

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Be Appreciative

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

God tells us in so many places in the Quran and in many different ways that we need to be appreciative. We need to appreciate the bounties He has placed on earth, like the seas and the ships roaming them (16:14, 35:12, 30:46, 31:31), all the foods He provided for us (16:114, 22:36-7, 6:142, 8:26), the night and the day (28:73), the livestock to ride and carry our burdens (43:13), the blessing of rain and how it revives a dead land (30:50), and so many more blessings than we can ever count.

[14:34] 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.

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

We know how important it is to remember God every chance we get. Seeing a beautiful sunset is an opportunity to be appreciative. Holding a small child and seeing her smile should bring feelings of deep apprecia-

tion for God who created this new life. Everything around us is from God and we want to always show our appreciation for all His creations.

We know that being appreciative helps put us on the path to being a believer, while being unappreciative is the same as being a disbeliever. We have examples of messengers in the Quran who recognized the importance of always appreciating God, striving for the Hereafter, and not being caught up in the glitz and glamor of this world.

Solomon: *[27:40] ... 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."

Luqman: *[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.*

Lot: *[54:35] We blessed him and his family; we thus reward the appreciative.*

Abraham: *[16:121] Because he was appreciative of His Lord's blessings, He chose him and guided him in a straight path.*

God gives us so many chances to be appreciative in all the examples, lessons and allegories He provides both in the Quran and in the world around us. *[29:41] The allegory of those who accept other masters beside GOD is that of the spider and her home; the flimsiest of all homes is the home of the spider, if they only knew. [29:43] We cite these examples for the people, and none appreciate them except the knowledgeable.*

[2:26] GOD does not shy away from citing any kind of allegory, from the tiny mosquito and greater. As for those who believe, they know that it is the

Ramadan 2019

Ramadan starts May 5th and the **last day of fasting** will be June 3rd for USA and Canada, God willing.

For more details (including dates for other places), please visit:
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truth from their Lord. As for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did GOD mean by such an allegory?" He misleads many thereby, and guides many thereby. But He never misleads thereby except the wicked.

[24:44] GOD controls the night and day. This should be a lesson for those who possess eyes.

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

We know that the majority of people will always be unappreciative (2:243, 10:60, 22:66) *[80:17] Woe to the human being; he is so unappreciative! [100:6] The human being is unappreciative of his Lord.*

Since we know that unappreciativeness is tantamount to disbelief, we definitely don't want to fall into that category. So, let's all work hard to be more appreciative of God's gifts and blessings that we may stay on the right path.

But in reading Quran I also found verses that say God is Appreciative.

[35:34] They will say, "Praise GOD for removing all our worries. Our Lord is Forgiving, Appreciative.

[4:147] What will GOD gain from punishing you, if you became appreciative and believed? GOD is Appreciative, Omniscient.

What does that mean? Is God appreciating His own creations—His sunset, His mountains, His stars? Maybe. But I think it's more than that.

[17:19] As for those who choose the Hereafter as their priority, and work righteousness, while believing, their efforts will be appreciated.

God is appreciative of the striving of the believers. He is so Merciful that He knows it's difficult for us to overcome our natural stinginess, our impatience, our egos. So, when we do good works, He is appreciative of that.

[64:17] If you lend GOD a loan of righteousness, He will multiply the

reward for you manifold, and forgive you. GOD is Appreciative, Clement.

[42:23] This is the good news from GOD to His servants who believe and lead a righteous life. Say, "I do not ask you for any wage. I do ask each of you to take care of your own relatives." Anyone who does a righteous work, we multiply his reward for it. GOD is For-giver, Appreciative.

And what that really said to me is that we need to be appreciative of each other. We need to acknowledge a good work by someone else. We need to be kind to one another, helpful, encouraging. If God, who is all-powerful and so high above us, can be appreciative of the little accomplishments we do (and we don't do anything without God's help and support)...if He can be so Gracious as to appreciate us, then we certainly need to do more to appreciate one another.

May God help me to be kind to others and to acknowledge their kindnesses towards me. May God make me more appreciative of everything around me, including friends and family and even strangers. There are so many ways to show our appreciation of God's gifts by appreciating one another. A smile and hello to a person passing on the street is showing appreciation. Letting the car pull in front of you, instead of being angry at the delay, is appreciation. None of us knows how much longer we have on this earth to do the righteous works that will gain us Paradise, so we need to strive every day to be more appreciative of God and His blessings.

[3:145] No one dies except by GOD's leave, at a predetermined time. Whoever seeks the vanities of this world, we give him therefrom, and whoever seeks the rewards of the Hereafter, we bless him therein. We reward those who are appreciative.

[2:152] You shall remember Me, that I may remember you, and be thankful to Me; do not be 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.

Worship GOD alone

[4:36] You shall worship GOD alone—do not associate anything with Him. You shall regard the parents, the relatives, the orphans, the poor, the related neighbor, the unrelated neighbor, the close associate, the traveling alien, and your servants. GOD does not like the arrogant showoffs.

One beautiful thing about worshipping God alone is that it can be done in many different ways. We all get to maintain a certain individuality so we are not like a group of robots that do the same thing. Some ways of worshipping God alone can be through meditation, reflection on creation, using kind words to others, giving to charity, leading Quran study, doing sermons, there are many, many, many different ways to worship God alone. I started with chapter 4 verse 36 because it confirms this point. The verse begins with a direct commandment, you shall worship God alone—do not associate anything with Him, then shows nine different avenues to achieve that goal (obeying God and regarding our parents, relatives, orphans, poor, related neighbor, unrelated neighbor, close associate, traveling alien, and servants), then closes by reminding us not to be showoffs.

Worshipping God alone is the same message that all the messengers brought to all mankind. This message is complete and good for any universe and all time. It is the common theme for Submitters all around the World. Worship God alone is the purpose of our lives, our ultimate goal, and should be the focus, no matter what the topic of discussion is. But we are humans and imperfect, so sometimes we forget our purpose and goal, and fall off the path of worshipping God alone.

The devil is one sneaky ardent enemy of mine. He is constantly trying to keep me distracted from worshipping God. He encourages me every morning to keep

Lydia

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hitting the snooze button and just get a little more sleep. Sometimes, I fall victim to his whispers, hit that snooze button one too many times, and end up missing prayer. And then, rather than just sincerely repenting and moving on, Satan makes me feel paralyzing guilt. The devil wants me to think that life is so busy it's too hard to make time for meditation and reading the Quran. Satan is constantly in my ear, you have to go to work to make money to provide, you have to help cook and clean, you need to work on the house or cars. He wants me to spend all my time engaged in the physical world around me. He encourages me to believe I have obligations for everyone around me rather than focus on growing my own soul. It's okay to enjoy things of this world, but I must keep the focus of worship God alone. Then there are times when I think I am on the right path, there he is trying to get me to adorn my works, and focus on the works, rather than worshiping God. The devil will pull out every trick in the bag to get me to slip away from worshiping God alone.

God already knows we are going to fall off the path or become stagnant with our worship. Actually, He designed humans with unrighteous traits. The Quran says humans are selfish, despondent, unappreciative, transgressing, impatient, stingy, argumentative, ignorant, anxious, and utterly lost. God created us with all these

traits and we must recognize this, so we know what we are up against. In competition, when opponents face each other, they try to watch films of their adversaries to exploit their weaknesses. Medical professionals observe viruses and infections to expose weaknesses, then implement other chemicals in the form of medicine to defeat them. To overcome our human unrighteous traits, we have to acknowledge and recognize them.

Our souls must battle our own human existence to grow. God tells us to kill our ego and the ego is actually a part of our own selves. This war against ourselves makes me think of how an immune system works. Something disruptive enters your body then it becomes part of your physical existence in a harmful way. In our immune system, our blood cells must locate and fight off what entered our body to prevent infection or possibly death. Think of the blood cells as the soul which must locate our unrighteous traits and fight them off to achieve the success of worshiping God alone. This personal battle against our own selves is a reflection of the soul versus the ego. The soul wants us to evaluate every situation to determine if we are being prevented from worshiping God alone. The ego wants us to say and do things to protect human pride. This is where we need God to strengthen our souls to fight the ego. We pray that God supports our souls to win against our unrighteous traits.

[7:200] When the devil whispers to you any whisper, seek refuge in GOD; He is Hearer, Omniscient.

[23:97] Say, "My Lord, I seek refuge in You from the whispers of the devils.

[23:98] "And I seek refuge in You, my Lord, lest they come near me."

Just because you made an error doesn't mean you must live in error. We're human, we make mistakes. We may miss a prayer, but that doesn't mean stop praying. We might feed into gossip, but that doesn't mean whenever we talk to someone we engage in gossip. We may be a glutton with food at times, but we don't have to be a glutton every time. We don't have to continue to live in error. We all make mistakes, but don't let those errors define who you are.

Every day and every minute is a new day and a new minute. We must take our opportunities to worship God whenever we can. There is an old saying that goes like this, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift from God, which is why we call it the 'present'." I should live in the present to make every second a new second that I can take the opportunity to be appreciative, patient, unselfish, ask for forgiveness and worship God alone.

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

Robert