

and bounty, as well as the means by which they can be obtained, only He sends them at the appropriate time.

Since He alone determines, apportions, creates, and spreads all our provisions before us as “heavenly tables,” He alone deserves our gratitude & thanks. Attributing our attainment of His bounties to our own or to another’s means or causes, in effect thereby proclaiming that He is not the true Owner, Creator, and Giver of all bounty, is like giving a huge tip to the servant who lays before us a magnificent table and ignoring the host who is responsible for having it prepared and sent to us. Such an attitude reflects sheer ignorance and ingratitude, as mentioned in: They know only the outward face of the life of the world apparent to them, and they are completely unaware of its face looking to the Hereafter (30:7).

Bodily thankfulness is possible by using one’s organs, faculties, and abilities for the purposes for which they were created, and in performing the duties of servanthood falling on each. On the other hand, some have stated that verbal thankfulness means daily recitation of portions of the Quran, prayers, supplications, and God’s Names. Thankfulness by the heart means that one is certain or convinced of the truth of the faith and straightforwardness. Since thankfulness relates directly to all aspects or branches of belief and worship, it is regarded as half of the faith. With respect to this inclusiveness, it is considered together with patience, meaning that according to some people, thankfulness and patience are considered as the two halves of religious life.

In His eternal Speech, God repeatedly commands thankfulness and, as in the phrases so that you may give thanks (2:52) and God will reward the thankful (3:144), presents it as the purpose of creation and of sending religion. In such verses as: **If you are thankful I will add more unto you.** But if you show ingratitude My punishment is terrible indeed (14:7), He has promised abundant reward to the thankful and threatened the ungrateful with a terrible punishment. One of His own Names is the All-Thanking, which shows us that the way to obtain all bounties or favors is through thankfulness, which He returns with abundant reward. He exalts the Prophets Abraham and Noah, upon them be peace, saying: (Abraham was) thankful for His bounties (16:121) and Assuredly, he (Noah) was a grateful servant (17:3).

Although thankfulness is a religious act of great importance and significant “capital,” few people truly do it: Few of My servants are thankful (34:13). Very few people live in full awareness of the duty of thankfulness, saying: Shall I not be a servant grateful (to my Lord)? and try their best to perform their duty of thankfulness and order their lives accordingly.

People are thankful for many things: the provisions, home, and family with which they have been favored; wealth and health; belief, knowledge of God, and the spiritual pleasures bestowed on them; and the consciousness with which God favored them so they could open themselves to the knowledge that they must be thankful. If those who are thankful for such a consciousness use their helplessness and destitution as “capital” and thank Him continuously, they will be among the truly thankful.

The Prophet David, upon him be peace, asked God: O Lord. How can I be thankful to You, since thanking You is another favor that requires thankfulness? The Almighty responded: Just now you have done it.

One can be thankful by recognizing and appreciating Divine favors, for feeling gratitude to the One Who bestows favors depends to a great extent on due recognition and appreciation of them. Belief and Islam (including the Qur’an) lead one to recognize and appreciate favors and thus turn to God in gratitude. One can be more aware of these favors, and that they are given to us by God out of His mercy for our helplessness and inability to meet our own needs, in the light of belief and Islamic practices. This awareness urges us to praise the One Who bestows upon us those favors and bounties that we consume. Awakening to the meaning of: As for the favor of Your Lord, proclaim it (93:11), we feel a deep need to be grateful and thankful.

Everyone is naturally inclined to praise the good & the one who does good to him/her. However, until this feeling is aroused there is no awareness of being favored by someone else, just as fish are not conscious of living in water. Furthermore, these favors may be attributed to the means & causes used to obtain them. If it is blindness and deafness not to see and appreciate the favors we continuously receive, then it must be an unforgivable deviation to attribute them to various blind, deaf, and unfeeling means & causes. The Prophetic statements: **One who does not thank for the little does not thank for the abundant, and: One who does not thank people does not thank God,** express blindness and deafness to favors and remind us of the importance of being thankful. Such verses as: Mention Me so that I will mention you, and give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me (2:152), and: Worship Him and give Him thanks (29:17) tell us that it is God Who truly deserves to be thanked, and also remind us of His absolute Unity.

Thankfulness can be divided into three categories. The first category consists of thankfulness for those things that everyone, regardless of religion or spiritual attainment, desires. The second category consists of thankfulness for those things that, although apparently disagreeable or displeasing, reveal their true nature to those who can see them as favors requiring gratitude.

The third category of thankfulness is that kind performed by those who are loved by God and view bounties from the perspective of the One Who bestows them. They spend their lives in spiritual pleasure that begins in observing God’s manifestation of Himself through His favors, & take the greatest pleasure in worshipping Him. Although they are always enraptured with the spiritual delight flowing from their love of Him, they are extremely careful of their relationship with Him.

We should bestow our love, our gifts and our toil with no anxious thought about the returns. If we chance to love a **loveless** individual, to give to one **bankrupt in gratitude**, to toil for the **unappreciative**, it is but a temporary deprivation for us. The love, the gratitude and the recompense will all come to us in time from some source, or many sources. It cannot fail.

Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world. —Milton
Gratitude is the passport to the joyous life!!!

The moral memory of mankind

GRATITUDE

...is the passport to the joyous life

The glory of humanity, Muhammad (p), whose soles swelled because of his long supererogatory prayer vigils, was a matchless hero of thankfulness. On one occasion, he told his wife Aisha: “Shall I not be a servant grateful to God?” He always thanked God & recommended thankfulness to his followers. He prayed to God every morning & evening, saying: “O God. Help me mention You, thank You, and worship You in the best way possible.”

Thankfulness is the deep gratitude and devotion of one who, receiving His bounties or favors, directs these feelings toward the One Who bestows such blessing, and the subsequent turning to Him in love, appreciation, and acknowledgment. The above Prophetic saying expresses this most directly. Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.

It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns **denial** into acceptance, **chaos** to order, **confusion** to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. Gratitude bestows reverence, allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies, those transcendent moments of awe that change forever how we experience life and the world. Gratitude fosters a heart full of gladness, which overflows and spills out into acts of kindness and generosity towards others. **If you want to sleep more soundly, count blessings, not sheep.**

In Chapter 55 of the Quran, titled "The Lord of Mercy," God asks the same question **thirty-one times**, "**Which of the favours of your Lord will you deny?**" God has created us and then made this world for us. We are getting benefits from all of His creations such as the sun, moon, clouds, rain, air, grasslands, animals, plants, rivers, oceans and countless other bounties of the natural world! After realizing all this abundance, **how can a sensible person be anything but thankful to God?**

The spirit of thanksgiving runs against the temptation we face as human beings to assert our self-sufficiency. Few of us enjoy the feeling of indebtedness; a fact easily demonstrated by our oft-unsolicited readiness to return a favour once someone has expressed kindness to us. I owe you one, I will return the favor, and I am in your debt are some of the ways in which we express this attitude. Such responses, together with the more modest one, please let me know what I can do for you, allow us to express gratitude **without** acknowledging the chronic shadow of dependence that so rudely dogs our entire threescore and ten.

Not only does this inability to express gratitude without our own autonomy stealing the show sometimes **rob of us** of the joy of affirming the contribution of others to our well-being, it also **shrivels up our desire to worship God**. An unexamined sense of self-sufficiency instills in us a subtle but false attitude of entitlement, thus making it difficult for us to accept the sense of vulnerability that is part of true gratitude. Ever since the tempter said to Adam & Eve in the Garden, "You will be like God," human beings have never given up the temptation to either elevate ourselves to the level of God or pull God down to our level, so we can deal with God as equals. We are always looking for a chance to say to God, "I can take it from here." Such an attitude of entitlement occupies a central role in the story of humanity. Without a clear sense of how little we are entitled to, we cannot really come to terms with the need for gratitude—for an **attitude of entitlement is an effective impediment** to gratitude.

But everything we know about ourselves and our world speaks loudly against this tendency to self-sufficiency. As human babies, we all begin our lives at the highest level of dependence, and none of us really outgrows all degrees of dependence. We depend on parents, teachers, peers, coaches, and others to open doors for us in life. Even in places where commitment to personal autonomy is likely to produce more martyrs than religious conviction, dependence on others is still a living reality whose attempted concealment is gradually unveiled by the onset of old age. From the inventions that give us comfort in this world to the young soldiers who give their lives in the battlefields to protect our livelihoods, an unobstructed view of our lives reveals the fact that **we all owe debts that we can never repay**. We will never begin to worship God until we recognize that we are bankrupt debtors, for an **attitude of gratitude is an indispensable impetus to worship**.

Like skilled gourmet chefs spicing up their delicacies, spiritual writers sprinkle their words with admonitions & exaltations regarding gratitude, frequently tying it together with worship. In the midst of a dark catalogue of humanity's journey away from God, the Prophets lays the blame on our **unwillingness** to glorify God or give thanks to God. It is impossible to worship God without gratitude, and it is impossible to be grateful while clinging to self-sufficiency & entitlement at the same time. Yes, there is some vulnerability in gratitude sincerely expressed, but that is because we are relational beings whose deepest needs can only be met in partnership with others & ultimately with God. While an attitude of entitlement is an impediment to gratitude, **an attitude of gratitude is an indispensable impetus to worship**. A person whose life is characterized by gratitude, is a person whose soul is poised to worship God.

The foundations of mental & spiritual health are obedience, reverence, loyalty, gratitude; those inward attitudes of thought & emotion which become beings who are subjects & receivers, and which are the personal expression of our true relations to God and men alike.

Gratitude may be defined as an attitude of the mind of joyous and gracious acceptance, and if we apply it to life in the spirit we cannot fail to see that it must prove the "passport" or key to life. That it is one of the attributes of mind and character without which life is incomplete. It is an attribute of health or wholeness, typified by that of the healthy child who laughs and crows with delight, alike at dancing sunbeams or falling rain. In its fully conscious perfection, it is the attitude of mind of the Prophets, who accepted poverty and pain, joy and sorrow, life and death, not only in meek resignation, but in a spirit of joyous acceptance, recognizing their equal "brotherhood" and equal service to the growth of the soul.

Is it not easy to see that unless we have in ourselves something of this spirit life cannot be full or complete. Without gratitude, we shall meet our fate with the sulky whining disposition of ailing children, blind to life's beauty, missing its opportunities.

In Islam, thanksgiving is the most important pillar of being a good worshipper and a beloved servant of God. Many verses in the Quran express the importance of thanksgiving. Remember Me then and I will remember you. Give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful. (2:152). If you disbelieve, God does not need you, although He does not approve disbelief in His servants. However, if you give thanks, He will approve that in you.

Many other verses emphasize that what the Creator requests most of His servants is thanksgiving. We have indeed created man from a mixed sperm to test him; and so We made him capable of hearing and sight. We have guided him upon the path, **either as thankful or thankless**. (76:2-3)

It was out of His mercy that He created the day and the night, so that you may rest in it and to seek some of His bounty, that perchance **you may give thanks**. (28:73)

Also in Sura al-Rahman (55), it is asked repeatedly: So, hich of your Lord's bounties do you deny? The bounties, such as fruits with different aromas and flavors, are invitations from God for

thanksgiving. In this respect, thanksgiving is the appreciation of the providence coming from God, and respect for it. It is an expression of our acceptance of God as the Provider and Sustainer of our presence, rather than crediting our own efforts or mere chance. Thanksgiving is the connection of the worshipper with the name All-Merciful, one of the ninety nine beautiful names of God.

Signs of thanksgiving are contentment, thrift, consent and gratitude, while those of unthankfulness are greed, waste, ingratitude and consumption without discriminating between the lawful and unlawful. There are many kinds of thanksgiving, the most comprehensive of which is the daily prescribed prayers. As it is stated in a hadith: The Prophet used to pray so much that his feet used to become edematous or swollen, and when he was asked as to why he prays so much, he would say, "Shall I not be a thankful servant (to God)?"

Thanksgiving can be an oral or physical act. Saying Al-hamdulillah (praise be to God) in response to a blessing we have appreciated is a kind of thanksgiving. Using our hands, eyes, time and wealth in accordance with God's will is also thanksgiving. God had already given you victory at Badr, at a time when you were still powerless; so **fear God that perchance you might be thankful**. (3:123)

Other prophets were also ordered to be thankful for God's blessings. Give thanks, O family of David! **And very few of My servants are grateful**. (34:13) Indeed, Abraham was a model of virtue, obedient to God and upright; and he was not one of the polytheists. He was thankful for His blessings, and God chose and guided him to a straight path. And We gave him good in this world, and he will be, in the Hereafter, in the ranks of the Righteous. (16:120-122)

Then he (Solomon) smiled, laughing at its words, and said: Lord, **inspire me to be thankful for Your blessing**, with which You have blessed me and my parents, and to do the right pleasing to You. Admit me, by Your Mercy, into the company of Your righteous servants. (27:19)

Islamic teachings define human beings as the best of creation. Only through thanksgiving can people attain this highest of ranks, otherwise they will fall to the lowest of the low. In a sense, a Muslim should observe each day of his/her life as a thanksgiving day.

Literally meaning gladness felt about and gratitude shown for the good done to one, Muslims use *shukr* to mean using one's body, abilities, feelings, and thoughts bestowed upon one to fulfill the purpose of his or her creation: Being thankful to the Creator for what He has bestowed. Such thankfulness is to be reflected in the person's actions or daily life, in speech and in the heart, by admitting that all things are directly from Him, and by feeling gratitude for them.

One may thank God verbally by only depending upon His power and strength, as well as upon His bestowal or withholding of favors, and acknowledging that all good and bounties come from Him. As He alone creates all good, beauty,

If you are thankful I will add more unto you

Prepared by: Zamals Software Co. 6 Dowding St. Kitty; 225-9031; shamalz2007@yahoo.com; Get all brochures on zamals.com

Please Donate