

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

# Submitters Perspective

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## Giving Thanks

*[2:172] O you who believe, eat from the good things we provided for you, and be thankful to GOD, if you do worship Him alone.*

### The history of Thanksgiving

Before I get into the history of Thanksgiving, I just want to say this about history in general. With many historical accounts, there are three sides—one side's version, the other side's version, and the truth from God. So, as with any history, the history of Thanksgiving may not be completely accurate. According to Wikipedia, thanksgiving pre-America involved religious ceremonies following a harvest. There are early accounts of Egyptians, Greeks and Romans having a feast after harvesting their crops and paying tribute to their gods. In the early 1500s in England, there were 95 holidays that involved feasting and celebration. King Henry VIII reduced these feasts from 95 to 27, but the Puritans wanted to eliminate all holidays and simply have Days of Fasting and Days of Thanksgiving.

Days of Fasting followed unexpected disasters, such as the drought in 1611, disastrous floods in 1613 and the plagues in 1604 and 1622. Special

blessings from God, such as the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, called for Days of Thanksgiving. To remove all the variance of celebrations, one annual Day of Thanksgiving was assigned in 1606.

The origin of Thanksgiving in America is somewhat controversial. One account points to a peaceful gathering, celebrated after a fruitful harvest between the pilgrims and the Native Americans. Another account states Thanksgivings were celebrations of victories in physical combat over the land. Whatever truly happened, we know that God tells us humans to be thankful for our food and our lives.

In 1789, George Washington issued a proclamation calling for a national day of Thanksgiving. (See Submitters Perspective Nov 2012.) Regardless of the accuracy of the historical accounts of early Thanksgivings, the annual day celebrated in the US began absolutely as a time to be thankful to God alone. As submitters, of course, we do not have a specific day designed to be thankful to God. God willing, we are thankful all day, every day, all year, all of our lives.

*[2:152] You shall remember Me, that I*

*may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.*

When I did a search in the Quran, I was surprised to see there are only 9 verses with the English word "thank." But, as the previous verse shows us, thanks in the Quran is associated with appreciation. And a Quran search of the word "appreciate" yields pages of verses, which makes perfect sense to me. But the following discussion is of the verses using the word "thank."

*[2:172] O you who believe, eat from the good things we provided for you, and be thankful to GOD, if you do worship Him alone.*

This verse doesn't mean a holiday once a year, have a feast and be thankful. God willing, we should thank God with every drink, every snack and every meal.

*[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.*

In my younger years, I wanted to use this verse for my personal gain. I didn't understand the wisdom of this verse. When God gave me money, I thanked

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Him profusely, thinking this would immediately bring me more. I finally realized that life is about our souls and the physical world is only an illusion. When God provides me with money, and I am thankful, I have an opportunity to grow my soul by paying zakat, by using the money in worship and observance of God. If you keep thanking God, you can see a snowball effect of opportunities to grow your soul and you will be in a happier state of mind. Thank You, God, for giving us the gift of thankfulness.

*[21:80] And we taught him the skill of making shields to protect you in war. Are you then thankful?*

I always like to see how verses in the Quran can apply to me and my life. There are different ways people can engage in war—physical combat, face-to-face verbal disputes, battles of words on the internet, and war within and against yourself to deal with your ego. One way to win these wars is with shields—coverings, words inspired by God, research done to let the truth be known, and for our inner war, prayer and meditation. Thank You, God, for the shields You have given us.

*[32:9] He shaped him and blew into him from His spirit. And He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains; rarely are you thankful.*

This verse is telling us to be thankful for just life itself. We know this is another opportunity for us to repent from our original sin of siding with Satan. When life seems very hard, God willing, we remember to be thankful, knowing the alternative could have been condemnation without this chance. And we have the tremendous gift of our hearing, eyesight and brains. Life would be so much harder if we couldn't hear or see. Or if we didn't have our amazingly complex brain—humans don't fully understand it. They say we can only use about 10 percent of it at a time. But they don't really know; they're only guessing. We know from Quran that our brain is a source for knowing (16:78) and for verifying information (17:36). Thank

You, God, for life, hearing, eyesight and brains.

*[36:35] This is to provide them with fruits, and to let them manufacture with their own hands whatever they need. Would they be thankful?*

God is reminding us to be thankful for fruits and the ability to use our hands. Imagine life without our hands. We wouldn't be able to build things, type things, or do most things. Thank You, God, for the delicious fruits of the world, and for our hands, and may You keep us healthy and prosperous.

*[40:61] GOD is the One who designed the night so you can rest in it, and the day lighted. GOD bestows many blessings upon the people, but most people are not thankful.*

God bestows many blessings upon us; this verse is pointing to night for rest and the lighted day. We can thank God for sleep. It feels great waking up feeling refreshed and starting your day. It almost feels like every morning I'm reborn. Without light, we would have a difficult time moving around and accomplishing things. Thank You, God, for the night to rest and the light of the day, and all the blessings You bestow on us.

*[56:68] Have you noted the water you drink? ... [56:70] If we will, we can make it salty. You should be thankful.*

How refreshing is a glass of water, especially during Ramadan, when breaking your fast. It feels magical when going down your throat into your body. Thank You, God, for fresh water.

*[76:9] "We feed you for the sake of GOD; we expect no reward from you, nor thanks.*

Not just food, but everything we do in our lives, needs to focus around doing it for God, not to be seen or thanked by anyone else. We need to constantly say "Thank You, God" for everything. Please help us to be thankful to You every second of every day of every year for our entire lifetime, here and in the Hereafter.

Robert

## An Attitude of Gratitude

*Do you know the power of appreciation? 85% of people are unhappy with their career. We all have goals and we are always trying to keep up with the Jones'. Goals are great to have, but don't let life pass you by without enjoying the journey you are on. Count your blessings not your problems. Don't regret not appreciating what you had when you had it including the people in your life. We get so focused on where we are headed we forget where we are and what we have now. The purpose of life is to find your purpose ... .*  
(LinkedIn Quote)

When I read this, it got me thinking. We, as Submitters, know our purpose is to worship God alone (45:22, 51:56, 90:4).

*[45:22] GOD created the heavens and the earth for a specific purpose, in order to pay each soul for whatever it earned, without the least injustice.*

*[51:56] I did not create the jinns and the humans except to worship Me alone.*

*[90:4] We created the human being to work hard (to redeem himself).*

*[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.*

*[32:9] He shaped him and blew into him from His spirit. And He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains; rarely are you thankful.*

When was the last time we stopped to really acknowledge the things we're thankful for? To thank Him for our innumerable blessings?

Gratitude means thankfulness. It includes counting our blessings and noticing the simple pleasures, and acknowledging everything that we receive comes from

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God. It means being aware on a continuous basis of how much we've been given (30:50). Gratitude shifts our focus from what we appear to lack, to the abundance God already gave us.

People tend to take for granted the good that is already present in their lives. There's a gratitude exercise that has you imagine losing some of the things that you take for granted, such as your ability to see, hear, walk, etc. Now, imagine getting each of these things back, one by one, and consider how grateful you would be for each blessing (16:78, 6:46).

Use gratitude to help put things in perspective. When things don't go our way, remember that God is in control. That there's a good reason for it. As long as we're steadfast (2:45, 2:153), the test carries within it the seeds of an equal or greater benefit. Always turn to God and ask yourself: "What can I learn from this?" "What's good about this?" "How can I grow my soul with this?"

[94:5] *With pain there is gain.*

[94:6] *Indeed, with pain there is gain.*

Gratitude may be one of the most overlooked tools that we all have access to every day. Cultivating gratitude doesn't cost any money and it certainly doesn't take much time, but the benefits are enormous. God states in 27:40 *The one who possessed knowledge from the book said, "I can bring it to you in the blink of your eye." When he saw it settled in front of him, he said, "This is a blessing from my Lord, whereby He tests me, to show whether I am appreciative or unappreciative. Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good, and if one turns unappreciative, then my Lord is in no need for him, Most Honorable."*

Science says gratitude has many benefits.

### 1. Gratitude fosters more relationships.

We are taught that saying "thank you" is good manners. According to a 2014 study published in *Emotion* it also helps you

make friends. If you thank a new acquaintance, they are more likely to want to continue the friendship.

### 2. Gratitude improves physical health.

Following God's system is the secret to health and happiness. Science is finding that out too. According to a 2012 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences* grateful people experienced fewer aches and pains, had a better immune system, and reported feeling healthier than others. They were also more likely to exercise regularly and attend regular check-ups with their doctors. Also, being appreciative appears linked to reducing the effects of aging on the brain. Praise God!

### 3. Gratitude improves psychological health.

God tells us to counter evil with good. Being grateful reduces many harmful emotions, including envy, resentment, frustration and regret (according to Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D., a leading researcher in the field). If you're thanking God for the car He gave you, why would you envy someone else's? Whatever God gives us is perfect (11:86).

### 4. Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression.

God's system is peace while Satan preaches aggression. Studies show grateful people are less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback. They also were more empathetic and had a decreased desire to seek revenge. A submitter knows God is in control, and will work on suppressing anger and pardoning the people (3:134).

### 5. Grateful people sleep better.

Writing about things we appreciate improves sleep, according to a 2011 study in *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. The study examined being appreciative before bed. Let's try to be appreciative every chance we get (2:152, 3:191).

### 6. Gratitude increases mental strength.

Research shows gratitude not only reduces stress, but can also help overcome trauma. According to a WebMD report gratitude after the events of 9/11 helped people deal with stress. Life and death

are in God's hands. Each day is an opportunity to grow closer to Him.

**7. It's good for teen mental health.** Not surprisingly, teens who are appreciative are happier (according to research presented at the American Psychological Association meeting in 2016). Such individuals were more likely to be well-behaved at school and have a positive outlook. Adolescence can be a difficult stage in life, and appreciating God's many blessings can help overcome the anger and negativity Satan tries to promote.

**8. Better Grades** Grateful high-schoolers had higher GPAs, were more satisfied with life according to a 2010 study in the *Journal of Happiness Studies*. They were less likely to be depressed or envious. The best thing we can do for our children is to bring them up as righteous persons (2:220, 20:132). God's system is perfect.

We all have the ability and opportunity to cultivate gratitude. Simply take a few moments to focus on all that you have – rather than complain about all the things you think you deserve. Developing an "attitude of gratitude" is one of the simplest ways to improve your satisfaction with life. Once you become oriented toward looking for things to be grateful for, you will find that you begin to appreciate simple pleasures and things that you previously took for granted.

Gratitude should not be just a reaction to getting what you want, but an all-the-time gratitude, the kind where you notice the little things and where you constantly look for the good.

So, when God says in 27:40 "...*whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good,*" it is not just for reasons of faith; it REALLY IS for our own good—physically and mentally. God willing, let's all try to be more appreciative on a daily basis.

Moe

Reference: Amy Morin, "*7 Scientifically Proven Benefits Of Gratitude That Will Motivate You To Give Thanks Year-Round,*" *Forbes*, 2014.

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## Giving Thanks Verses

*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34)*

*Now, our God, we give You thanks, and praise Your glorious name. (1 Chronicles 29:13)*

*I will give thanks to You, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonderful deeds. (Psalm 9:1)*

*I will praise God's name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving. (Psalm 69:30)*

*Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. (Psalm 95:2)*

*Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. (Luke 9:16)*

*For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. (1 Timothy 4:4)*

*Know that the LORD is God.*

*It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.*

*For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100:3-5)*

### Quran

*[3:123] .... you shall observe GOD, to show your appreciation.*

*[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.*

*[31:12] We have endowed Luqmān with wisdom: "You shall be appreciative of GOD." Whoever is appreciative is appreciative for his own good. As for those who turn unappreciative, GOD is in no need, Praiseworthy.*

*[39:66] Therefore, you shall worship GOD alone, and be appreciative.*

*[46:15] ... "My Lord, direct me to appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do the righteous works that please You. ..."*

*[2:198] ... You shall commemorate Him for guiding you; before this, you had gone astray.*

*[76:3] We showed him the two paths, then, he is either appreciative, or unappreciative.*

*[16:10-14] He sends down from the sky water for your drink, and to grow trees for your benefit. With it, He grows for you crops, olives, date palms, grapes,*

*and all kinds of fruits. This is (sufficient) proof for people who think. And He commits, in your service, the night and the day, as well as the sun and the moon. Also, the stars are committed by His command.*

*These are (sufficient) proofs for people who understand. And (He created) for you on earth things of various colors.*

*This is a (sufficient) proof for people who take heed. And He committed the sea to serve you; you eat from it tender meat, and extract jewelry which you wear. And you see the ships roaming it for your commercial benefits, as you seek His bounties, that you may be appreciative.*

*[16:18] If you count GOD's blessings, you cannot possibly encompass them. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.*

*[16:78] GOD brought you out of your mothers' bellies knowing nothing, and He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains, that you may be appreciative.*

As we enjoy Thanksgiving feasts, or our daily meals, let us remember to be thankful to God.

*[16:114] 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.*

*[69:24] Eat and drink happily in return for your works in days past.*

With God's help, we remember to eat and drink moderately (7:31) and not to waste anything (6:141).