

Masjid Tucson United Submitters International

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Happiness is Submission to God Alone

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Everyday is Thanksgiving

continued from the first page

Do you not see that God has committed in your service everything in the heavens and the earth, and has showered you with His blessings — obvious and hidden? Yet, some people argue about God without knowledge, without guidance, and without the enlightening scripture. [31:20]

And He gives you all kinds of things that you implore Him for. If you count God's blessings, you can never encompass them. Indeed, the human being is transgressing, unappreciative. [14:34]

For Our Own Good

Appreciating all the blessings of God is for our own good. We reap its benefits manifold. It makes our soul grow and brings us closer to God. It reminds us that God is the ultimate source and provider

of everything. Furthermore, God blesses us with more, watches over us, and protects us from evil as long as we remain appreciative.

The more appreciative we are of God's blessings, the better believers we can become. But if we turn unappreciative, God is in no need, Praiseworthy (31:12). Because only the disbelievers lack appreciation of His blessings we cannot afford to take any of God's blessings for granted if we want happiness in this life and in the Hereafter.

Therefore, you shall eat from God's provisions everything that is lawful and good, and be appreciative of God's blessings, if you do worship Him alone. [16:114]

Abdullah Arik

Abraham Lincoln's View

More than 130 years ago, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, recalled the roots of Thanksgiving. Here are some quotes from him.

"We have been the recipient of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no nation has ever grown.

"But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own."

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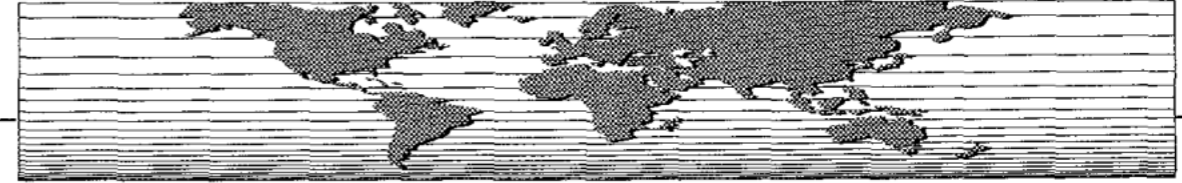
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In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Our happiness both in this life and in the Hereafter is associated
with our appreciation of God's blessings

Everyday is Thanksgiving

One of the most neglected virtues of our daily existence is appreciation. We often take our parents, spouses, children, brothers and sisters, good friends... so much for granted that we rarely let them know we appreciate them. Similarly, all the blessings from God, material or otherwise, may become so much a part of our livelihood that we tend to forget their existence in our lives. Unfortunately, it is our tendency not to appreciate things until something happens to them. But it may be too late then.

Why not appreciate God's blessings to us when we can? Why not take the time and reflect on what God has bestowed on us? Not only once a year, on Thanksgiving day, or during some religious days, but much more often. Every day, every possible moment of our lives. We should reflect and thank God for His blessings, and also show our appreciation to the people that we love. If we do, we will also be appreciated, not only by these people, but more importantly by God, who promises to give us more because we value His blessings.

We see the faults of others more easily than our own. We also tend to talk about and highlight people's mistakes more often than their good works. Indeed, we do not show the same keenness to appreciate people when they do good, as we do to criticize them. As an old saying goes:

*Once I did bad and that I heard ever.
Twice I did good, but that I heard never.*

Believers' Trait

By definition, believers are appreciative of God's blessings to them. It is their trait. It is a distinguishing quality from the disbelievers. They value God and whatever He provides for them. A good family and caring friends, beautiful brothers and sisters in faith. A community that they can rely on. All the material or spiritual blessings that God bestowed on them, no matter how little or how abundant. They are thankful to God.

The Quran teaches us that God increases His blessings to people and communities when they are appreciative of the blessings they receive. On the other hand, an unappreciative state of mind is associated with disbelief in God and will lead people to an eventual loss, both in this life and in Hereafter.

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

Count God's Blessings

Even those of us who are not as fortunate as some others in this material life

can find many things in our lives to be thankful for. Just looking at ourselves should be enough. Do we have eyes with which we can see? Do we have ears with which we can hear? Tongues we can speak and taste with? Legs we can walk with? Lungs we can breath with? Think about all the organs, small or large, external or internal, that make up our body, and are functioning without giving us any trouble, in accordance with God's design. Think about the countless red and white blood cells running around in our veins to keep us going. They busily work in their designated jobs day and night for as long as we live.

Think about the air we breath. We do not have to carry an oxygen tank on our backs to get the air we need. How difficult it would have been for us then. Imagine people lining up to refill their tanks in oxygen stations. God made the air freely available. We should be thankful to Him for His infinite mercy.

How about the sun and the moon, and the stars God has put for our service. Nights He has designed for our rest. Days He has made for us to provide sustenance. The seasons. The rain. The snow.... The oceans, the mountains, the trees, the animals.... The list of God's provisions and blessings is virtually endless.

continued on the last page

IMMUNE SYSTEMS:

The way God protects us

He is Supreme over His creatures, and He appoints guards to protect you... [6:61]

God perfected His creation as stated in Verse 95:4 "We created man in the best design" and in 40:64 "...and He designed you, and designed you well..."

When a baby is born, he or she is protected by immune systems that can recognize certain microbes immediately and destroy them. If God did not provide us with immune systems, the population of people and animals in the world would probably be extinct, because we would not have any protection against diseases and infections.

The baby gradually grows and so does the immune system. Then, antibodies play a leading role against antigens. Antigens are produced or released by invaders or foreign molecules, such as bacteria, viruses, pollens, fungi, protozoa, worms, cancer cells, foreign tissues, worn out cells, etc. Antibodies, also called immunoglobulins (Igs), are proteins produced in response to a particular antigen and their response is very specific. There are five groups of antibodies: IgG, IgM, IgA, IgD and IgE. Each of them has a specific job. God's design is precise as stated in verse 77:23. "We measured it precisely. We are the best designers."

How can the immune systems recognize viruses (influenza, HIV, hepatitis, measles), bacteria (tuberculosis, syphilis, leprosy), pathogens (malaria, worms, sleeping sickness), or other foreign elements that enter our body and can infect us? When intruders enter our body, the white blood cells fight against them. To respond to various intruders, the leukocytes (white blood cells) have different types of blood cells, such as lymphocytes, monocytes and granulocytes (neutrophils, basophils and eosinophiles). These cells have different roles to protect us. The lymphocytes have two different classes of immune responses:

Humoral immunity (B lymphocyte) originates from the bone marrow. B cells have antibodies on their surfaces so they can recognize foreign intruders directly. These antibodies are the most important factor in our defense system against infection, because they can bind antigens, they have the ability to recognize and neutralize bacteria toxin, then destroy them or coat the microbes, which increases their ability to engulf the pathogens. When B cells are activated, they divide and differentiate into plasma cells, then the plasma cells secrete antibody proteins.

However, antibodies alone are not enough to defend our body from hidden foreign intruders that slip very quickly inside the cells, like malaria, Leishmania, Pneumococci bacillus and viruses. Antibodies get help from cell-mediated immunity (T lymphocyte) which originates from the thymus. Here the T cells play a role. Because T cells cannot see the whole antigens, they get help from their receptors and antigen-presenting cells which recognize and then ingest the antigens and split them into fragments of peptides. These peptides join MHC (major histocompatibility complex) molecules and appear on the surface of the T cells, which release chemical signals, lymphokines, that activate other parts of the immune systems. There are many kinds of T cells: cytotoxic T cell, helper T cell, inflammatory T cell, suppression T cell; each has a special job.

Various cells and molecules in the white blood cells, such as dendritic cells, macrophages, and natural-killer cells, help both B and T cells, so our immune system is perfect. These cells have the responsibility to recognize antigens, then destroy them. They work with specific reactions. The duet of B and T lymphocytes cooperates to protect us against diseases. It is really amazing how the immune system works in concert. Who is the conductor? Who is the initiator? Who controls them?

He is the One who initiates and repeats. [85:12]

He creates and shapes. He designs and guides. [87:2-3]

He is the One God; the Creator, the Initiator, the Designer. [59:24]

Such is God your Lord, the Creator of all things. There is no god except He. How could you deviate. [40:62]

From previous experience with the infectious organisms, some T and B cells become memory cells, where some information about the invasion imprints and stays in the circulation. When the same foreign cells enter the body, the memory cells replicate T or B cells automatically and are ready to kill the antigens. That is why we rarely suffer for a second time from chicken-pox, measles, or whooping-cough. We never order them to replicate, but God designed our immune systems for protection against the infection, for our good health and survival.

To God prostrates everyone in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and so do their shadows in the mornings and the evenings. [13:15]

Such is God your Lord, there is no god except He, the Creator of all things. You shall worship Him alone. He is in control of all things. [6:102]

Not only does God protect our immune systems, He also restores damaged immune functions and suppresses them when they go uncontrolled. So, if God protects us through the immune systems, why do we sometimes get sick? We shouldn't blame God; we should ask ourselves whether we have done something wrong because: "anything good that happens to you is from God, and anything bad that happens to you is a consequence of your own deeds, and He overlooks many." [4:79, 42:30]

If we can't find the reason why we are sick, maybe God wants to test us:

We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast. [2:155]

Do the people think that they will be left to say, 'We believe,' without being put to the test? [29:2]

However, many people do not appreciate what God has given them. They tend to remember God when they get sick; only at that time do they not take God for granted. "The human being is unappreciative of his Lord." [100:6]

Let us be more appreciative of what God has given us before it is too late. Be He glorified. He is the Most High.

And He is the One who initiates the creation, then repeats it; this is even easier for Him. To Him belongs the most sublime similitude, in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Almighty, Most Wise. [30:27]

Is God not the Most Wise, of all the wise ones? [95:8]

Anita H. Atmowidjojo

Masjid Tucson News

Thanksgiving Service

We participated in an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service held at Catalina United Methodist Church on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1995. The service was organized by the Inter-Religious Council of Southern Arizona of which we are a member. The religions represented on the council are Christianity (Protestant and Roman Catholic), Baha'ism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. The objective of the service was to bring together different faiths in prayer and song as we give thanks to God for the many blessings we have received.

The turnout for the service was much more than we expected, over 150 people attending. Each religion was given about 10 minutes for their presentation. It was God's will that we had the last slot to wrap up all the talks. This was an excellent opportunity for us to tell people about the religion of true Islam (Submission to God alone) and to read verses from the Quran on appreciating God's blessings. We also shared excerpts from George Washington's original Thanksgiving proclamation, a truly Islamic document. And the Kids of the Mosque performed their best again, singing two wonderful songs.

We prepared a pamphlet for this event and distributed it. We explained in this pamphlet the meaning of Islam (Submission) and Muslim (Submitter) with the verses from the Quran. We also included in the pamphlet the verses from the Quran on appreciation which were read during the talk, and the songs which the children sang.

At the closing, everyone participated in a response prayer of Thanksgiving to God alone. This prayer is given on the right.

Soup Kitchen

We participate in an ongoing project to help feed the hungry in our town in cooperation with Casas Adobes congregational church and Temple Emmanuel synagog. During one weekend every other month, representatives from the three communities get together to buy, prepare and distribute food at a soup kitchen operated by the Salvation Army. The kitchen usually feeds about 200 people at each meal. The last soup kitchen participation was on November 4-5, 1995.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

In the name of God:

All Respond: We will give thanks to the Lord with all our heart in the company and assembly of the just.

Praise be to God, who created the heavens and the earth, who made the earth habitable, who created on it rivers, oceans and mountains, who sends the winds to stir up clouds; then sends down from the clouds rain to produce gardens of beauty.

All Respond: Praise and Thanksgiving to God, our Lord.

To God who created the sun and the moon, designing the night for our rest and the day lighted, who created the stars and the planets, who gave us sunsets and rainbows.

All Respond: The heavens and the earth declare the glory of God.

To God who created us, who provides for us, who grants us the hearing, the vision and the intellect, who has bestowed all these blessings, and so many more, upon us.

All Respond: God, we are appreciative of Your blessings.

To God who rescues those who call upon Him, relieves adversity, and guides us on the right path, who answers our prayers when we implore Him, who is merciful towards His servants, who accepts our repentance and remits our sins.

All Respond: We thank you God for Your mercy and Your guidance.

On this Day of Thanksgiving, we remember that God is the source of everything, and we thank Him for the gifts He has given us.

All Respond: Praise and Thanksgiving to God, our Lord.

May God help us to always be appreciative, humble, and kind. May we be generous to others, as God has been generous to us. May we be honorable and righteous every day. It is only through remembering God, and thanking Him, that we may continue to receive His blessings.

All Respond: Praise the Lord, for He is good; sing praise to our God, for He is gracious, it is fitting to praise Him.

Dear Readers:

We would like to hear from you. If you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter, please let us know. If you would like to contribute an article based on the Quran, Islam (Submission), or related topics, please send them to ICS/Masjid Tucson, PO Box 43476, Tucson, AZ 85733, USA.

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