

Prayer: God-given Gift

With the approach of the great occasion of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi`raj, we should remember Allah's gift to Muslims, namely Prayer. Prayer was given as both an order and a gift to Muslims on the night of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi`raj. Therefore, we should be grateful to Allah and take care of His gift.

Prayer has a vital role in the Muslims' behavior and conduct. According to the Qur'an, Prayer leads people away from evil and wrongdoing. It enlightens people's hearts and minds. It guides Muslims to be men of faith and action.

Now let's ask ourselves: how could we be grateful to Allah and thank Him for such a great gift?

Though the answer to this question is very simple and well known, it requires painstaking efforts, patience, forbearance and determination.

Let's reflect on the following:

1. Gratefulness to Allah for His gift — Prayer — requires purification of our bodies and hearts. Purification is a prerequisite of Prayer. Purification is regarded by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) as half of faith. A grateful worshiper should purify his body and clothes from all impurities and dirties, and purify his heart from all heart diseases such as envy, pride, etc.

2. Gratefulness to Allah should be reflected in one's life. A true worshiper should translate the Islamic teachings into practice. Light of Prayer should enlighten his way when dealing with people. Truthfulness, trustworthiness, honesty, faithfulness, etc., should be his distinctive characters.

3. Gratefulness to Allah for His gift reminds the Muslim with the first Qiblah, namely Al-Aqsa mosque. One who offers Prayer — and observes its rights — cannot forget Al-Aqsa mosque. At least, he should make du`a' from the depths of his heart that Allah will protect it and spread peace in its land.

4. Gratefulness to Allah for Prayer implants in the Muslim's heart the feeling of brotherhood and unity of all Muslims. In Prayer, all Muslims face the Ka`bah which is the symbol of their unity and brotherhood. A true worshiper takes care of the affairs of his fellow Muslims and spares no efforts in bringing all Muslims back to the true path of Islam.

5. Gratefulness to Allah for His gift inculcates in the Muslim love to the Qur'an and dhikr

(remembrance of Allah). Qur'an is the close friend of the true worshiper of Allah. A true worshiper always says dhikr, particularly the Prophet's adhkar (the authentic supplications and dhikr that the Prophet used to say in different situations). In each Prayer, the Muslim reads surat Al-Fatihah, which contains thanks to Allah and du'a'.

6. Gratefulness to Allah teaches man to manage his time and make the best use of it. Offering Prayers in their due times train the Muslim how to manage his time and be accurate in his appointments.

7. Gratefulness to Allah seeds love for Allah and for all humans in the Muslim's heart. A Muslim — who loves His Lord — hurries to offer Prayers in time, and even do optional Prayers or Sunnah out of his love to stand in front of his Creator. A true worshiper of Allah loves all people and wishes them what is best in this world and the in the Hereafter.

Given the above, it is high time to be grateful to Allah for His gift. Let's be real worshipers of Allah so that love, peace, security, justice, and happiness will dominate the whole world. Let's translate the Islamic teachings into practice and not be satisfied with superficial performance of the acts of worship.

May Allah Almighty guide us all to what is best in this world and the world to come.

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