

There is no blessing you enjoy which does not come from God, and to Him you turn for help when misfortune befalls you.

- *The Holy Quran, 16:53*

Fame or integrity: which is more important?
Money or happiness: which is more valuable?
Success or failure: which is more destructive?

If you look to others for fulfillment,
You will never truly be fulfilled.
If your happiness depends on money,
You will never be happy with yourself.

Be content with what you have,
Rejoice in the way things are.
When you realize there is nothing lacking,
The whole world belongs to you.

- *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching 44*

The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.

- *Friedrich Nietzsche*

They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples.

[...]

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, 2, 5*

You must search for the good in yourself.

When you start looking deep within yourself, you may think there is no good in you at all. You may feel you are full of evil: a negative voice inside you may try to drive you into depression. But you must not allow yourself to fall into depression. Search until you find some little good in you. For how could it be that you never did anything good in your whole life?

[...]

But finding your good points can give you new life. Even if you know you have done wrong and caused damage and that you are far from God, you must search until you find the good that is still inside you. This will give you new life and make you truly happy. You are certainly entitled to feel the greatest joy over every good point you find in yourself, because each good point comes from the holy soul within you. The new life and joy you will gain from this path will enable you to pray, sing and give thanks to God.

- *Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Likutey Moharan I, 282*

Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.

- *Marcus Tullius Cicero*

Those who consider the inessential to be essential

And see the essential as inessential

Don't reach the essential,

Living in the field of wrong intention.

Those who know the essential to be essential

And the inessential as inessential

Reach the essential,

Living in the field of right intention.

- *Gautama Buddha, Dhammapada, 11-12*

Lord

I thank You for creating the world beautiful and various

and for allowing me in Your fathomless goodness to visit places which were not the sites of my daily torments

- that at night in Tarquinia I lay in the square by the well and a gunmetal pendulum rang out from the tower Your wrath or forgiveness

and that a little donkey on the island Corkyra sang to me from the unfathomable bellows of its lungs the melancholy of the landscape

and that in the ugly city of Manchester I discovered kindhearted and sensible people

nature repeated its wise tautologies: the forest was a forest the sea the sea a cliff a cliff

stars revolved and it was as it ought to be - *lovis omnia plena*

- forgive me - that I thought only of myself while the lives of others cruel and inexorable turned around me like the great astrological clock of St. Pierre in Beauvais

that I was lazy distracted too timid in labyrinths and caves

and forgive me also that I did not fight like Lord Byron for the happiness of oppressed peoples and studied only the rising moon and museums

- I thank You that works created for Your greater glory yielded to me particles of their mystery and that with great presumption I thought that Duccio Van Eyck and Bellini painted for me also

and also that the Acropolis which I never fully understood patiently revealed to me its mutilated body

- I ask You to reward the gray old woman who unbidden brought me fruit from her garden on the sunburned native island of the son of Laertes

and Miss Helen of the foggy island of Mull in the Hebrides for offering Greek hospitality and asking me to leave a lamp lit at night in the window facing Holy Iona so that the lights of earth would greet each other

and also all those who gave me directions and said *kato kyrie kato*

and take under Your protection Mama from Spoleto Spiridion from Paxos the good student from Berlin who saved me from oppression and then when met unexpectedly in Arizona drove me to the Grand Canyon which is like a hundred thousand cathedrals standing on their heads

- Lord let me not think of my moist eyed gray deluded persecutors when the sun sets on the truly indescribably Ionian Sea

let me understand other people other languages other sufferings and above all let me be humble that is to say one who longs for the source

I thank You Lord for creating the world beautiful and various and if this is Your seduction I am seduced for good and past all forgiveness

- *Zbigniew Herbert, Prayer of the Traveler Mr. Cogito*

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

- John F. Kennedy

They should manifest gratitude and thankfulness to God, and the best way to thank God is to love one another.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 468

Praise belongs to Allah in satisfaction with Allah's decision! I bear witness that Allah has apportioned the livelihoods of His servants with justice and undertaken bounty for all His creatures.

O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, tempt me not with what Thou hast given to Thy creatures and tempt them not with what Thou hast withheld from me. Lest I envy Thy creatures and despise Thy decision!

O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, delight my soul through Thy decree, expand my breast through the instances of Thy decision, give to me a trust through which I may admit that Thy decree runs only to the best, and let my gratitude to Thee for what Thou hast taken away from me be more abundant than my gratitude to Thee for what Thou hast conferred upon me! Preserve me from imagining any meanness in someone who is destitute or imagining any superiority in someone who possesses wealth, for the noble is he whom obedience to Thee has ennobled and the exalted is he whom worship of Thee has exalted! So bless Muhammad and his Household, give us to enjoy a wealth which does not run out, confirm us with an exaltation which will never be lost, and let us roam freely in the kingdom of everlastingness! Surely, Thou art the One, the Unique, the Eternal Refuge; Thou hast not begotten, nor hast Thou been begotten, and equal to Thee is not any one.

-Imam Ali Zain-ul-Abidin (عليه السلام), *His Supplication in Satisfaction with the Decree*

My Allah, the uninterrupted flow of Thy graciousness has distracted me from thanking Thee! The flood of Thy bounty has rendered me incapable of counting Thy praises! The succession of Thy kind acts has diverted me from mentioning Thee in laudation! The continuous rush of Thy benefits has thwarted me from spreading the news of Thy gentle favors! This is the station of him who confesses to the lavishness of favours, meets them with shortcomings, and witnesses to his own disregard and negligence. Thou art the Clement, the compassionate, the Good, the Generous, who does not disappoint those who aim for Him! In Thy yard are put down the saddlebags of the hopeful and in Thy plain stand the hopes of the helpseekers! So meet not our hopes by disappointing and disheartening and clothe us not in the shirt of despair and despondency!

My Allah, my thanksgiving is small before Thy great boons, and my praise and news-spreading shrink beside Thy generosity toward me! Thy favours have wrapped me in the robes of the lights of faith, and the gentlenesses of Thy goodness have let down over me delicate curtains of might! Thy kindnesses have collared me with collars not to be moved and adorned me with neck-rings not to be broken! Thy boons are abundant - my tongue is too weak to count them! Thy favours are many - my understanding falls short of grasping them, not to speak of exhausting them! So how can I achieve thanksgiving? For my thanking Thee requires thanksgiving. Whenever I say, "To Thee belongs praise!", it becomes thereby incumbent upon me to say, "To Thee belongs praise!"

My Allah, as Thou hast fed us through Thy gentleness and nurtured us through Thy benefaction, so also complete for us lavish favours, repel from us detested acts of vengeance, and of the shares of the two abodes, give us their most elevated and their greatest, both the immediate and the deferred! To Thee belongs praise for Thy good trial and the lavishness of Thy favours, a praise conforming to Thy good pleasure and attracting Thy great goodness and magnanimity. O All-mighty, O All-generous! By Thy mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful!

-Imam Ali Zain-ul-Abidin (عليه السلام), *Whispered Prayer of the Thankful*

Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth but God sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.

- *The Báb*

O Allah, thank them [my parents] for my upbringing, reward them for honouring me, and guard them as they guarded me in my infancy!

-*Imam Ali Zain-ul-Abidin (عليه السلام), His Supplication for Parents*

Health is the foremost possession,
Contentment, the foremost wealth,
Trust, the foremost kinship,
And Nirvana, the foremost happiness.

- *Gautama Buddha, Dhammapada, 204*

This man of harmony surrenders the reward of his work and thus attains final peace: the man of disharmony, urged by desire, is attached to his reward and remains in bondage.

- *Krishna, Bhagavad Gita, 5.12*

"Religion is sincerity." We said: To whom? He said: "To Allah and his Book, and His Messenger, and to the leaders of the Muslims and their common folk."

- *Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [Sahih Muslim]*

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

- *John Milton*

O SON OF MAN! Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou mayest be worthy to meet Me and to mirror forth My beauty.

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, From the Arabic, 36*

Death sweeps away

The person obsessed
With gathering flowers,
As a great flood sweeps away a sleeping village.

The person obsessed
With gathering flowers,
Insatiable for sense pleasures,
Is under the sway of Death.

As a bee gathers nectar
And moves on without harming
The flower, its color, or its fragrance,
Just so should a sage walk through a village.

Do not consider the faults of others
Or what they have or haven't done.
Consider rather
What you yourself have or haven't done.

Like a beautiful flower,
Brightly colored but lacking scent,
So are well-spoken words
Fruitless when not carried out.

Like a beautiful flower,
Brightly colored and with scent,
So are well-spoken words
Fruitful when carried out.

Just as from a heap of flowers
Many garlands can be made,
So, you, with your mortal life,
Should do many skillful things.

- *Gautama Buddha, Dhammapada, 47-53*

O My God, Thou fairest, greatest, first of all objects, my heart admires, adores, loves thee, for my little vessel is as full as it can be, and I would pour out all that fullness before thee in ceaseless flow.

When I think upon and converse with thee ten thousand delightful thoughts spring up, ten thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed, ten thousand refreshing joys spread over my heart, crowding into every moment of happiness.

I bless thee for the soul thou hast created, for adorning it, for sanctifying it, though it is fixed in barren soil;

for the body thou hast given me, for preserving its strength and vigour, for providing senses to enjoy delights, for the ease and freedom of my limbs, for hands, eyes, ears that do thy bidding;

for thy royal bounty providing my daily support, for a full table and overflowing cup, for appetite, taste, sweetness, for social joys of relatives and friends, for ability to serve others, for a heart that feels sorrows and necessities, for a mind to care for my fellow-men, for opportunities of spreading happiness around, for loved ones in the joys of heaven, for my own expectation of seeing thee clearly.

I love thee above the powers of language to express, for what thou art to thy creatures. Increase my love, O my God, through time and eternity.

- *Puritan Prayer from The Valley of Vision*

Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.

- *Charles Dickens*

O SON OF MAN! Be thou content with Me and seek no other helper. For none but Me can ever suffice thee.

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, From the Arabic, 17*

This doth not mean, however, that one ought not to yield praise unto former Revelations. On no account is this acceptable, inasmuch as it behooveth man, upon reaching the age of nineteen, to render thanksgiving for the day of his conception as an embryo. For had the embryo not existed, how could he have reached his present state? Likewise had the religion taught by Adam not existed, this Faith would not have attained its present stage. Thus consider thou the development of God's Faith until the end that hath no end.

- *The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb 3.15.3*

What can God gain
By your punishment,
If ye are grateful
And ye believe?
Nay, it is God
That recogniseth
(All good), and knoweth
All things.

- *The Holy Quran, 4.147*

Craving gives rise to grief;
Craving gives rise to fear.
For someone released from craving
There is no grief;
And from where would come fear?

- *Gautama Buddha, Dhammapada, 216*

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.

- *Melody Beattie*

Often people ask how I manage to be happy despite having no arms and no legs. The quick answer is that I have a choice. I can be angry about not having limbs, or I can be thankful that I have a purpose. I chose gratitude.

- Nick Vujicic

Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

- Bible, Job 1.21

When one of you prays, let him begin by praising and thanking Allah, then let him send blessings upon the Prophet, and then afterward let him supplicate for whatever he wishes.

- Prophet Muhammad ﷺ [At-Tirmidhi]

For each new morning with its light, For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends, For everything Thy goodness sends.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thou seest, O my God, how my spirit hath been stirred up within my limbs and members, in its longing to worship Thee, and in its yearning to remember Thee and extol Thee; how it testifieth to that whereunto the Tongue of Thy Commandment hath testified in the kingdom of Thine utterance and the heaven of Thy knowledge. I love, in this state, O my Lord, to beg of Thee all that is with Thee, that I may demonstrate my poverty, and magnify Thy bounty and Thy riches, and may declare my powerlessness, and manifest Thy power and Thy might.

- Bahá'u'lláh, Long Obligatory Prayer

Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

My servant is my own two hands; my riding beast is my two feet, my bed is the earth, my pillow is a rock, my warmth in the winter is the east of the earth. I sleep and I do not possess anything, and I wake up and I do not possess anything, but there is no one on the face of this earth is richer than me.

- Christ Jesus (Islamic tradition)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

- Bible, Psalms 136.1

When a person wants to pray to God and ask for what he needs, he should first thank God for all of His past kindnesses and only then ask for what he needs. Because if he starts by asking only for what he needs, God says, "Have you nothing to thank Me for then?"

- Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-2

(Some people) have a wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life, with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy.

- Abraham H. Maslow

O SON OF SPIRIT! Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself.

- Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, From the Arabic, 18

One who makes merit rejoices in this life,
Rejoices in the next,
Rejoices in both worlds.
Seeing one's own pure acts bring joy and delight.

- Gautama Buddha, Dhammapada, 16

Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

- Aesop

Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! Every time I attempt to make mention of Thee, I am hindered by the sublimity of Thy station and the overpowering greatness of Thy might. For were I to praise Thee throughout the length of Thy dominion and the duration of Thy sovereignty, I would find that my praise of Thee can befit only such as are like unto me, who are themselves Thy creatures, and who have been generated through the power of Thy decree and been fashioned through the potency of Thy will. And at whatever time my pen ascribeth glory to any one of Thy names, methinks I can hear the voice of its lamentation in its remoteness from Thee, and can recognize its cry because of its separation from Thy Self. I testify that everything other than Thee is but Thy creation and is held in the hollow of Thy hand. To have accepted any act or praise from Thy creatures is but an evidence of the wonders of Thy grace and bountiful favors, and a manifestation of Thy generosity and providence.

I entreat Thee, O my Lord, by Thy Most Great Name whereby Thou didst separate light from fire, and truth from denial, to send down upon me and upon such of my loved ones as are in my company the good of this world and of the next. Supply us, then, with Thy wondrous gifts that are hid from the eyes of men. Thou art, verily, the Fashioner of all creation. No God is there but Thee, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most High.

- Bahá'u'lláh

Does not the gratitude of the dog put to shame any man who is ungrateful to his benefactors?

- Saint Basil the Great of Caesarea

He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.

- Epictetus

To find gratitude and generosity when you could reasonably find hurt and resentment will surprise you. It will be so surprising because you will see so much of the opposite: people who have much more than others yet who react with anger when one advantage is lost or with resentment when an added gift is denied.

- Henry B. Eyring

“O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another. O My servant, all of you are astray except for those I have guided, so seek guidance of Me and I shall guide you. O My servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food of Me and I shall feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing of Me and I shall clothe you. “

- Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, reciting the words of Allah [Sahih Muslim]

Like someone pointing to treasure

Is the wise person

Who sees your faults and points them out.

Associate with such a sage.

Good will come of it, not bad,

If you associate with one such as this.

Let one such as this advise you, instruct you,

And restrain you from rude behavior.

Such a person is pleasing to good people,

But displeasing to the bad.

- Gautama Buddha, Dhammapada, 76-77

Things turn out best for people who make the best of the way things turn out.

- *John Wooden*

When a man surrenders all desires that come to the heart and by the grace of God finds the joy of God, then his soul has indeed found peace.

- *Krishna, Bhagavad Gita, 2.35*

Do you not see how God sends down water from the sky and forthwith the earth turns green? Gracious is God and all-knowing.

His is all that the heavens and the earth contain. Surely God is the Self-sufficient, the Glorious One.

Do you not see how God has subdued for you all that is in the earth/ And the ships which sail the sea at His bidding? He holds the sky from falling down upon the earth: this it shall not do except by His own leave. Compassionate is God, and merciful to mankind.

Is it He who has given you life, and He who will cause you to die and make you live again. Surely man is ungrateful.

- *The Holy Quran, 22:63-67*

Silent gratitude isn't very much to anyone.

- *Gertrude Stein*

God doth not wish
to place you in a difficulty,
But to make you clean,
And to complete
His favour to you,
That ye may be grateful.

- *The Holy Quran, 5.6*

I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.

Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

- *Bible, Psalms 138*

Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.

- *Karl Barth*

O SON OF MAN! Neglect not My commandments if thou lovest My beauty, and forget not My counsels if thou wouldst attain My good pleasure.

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, From the Arabic, 39*

Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves, and spend without fear of bankruptcy.

- *Fred De Witt Van Amburgh*

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! I yield Thee thanks for having enabled me to recognize the Manifestation of Thyself, and for having severed me from Thine enemies, and laid bare before mine eyes their misdeeds and wicked works in Thy days, and for having rid me of all attachment to them, and caused me to turn wholly towards Thy grace and bountiful favors. I give Thee thanks, also, for having sent down upon me from the clouds of Thy will that which hath so sanctified me from the hints of the infidels and the allusions of the misbelievers that I have fixed my heart firmly on Thee, and fled from such as have denied the light of Thy countenance. Again I thank Thee for having empowered me to be steadfast in Thy love, and to speak forth Thy praise and to extol Thy virtues, and for having given me to drink of the cup of Thy mercy that hath surpassed all things visible and invisible. Thou art the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the All-Loving.

- *Bahá'u'lláh*

When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.

- *Willie Nelson*

This a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before.

- *Maya Angelou*

O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.
For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.

- *Bible, Psalms, 117*

...fear Me, so that I may perfect My favor to you and that you may be rightly guided.

Thus have We sent forth to you an apostle of your own who will recite to you Our revelations and purify you of sin, who will instruct you in the Book and in wisdom and teach you that of which you had no knowledge. Remember Me, then, and I will remember you. Give thanks to Me and never deny Me.

- *The Holy Quran, 2:151-152*

Gratitude is riches. Complaint is poverty.

- *Doris Day*

O people of the world! Build ye houses of worship throughout the lands in the name of Him Who is the Lord of all religions. Make them as perfect as is possible in the world of being, and adorn them with that which befitteth them, not with images and effigies. Then, with radiance and joy, celebrate therein the praise of your Lord, the Most Compassionate. Verily, by His remembrance the eye is cheered and the heart is filled with light.

- *Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, 31*

Gratitude

"This a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before."

- *Maya Angelou*

April 30th, 2016