

Welcome/Introduction

Prayer for America

“O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad-tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.” - *Abdu'l-Baha*

Music Selection #1

“Magnify his name, and be thou of the thankful”

--*Baha'u'llah*

1. *Native American tradition:*

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies with yourself.

Tecumseh, Shawnee Chief

2. *Sikhism:*

...Sing His praises Who is the Treasury of excellences. Sing and hear and put His love into your hearts. Thus shall your sorrows be removed, and you shall be absorbed in Him Who is the abode of happiness.

Guru Nanak: from the Japki

3. *Judaism and Christianity:*

Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with singing.

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations.

The Old Testament: Psalms 107:21-22; 100:4-5

4. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The New Testament: Colossians 3:15-16

5. ...Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever....

The New Testament: Revelation 7:12

6. *Islam:*

Few of My servants are truly thankful. What is to come is better for you than what has gone before: For your Lord will certainly give (to) you, and you will be content....Keep recounting the favors of your Lord....And magnify Him with repeated magnificats.

Mohammad: The Qur'an, from Suras 34, 93 and 17

7. *Baha'i Faith:*

Know thou, that I have wafted unto thee all the fragrances of holiness, have fully revealed to thee My word, have perfected through thee My bounty and have desired for thee that which I have desired for My Self. Be then content with My pleasure and thankful unto Me.

Say: We have caused the rivers of Divine utterance to proceed out of Our throne, that the tender herbs of wisdom and understanding may spring forth from the soil of your hearts. Will ye not be thankful? They who disdain to worship their Lord shall be of those who are cast off.

Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God; for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful.

...It well beseemeth thee to appreciate the wondrous favors with which God hath favored thee, and to magnify continually His name.

Baha'u'llah: Arabic Hidden Words, no. 70

Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, pp. 43, 276, 234

7a. *The above Hidden Words in Arabic language. A few quotes on Thanksgiving in Persian language for our Arabic/Persian speaking friends.*

Music Selection #2

8. Thankfulness is of various kinds. There is a verbal thanksgiving which is confined to a mere utterance of gratitude. This is of no importance because perchance the tongue may give thanks while the heart is unaware of it. Many who offer thanks to God are of this type, their spirits and hearts unconscious of thanksgiving. This is mere usage, just as when we meet, receive a gift and say thank you, speaking the words without significance. One may say thank you a thousand times while the heart remains thankless, ungrateful. Therefore, mere verbal thanksgiving is without effect. But real thankfulness is a cordial giving of thanks from the heart....

There is a cordial thanksgiving, too, which expresses itself in the deeds and actions of man when his heart is filled with gratitude. For example, God has conferred upon man the gift of guidance; and in thankfulness for this great gift, certain deeds must emanate from him. To express his gratitude for the favors of God, man must show forth praiseworthy actions. In response to these bestowals, he must render good deeds, be self-sacrificing, loving the servants of God, forfeiting even life for them, showing kindness to all the creatures....There can be no doubt that such commendable deeds are thankfulness for the favors of God.

Consider how grateful anyone becomes when healed from sickness, when treated kindly by another, or when a service is rendered by another, even though it may be of the least consequence. If we forget such favors, it is an evidence of ingratitude. Then it will be said a loving-kindness has been done, but we are thankless, not appreciating this love and favor. Physically and spiritually we are submerged in the sea of God's favor. He has provided our foods, drink and other requirements; His favors encompass us from all directions. The sustenances provided for man are blessings. Sight, hearing, and all his faculties are wonderful gifts. These blessings are innumerable....Spiritual blessings are likewise endless---spirit, consciousness, thought, memory, perception, ideation and other endowments. By these He has guided us....He has opened the doors of all good before our faces. He has vouchsafed eternal glory. He has summoned us to the Kingdom of heaven. He has enriched us by the bestowals of God....

Therefore, in thanksgiving for them, ye must act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'u'llah. Ye must read the Tablets...all the holy utterances, and act according to them. This is real thanksgiving, to live in accord with these utterances....This is thanksgiving and glorification of God.

*'Abdu'l-Baha: The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 236-237
(From a talk delivered in New York in 1912)*

9. From amongst all mankind hath He chosen you, and your eyes have been opened to the light of guidance and your ears attuned to the music of the Company above; and blessed by abounding grace, your hearts and souls have been born into new life. Thank ye and praise ye God that the hand of infinite bestowals hath set upon your heads that gem-studded crown, this crown whose lustrous jewels will forever flash and sparkle down all the reaches of time.

Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 35

Music Selection #3

10. PRAYER

O Lord, my God! Praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee for Thou hast guided me to the highway of the kingdom, suffered me to walk in this straight and far-stretching path, illumined my eye by beholding the splendors of Thy light, inclined my ear to the melodies of the birds of holiness from the kingdom of mysteries and attracted my heart with Thy love among the righteous.

Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i Prayers, p. 185

11. Waking up this morning, I see the blue sky. I join my hands in thanks for the many wonders of life; For having twenty-four brand new hours. The sun is rising on the forest, and so is my awareness....

Thich Nhat Hanh (Buddhist)

12. How lovely are Thy holy groves, God of heaven and earth; My soul longs and faints for the circle of Thy trees. My heart and my flesh sing with joy to Thee, O God of life.

Chinook Psalter

13. I reverently speak in the presence of the Great Parent God: I give Thee grateful thanks that Thou hast enabled me to live this day, the whole day, in obedience to the excellent spirit of Thy ways.

Shinto Evening Prayer

14. We thank You, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, Defender of our lives, Shield of our safety. Through all generations we thank You and praise You. Our lives are in Your hands, our souls in Your charge. We thank You for the miracles which daily attend us, For Your wonders and favors, morning, noon, and night. You are beneficent with boundless mercy and love O God, You are our deliverance and our help. Praised are You, O Lord, for Your goodness and Your glory....

From the Amidah (Jewish Prayer)

Prayer for New York

"I eagerly anticipate the day when New York will become a blessed spot from which the call to steadfastness in the Covenant of God will go forth to every part of the world, thus making that city outstanding from every point of view.

Bless Thou, O King of Kings, the city of New York! Cause the friends there to be kind to one another. Purify their souls and make their hearts to be free and detached. Illumine the world of their consciousness. Exhilarate their spirits and bestow celestial power and confirmation upon them. Establish there a heavenly realm, so that the City of Bahá may prosper and New York be favoured with blessings from the Abhá Kingdom, that this region may become like the all-highest Paradise, may develop into a vineyard of God and be transformed into a heavenly orchard and a spiritual rose garden."

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Music Selection # 4

Announcements/Prayer Requests

Fellowship