

*Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, Sept 9, 2011*

*Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah*

*Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim*

God willing, this Qhutbah is on gratitude to God. The enshrined belief in the Quran is that to achieve peace of mind means to thank God for anything and everything He grants us. We have to appreciate that whatever God decides for us is for the best. If we get into difficulty we have to show tolerance and trust in God. This is also good for us because we learn from our mistakes and don't commit the same error again. In this way, we can be favoured with internal satisfaction and comfort.

Reflecting on the Quran sincerely, we will easily comprehend the notable differences between thankfulness and thanklessness (kufr in Arabic). If we believe that the contents of the Quran are of Divine Origin, we will have a positive realisation in our opinion and outlook which would be emulated in our actual behaviour and conduct.

Satan was expelled from Paradise for displaying superciliousness. [7:13-17] *He said, "Therefore, you must go down, for you are not to be arrogant here. Get out; you are debased." He said, "Grant me a respite, until the Day of Resurrection." He said, "You are granted a respite." He said, "Since You have willed that I go astray, I will skulk for them on Your straight path. "I will come to them from before them, and from behind them, and from their right, and from their left, and You will find that most of them are unappreciative."*

These Ayats warn us that Satan has a strategy to make us ungrateful and unthankful to God. He launches a multi pronged attack of evil and takes advantage of all our weaknesses. He will use every possible trick to entice us into his snare of evil.

[2:155-7] *We will surely test you through some fear, hunger, and loss of money, lives, and crops. Give good news to the steadfast. When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to GOD, and to Him we are returning." These have deserved blessings from their Lord and mercy. These are the guided ones.*

We must under all circumstances be grateful to God for His loving care. Our foolishness is that we forget our gratitude and unwittingly promote the cause of Satan. [2:153] *O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness and the Contact Prayers (Salat). GOD is with those who steadfastly persevere.*

God will always help those who are appreciative of Him. Remember Prophet Mohammed and his followers in Mecca. They were rejected, harassed, persecuted and lived in a situation of insecurity. *God Supports the Believers [8:26] Remember that you used to be few and oppressed, fearing that the people may snatch you, and He granted you a secure sanctuary, supported you with His victory, and provided you with good provisions, that you may be appreciative.*

The Quran continues - *[3:144] Muhammad was no more than a messenger like the messengers before him. Should he die or get killed, would you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels, does not hurt GOD in the least. GOD rewards those who are appreciative.*

In spite of their difficulties, they were indebted to God who provided them a secure asylum in Medina. They found enthusiastic allies and after amassing strength were capable of defeating the forces of idolatry, injustice and oppression.

*[9:100] As for the early vanguards who immigrated (Muhajerin), and the supporters who gave them refuge (Ansar) and those who followed them in righteousness, GOD is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. He has prepared for them gardens with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. This is the greatest triumph.*

An unresolved question for a long time now is that why are Muslims not getting similar help from God? Of course, there are several answers but one certainly will be that the Muslims have lost the fundamental principles of tolerance, restraint and being grateful to God. This lesson would apply to each and every individual in one form or the other.

When we suffer temporary setbacks and losses and even for minor mishaps we have an inclination to become ungrateful and rebellious. We have to overcome this and thank Almighty God at all times if we wish to receive His care and blessings. If we remain steadfast and grateful to God, then He will give us strength and sustain us now and in the Hereafter.

*[11:9-11] Whenever we bless the human being with mercy from us, then remove it, he turns despondent, unappreciative. Whenever we bless him, after adversity had afflicted him, he says, "All adversity has gone away from me;" he becomes excited, proud. As for those who steadfastly persevere, and lead a righteous life, they deserve forgiveness and a generous recompense.*

If we have faith in God and thank Him in adversity and prosperity, then we will surely have mental peace and support in this life. No human can be our *Razzaq* (Provider of sustenance). No one can bestow anything on us that God has not ordained for us and in turn no one can withhold anything that God has destined for us.

*Can They Create a Fly? [22:73] O people, here is a parable that you must ponder carefully: the idols you set up beside GOD can never create a fly, even if they banded*

*together to do so. Furthermore, if the fly steals anything from them, they cannot recover it; weak is the pursuer and the pursued.*

To behave like a believer you have to be thankful (*shaakir*). The reverse is to be unthankful (*kaafir*) of God – one who does not believe in the existence of God who created this marvellous universe and more.

God appointed Moses as a Prophet. He recounted God's blessings and favours which was showered upon him and the Children of Israel. [7:144] *He said, "O Moses, I have chosen you, out of all the people, with My messages and by speaking to you. Therefore, take what I have given you and be appreciative."*

Whatever God said, Moses transmitted to his people by relating the Divine support and favour which led to their miraculous escape from the tyrannical yoke of the Egyptian Pharaoh. Moses said to his people - *Appreciative vs. Unappreciative [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.* If we express thanks to God for whatever He has given us, He promises to be more favourable to us. Masha Allah, how can we lose this opportunity?

Being thankful to God is one of the main platforms of Islam which has a Divinely revealed infrastructure. [4:147] *What will GOD gain from punishing you, if you became appreciative and believed? GOD is Appreciative, Omniscient.* It is noteworthy that in this Ayat God equates appreciation and belief.

Is it any wonder that the first verses of the Quran begin with the acknowledgment of being grateful for God's grace and mercies by praising Him as the Lord of the Universe?

*Remember God, Always [30:17-18] Therefore, you shall glorify GOD when you retire at night, and when you rise in the morning. All praise is due to Him in the heavens and the earth, throughout the evening, as well as in the middle of your day. [20:130] Therefore, be patient in the face of their utterances, and praise and glorify your Lord before sunrise and before sunset. And during the night glorify Him, as well as at both ends of the day, that you may be happy.* This is in conformity with the 5 daily Salat prayers we perform which are obligatory for us in our God given guidelines. Our worship assumes a new significance if we bear in mind that every time we pray we are fulfilling a vital portion of our obligations to that God.

The Quran emphasises the significance of being grateful and enlightens us that all material and non material objects in the universe have their own way of expressing their thankfulness. We also understand that it is not just us humans but also the angels are involved. *Angels Pray for the Believers [40:7] Those who serve the throne and all those*

*around it glorify and praise their Lord, and believe in Him. And they ask forgiveness for those who believe: "Our Lord, Your mercy and Your knowledge encompass all things. Forgive those who repent and follow Your path, and spare them the retribution of Hell.*

*Everything Glorifies God [17:44] Glorifying Him are the seven universes, the earth, and everyone in them. There is nothing that does not glorify Him, but you do not understand their glorification. He is Clement, Forgiver. [24:41] Do you not realize that everyone in the heavens and the earth glorifies GOD, even the birds as they fly in a column? Each knows its prayer and its glorification. GOD is fully aware of everything they do.*

*[45:13] He committed in your service everything in the heavens and the earth; all from Him. These are proofs for people who reflect. The world has been fashioned to accommodate our needs. The more we are grateful the more will be our comfort and serenity. [28:73] It is mercy from Him that He created for you the night and the day in order to rest (during the night), then seek His provisions (during the day), that you may be appreciative. The Quran reminds us of our elevated status and requires us to meditate, bow down and prostrate in reverence before God's unseen existence. [76:26] During the night, fall prostrate before Him, and glorify Him many a long night.*

The Quran educates us in issues that lie beyond the periphery of human experience. *[32:5] All matters are controlled by Him from the heaven to the earth. To Him, the day is equivalent to one thousand of your years. [70:4] The angels, with their reports, climb to Him in a day that equals fifty thousand years.*

*The Origin of Man [32:7] He is the One who perfected everything He created, and started the creation of the human from clay. [32:8-9] Then He continued his reproduction through a certain lowly liquid. 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 description of our conception is to give us an awareness of our origin. It impresses upon those who study the Quran by understanding the meaning of the text that they should ponder and reflect deeply on the subject of our creation. Are we not blessed with sight and sound and a "heart" which is capable of feeling what we experience?

Once we reflect on God's benevolence in having created us as humans on earth which we have to share with other creatures as animals, plants etc, we will arrive at the conclusion that on this account alone we owe a debt to our Initiator that we can never ever repay. Such a feeling is very likely to induce in us to implore our Lord and indicate our humility and unimportance before His Majesty.

One thing we have to bear in mind very clearly, the need to be appreciative of God is for our own good and not for any benefit to God as He is far above all needs. *[35:15] O people, you are the ones who need GOD, while GOD is in no need for anyone, the Most*

*Praiseworthy. [100:6-8] The human being is unappreciative of his Lord. He bears witness to this fact. He loves material things excessively.*

We are wretched ingrates in thoughts, words and deeds – we forget God, we deny God, we misuse His bounties. We receive guidance and pay scant regard to it. We are indeed ungrateful. Most of us waste our energy and health envying others for their wealth, power, influence and intellect. It is a self-perpetuating damage to ourselves.

*Men and Women Endowed With Unique Qualities [4:32] You shall not covet the qualities bestowed upon each other by GOD; the men enjoy certain qualities, and the women enjoy certain qualities. You may implore GOD to shower you with His grace. GOD is fully aware of all things. [20:131] And do not covet what we bestowed upon any other people. Such are temporary ornaments of this life, whereby we put them to the test. What your Lord provides for you is far better, and everlasting.*

If we desire to lead a healthy, happy and prosperous life with total peace of mind we have to cast out the sickness of materialism, greed, envy and jealousy and be content with whatever God has given us.

Every night when I go to bed, I get a taste of death. *Death and Resurrection: Every Day [6:60] He is the One who puts you to death during the night, and knows even the smallest of your actions during the day. He resurrects you every morning, until your life span is fulfilled, then to Him is your ultimate return. He will then inform you of everything you had done.* I do not know whether I will awaken or not, should I not seek God's forgiveness before going to sleep? Even so, God gives me a new life each morning whether I thank Him for this or not. He is Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

We have to learn to tolerate without frustration and complaint, thanking God under all circumstances. The golden rule for real solace in life and in the Hereafter is explained in *[6:162] Say, "My Contact Prayers (Salat), my worship practices, my life and my death, are all devoted absolutely to GOD alone, the Lord of the universe.*

*God be glorified!*