attended the first few conferences with Dr Khalifa were present at the 40th, still active in submission today. Praise God.

The sermon was delivered by Rafi Calcuttawala. He reminded us that the Quran is our guide, a mercy from God. And many throughout the conference repeated the verse: *[2:2] This scripture is infallible; a beacon for the righteous.* As humans, we are all flawed, but God and His scripture are infallible.

After the khutba, we enjoyed some "getting acquainted" activities and trivia from the Quran. We shared laughs as we tried to remember

different categories in the Quran. It's always fun to have such group activities. And then we were blessed to meet several submitters attending their first conference.

The speeches covered a wide range of topics. Each speaker gave his or her own unique take on a subject, causing all of us to really think about it. We can all benefit from different understandings; it makes us consider where we are in our submission journey. And what we can do to move forward. This is truly the advantage of getting together with so many diverse and wonderful people from all over the world. There is so much knowledge to be shared.

We had wonderful zikr sessions in the evenings. It is always such a joy to share in commemoration of God.

[13:28] They are the ones whose hearts rejoice in remembering GOD. Absolutely, by remembering GOD, the hearts rejoice.

It was especially heartwarming to see all the children participating in the singing. Their enthusiasm and their lovely voices added so much to the evenings. All in all, the children were so well-behaved, and so eager to join in the zikr. It is a blessing to see the future of Submission.

The conference venue was lovely. The hotel staff were so helpful and the food was delicious and plentiful. We

fed our bodies well, as we continued to feed our souls. All a gift from God. And we are so grateful to the Dallas community and the Calcuttawala family for all their hard work arranging the conference, and then taking care of so many people who were able to stay on after the conference officially ended.

That happened on Sunday with a photo session that went on for a long time, as we didn't want to say goodbye. We pray that everyone will stay focused and motivated through the year, and we look forward to seeing everyone in Tucson in 2026, God willing.

Nargis and Lydia

Quran app: Android, iOS, Windows

... And read the Quran from cover to cover. [73:4]

Read, in the name of your Lord, who created. [96:1]

By God's grace, we have a Quran app available for iOS & Android phones and tablets, and Windows PCs. You can read Quran, search for a verse, save bookmarks and more. Please visit: <https://masjiduntucson.org/quran/app/>

Quran: The Final Testament
(Authorized English Version)
Translated from the Original by Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D.

