

heart remains thankless, ungrateful.

Therefore, mere verbal thanksgiving is without effect. But real thankfulness is a cordial giving of thanks from the heart. When man in response to the favors of God manifests susceptibilities of conscience, the heart is happy, the spirit is exhilarated. These spiritual susceptibilities are ideal thanksgiving.

There is a cordial thanksgiving, too, which expresses itself in the deeds and actions of man when his heart is filled with gratitude. For example, God has conferred upon man the gift of guidance, and in thankfulness for this great gift certain deeds must emanate from him.

To express his gratitude for the favors of God man must show forth praiseworthy actions. In response to these bestowals he must render good deeds, be self-sacrificing, loving the servants of God, forfeiting even life for them, showing kindness to all the creatures.

He must be severed from the world, attracted to the Kingdom of Abha, the face radiant, the tongue eloquent, the ear attentive, striving day and night to attain the good pleasure of God. Whatsoever he wishes to do must be in harmony with the good pleasure of God. He must observe and see what is the will of God and act accordingly. There can be no doubt that such commendable deeds are thankfulness for the favors of God.

Consider how grateful anyone becomes when healed from sickness, when treated kindly by



another or when a service is rendered by another, even though it may be of the least consequence. If we forget such favors, it is an evidence of ingratitude. Then it will be said a loving-kindness has been done, but we are thankless, not appreciating this love and favor.



Physically and spiritually we are submerged in the sea of God's favor. He has provided our foods, drink and other requirements; His favors encompass us from all directions. The sustenances provided for man are blessings. Sight, hearing and all his faculties are wonderful gifts. These blessings are innumerable; no matter how many are mentioned, they are still endless.

Spiritual blessings are likewise endless — spirit, consciousness, thought, memory, perception, ideation and other endowments. By these He has guided us, and we enter His Kingdom. He has opened the doors of all good before our faces. He has vouchsafed eternal glory. He has summoned us to the Kingdom of heaven. He has enriched us by the bestowals of God. Every day he has proclaimed new glad tidings. Every hour fresh bounties descend.

Consider how all the people are asleep, and ye are awake. They are dead, and ye are alive through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. They are blind while ye are endowed with perceptive sight. They are deprived of the love of God, but in your hearts it exists and is glowing. Consider these bestowals and favors.

Therefore, in thanksgiving for them ye must act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'u'llah. Ye must read the Tablets — the Hidden Words, Ishraqat, Glad Tidings — all the holy utterances, and act according to them. This is real thanksgiving, to live in accord with these utterances. This is true thankfulness and the divine bestowal. This is thanksgiving and glorification of God.

Excerpts from the Bahá'í Writings on Thankfulness

O compassionate God! Thanks be to Thee for Thou hast awakened and made me conscious. Thou hast given me a seeing eye and favored me with a hearing ear, hast led me to Thy kingdom and guided me to Thy path. Thou hast shown me the right way and caused me to enter the ark of deliverance. O God! Keep me steadfast and make me firm and staunch. Protect me from violent tests, and preserve and shelter me in the strongly fortified fortress of Thy Covenant and Testament. Thou art the Powerful. Thou art the Seeing. Thou art the Hearing.

O Thou the Compassionate God. Bestow upon me a heart which, like unto glass, may be illumined with the light of Thy love, and confer upon me thoughts which may change this world into a rose garden through the outpourings of heavenly grace.

Thou art the Compassionate, the Merciful. Thou art the Great Beneficent God.



In these times thanksgiving for the bounty of the Merciful One consists in the illumination of the heart and the feeling of the soul. This is the reality of thanksgiving. But, although offering thanks through speech or writings is approvable, yet, in comparison with that, it is but unreal, for the foundation is spiritual feelings and merciful sentiments. I hope that you may be favored therewith. But the lack of capacity and merit in the Day of Judgment does not prevent one from bounty and generosity, for it is the day of grace and not justice, and to give every one his due is justice. Consequently, do not look upon thy capacity, nay, rather, look upon the infinite grace of the Bounty of Abha whose grace is comprehending and whose bounty is perfect.



In this day, to thank God for His bounties consisteth in possessing a radiant heart, and a soul open to the promptings of the spirit. This is the essence of thanksgiving.



Praise and thanksgiving be unto Providence that out of all the realities in existence He has chosen the reality of man and has honored it with intellect and wisdom, the two most luminous lights in either world.



We offer thanksgiving unto God in all circumstances and cherish the hope that He—

exalted be His glory—may through His gracious providence guide all who dwell on earth towards that which is acceptable and pleasing unto Him.



O Lord, my God! Praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee for Thou hast guided me to the highway of the kingdom, suffered me to walk in this straight and far-stretching path, illumined my eye by beholding the splendors of Thy light, inclined my ear to the melodies of the birds of holiness from the kingdom of mysteries and attracted my heart with Thy love among the righteous.



Supplicate to God, pray to Him and invoke Him at midnight and at dawn. Be humble and submissive to God and chant the verses of thanksgiving at morn and eve, for that He guided thee unto the Manifest Light and showed to thee the straight Path and destined to thee the station of nearness in His wonderful Kingdom.

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Bahá'í Faith

Thankfulness

At this season we reflect on the spiritual significance of thanksgiving with the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, son of Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá shared these thoughts when he visited the United States in 1912:

Thankfulness is of various kinds. There is a verbal thanksgiving which is confined to a mere utterance of gratitude. This is of no importance because perchance the tongue may give thanks while the heart is unaware of it.

Many who offer thanks to God are of this type, their spirits and hearts unconscious of thanksgiving. This is mere usage, just as when we meet, receive a gift and say thank you, speaking the words without significance. One may say thank you a thousand times while the