

CHAPTER 16, VERSE 18: THE COUNTLESS BLESSINGS OF GOD

Rating: 5.0

Description: The blessings we enjoy are innumerable. This verse reminds us of that and makes us reflect as to what is the best way to express gratitude to those blessings.

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By: islamtoday.net [edited by IslamReligion.com]

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"And if you were to count God's favors, you would not be able to number them; most surely God is Forgiving, Merciful." (Quran 16:18)

Our lives are a continuous succession of God's gifts. Many people, due to their outlook on life or their circumstances, fail to see that they are receiving God's bounty. God has made it clear that we will never be able to count all of His blessings upon us, since they are innumerable.



This statement is found elsewhere in the Qur'an, emphasizing humanity's ungratefulness and heedlessness of God's blessings: **"If you were to count God's favors, you would not be able to number them; most surely humanity is very unjust, very ungrateful."** (Quran 14:34)

Consider the human body. It is made up of one hundred trillion cells. Each cell is a blessing from God. But this does not mean that there are only one hundred trillion blessings in the human body. There are far more, since God's blessings manifest themselves within each one of those cells in innumerable ways. Moreover, each cell is exposed to an incalculable number of potential threats, from viruses to cancer to a variety of malfunctions, and God through His mercy protects the cells from all of these. Therefore, we can never begin to enumerate the blessings that God, at every moment, bestows upon us within our bodies.

Even if we entertain the idea that the blessings God bestows upon any one of us is some finite number, that number would not take into account all of the misfortunes that God withholds from us, though He certainly tries some of His servants with those misfortunes. Then there are all the blessings God has bestowed upon our predecessors, our contemporaries, and our descendants and on the incalculable aspects of creation upon which our lives depend.

God reminds us: "**And whatever good thing you enjoy, it is from God. Then, when misfortune reaches you, you cry out to Him for help.**" (Quran 16:53)

We should look at ourselves and the way we behave towards God's blessings. Do we use them in obedience to His commands? Do we realize that God has a right over us in everything that He gives us? If we are blessed with wealth, the poor have a right in it. If we are blessed with health and strength, the weak and the infirm have a right in it. If we are blessed with knowledge, then those who are in want of knowledge have a right in it. For every ability that we are blessed with, those who are unable have some right in it.

We must praise God for empowering us to do that which others are incapable of doing. Part of the thanks we owe God is to give something of whatever we are blessed with to those who cannot do for themselves. We should remember that every blessing we enjoy will inevitably come to an end. Either we will lose the blessing some day in our lives, or we will depart this life and leave that blessing behind.

Another part of our gratitude to God is to serve Him with what He gives us and to use what we have in ways that are lawful and pleasing to Him. We should not be like Qarun (Korah). Some wise people advised him: "**Do not exult. Surely God does not love the exultant.**" (Quran 28:76)

Qarun (Korah) replied: "I have been given this only on account of the knowledge I have."

So God tells us: "**Did he not know that God had destroyed of the generations before him those who were mightier in strength than he and greater in assemblage? And the guilty need not be asked about their sins.**" (Quran 28:78)

We often do not notice a blessing that we have until we lose that blessing or are threatened with its loss. How many of our faculties, our limbs, and our talents do we take for granted? These are but some of the blessings in our own bodies. How many blessings surround us, in our families, our friends, our work, the status we enjoy, the connections we have, even our hopes and our dreams?

Even the world on which we live is a blessing, how it possesses everything needed for life to thrive. How many other worlds do we see and are still discovering in the heavens, some approximating our Earth in size, some smaller, some many times larger, but we find them to be sterile, hostile, unaccommodating worlds.

Praise be to God, who possesses all things and who gives without measure.

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