



Hamd ¹

Imām Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbī

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Hamd (praise) is more general and inclusive than *shukr* (thanks or gratitude), because thanks and gratitude are only a recompense for a favor, whereas *hamd* is both a recompense like thanks and is also spontaneous praise. Similarly, *shukr* may be more general and inclusive than *hamd*, because praise is expressed by the tongue, and thanks is expressed by tongue, heart and limbs.

If you understand the universal nature of *hamd* you will know that your saying “*al-hamdu li-llāh*” requires praise of Him for His majesty, vastness, unity, might, bestowal of favors, knowledge, ability and power, wisdom and other attributes, and that it encompasses the meanings of His ninety-nine beautiful names, and that it requires thanking Him and praising Him for every favor He has given and mercy He has bestowed upon all His creation in this world and the next. What a word [it is] which gathers together that which volumes find difficult to express, and the intellects of created beings concur upon as being unable to enumerate! Let it suffice you that Allāh made it the beginning of His Book and the conclusion of the supplication of the people of the Garden. ²

Thanks with the tongue is praise of the Bestower of Blessings and speaking about the blessings. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “To talk about blessings is gratitude.” ³ Thanks expressed by the limbs means to act in obedience to Allāh and to abandon disobedience to Him. Thanks with the heart is recognition of the magnitude of the blessing and the knowledge that it is a gracious bestowal and not from the slave’s own merit.

¹ From Ibn Juzayy's Tafsīr

² This refers to the supplication that the believers will make in the Garden, “***Their prayer in it will be ‘Glory be to You, O Allāh,’ and peace will be their greeting therein, and their prayer will conclude, ‘Praise belongs to Allāh the Lord of the Worlds.’***” (Sūrah Yūnus, Ayah 10).

³ Part of a narration related by al-Shaʿbī on the authority of an-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “He who is not grateful for a little cannot be grateful for a lot, and he who is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allāh [whereas] to talk about blessings is gratitude, and leaving it is ingratitude (*kufr*). The community (*jamāʿah*) [leads to] mercy, and dissension [leads to] debasement.” (Quoted by al-Qurtubī in his Jāmiʿ Ahkām al-Qurʾān Tafsīr ‘alā Sūrah Wal-Duhā.

Know that the blessings which require gratitude cannot be enumerated, but they can be expressed in terms of three categories:

- ❖ worldly blessings such as health and wealth;
- ❖ blessings of the *dīn* such as knowledge and carefulness (*taqwa*);
- ❖ and other-worldly blessings, which are one's being recompensed with much reward for few actions in a short life.

People have two ranks with respect to gratitude:

- ❖ there is the one who shows gratitude for the blessings which come to him particularly;
- ❖ and there is the one who thanks Allāh on behalf of all His creatures for the blessings which reach all of them.

There are three degrees of gratitude:

- ❖ the degree of the ordinary people is gratitude for blessings;
- ❖ the degree of the elect is gratitude for blessings and for misfortune, and in every state;
- ❖ and the degree of the elect of the elect is that they are absent from blessing through witnessing the Bestower of blessings. A man said to Ibrāhīm ibn Adham,⁴ "Who are the best of men?" He reflected and said, "The poor who when they are refused, are grateful, and when they are given something they prefer others to themselves."

One of the virtues of gratitude is that it is both one of the attributes of The Truth⁵ [as well as] an attribute of people, because one of the names of Allāh is *al-Shākir* (the Recompenser, literally: the Grateful) and *al-Shakūr* (the Fully Grateful), both of which I have explained in the dictionary of terms (*al-Shakūr* is the name of Allāh, "the One Who Recompenses His slaves for their actions with plentiful reward". It has also been said [that it means] "The One Who Praises the slaves."

Our saying, "Praise belongs to Allāh the Lord of the worlds", is better, according to the people who ascertain [statements], than "There is no god but Allāh" for two reasons:

⁴ Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Adam. He was at one point the Amīr of the region of Balkh in central Asia, but he turned to Allāh and abandoned everything he possessed. Imam al-Junayd said of him, "Ibrāhīm is the key to the sciences" and he is held in great respect, by all who have knowledge, for his exemplary life and his incisive wisdom with respect to the states of man. He associated with Sufyān ath-Thawrī.

⁵ *Al-Haqq* - "The True, the Real" is one of the names of Allāh

- ❖ one is that which an-Nasa'i narrated of the Messenger of Allāh, *may Allāh bless him and grant him peace*, "Whoever says, 'There is no god but Allāh' then twenty virtues will be recorded for him, and whoever says, 'Praise belongs to Allāh Lord of the worlds', has thirty virtues recorded for him,"
- ❖ the second is that the *tawhīd* that "There is no god but Allāh" requires is [already] present in your saying, "Lord of the worlds" and is increased [over and above that] with your saying, "Praise belongs to Allāh" and there [also] are the meanings in it which we have already presented.

As for the saying of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ "The best that I have said, I and the prophets before me, is 'There is no god but Allāh'," ⁶ then that is only because of the *tawhīd* which it contains, and "Praise belongs to Allāh Lord of the worlds" participates along with it in that [meaning] and has increase beyond that. The believer says it seeking reward, but as for the one who enters Islam then he is required to say, "There is no god but Allāh."



⁶ Related in the Jāmi' of al-Tirmidhī, in the Kitāb al-Da`wāt.