

ASH-SHUKR

(THANKING GOD AND BEING GRATEFUL TO HIM)

Definition:

We enjoy many blessings from Allah. If we understand that these blessings come from Him, then it is our duty to be thankful and grateful.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated that being thankful and grateful to Allah represents half the faith; the other half is exhibiting patience and perseverance.

Some people feel self-sufficient and do not realize that everything that they have and enjoy comes from Allah. They become arrogant and are likely to transgress; by contrast, those who are thankful and grateful are more likely to be humble and treat others well.

Concepts to be discussed:

- Our obligation to thank Allah for His blessings.
- Allah appreciates our thanks, if we are grateful Allah increases His blessings.
- We should thank other people and be humble.
- Allah's prophets set the example of being grateful and thankful.
- An example of the Prophet's Du'aa.
- The benefits of being thankful.

OUR OBLIGATION TO THANK GOD

We owe everything to Allah; He gave us our life and our faculties.

We emerge from our mother's wombs knowing nothing, but we learn and evolve as the Qur'an describes,

﴿ وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ
وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴾ [النحل: ٧٨]

"It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when ye knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affection: that ye may give thanks (to Allah)"

(An-Nahl 16 : 78)

Without these faculties, how can we grow, learn and advance? Without our intellect, how can we reason or know our Creator? The Qur'an illustrates the importance of intelligent speech and communication, as well the importance of God's divine message in guiding mankind.

﴿ الرَّحْمَنُ ﴾ [الرحمن: ١]

"(Allah) Most Gracious!" (Ar-Rahman 55 : 1)

﴿ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴾ [الرحمن: ٢]

"It is He Who has taught the Qur-an" (Ar-Rahman 55 : 2)

﴿ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴾ [الرحمن: ٣]

"He has created man:" (Ar-Rahman 55 : 3)

﴿ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴾ [الرحمن: ٤]

"He has taught him speech (and Intelligence)" (Ar-Rahman 55: 4)

Allah provides for us as well as for every living creature.

﴿ وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾
[العنكبوت: ٦٠]

"How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance?"

It is Allah Who feeds (both) them and you, for He hears and knows (all things)" (Al-Ankabut 29 : 60)

If we understand that our sustenance comes from Allah, then it is our obligation to thank Him and to be grateful for His blessings and Grace.

﴿ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَأَشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ كُنتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴾

[النحل / ١١٤]

"So eat of the sustenance which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good; and be grateful for the favours of Allah, if it is He Whom ye serve" (An-Nahl 16 : 114)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) taught us how to thank Allah for His blessings. He would say in his Du'aa (prayer to Allah) in the morning,

"O Allah whatever I find myself enjoying in the morning it is from You alone, You have no partners; all praise and all thanks belong to You."

Narrated by Abou Dawood and Nesa'ee

After completing our prayers, the Prophet (PBUH) taught us to say,

"O Allah help me to remember You and to thank You and to worship You and serve You in the best possible way."

Narrated by Abou Dawood, Nesa'ee and Ahmad on the authority of Moa'dh Bin Jabal

It is also important to understand that our sustenance only comes from Allah and He alone controls all good that comes our way. The Qur'an states,

﴿ وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْرُونَ ﴾ [النحل : ٥٣]

"And ye have no good thing but is from Allah; and moreover, when ye are touched by distress, unto Him ye cry with groans;"

(An-Nahl 16 : 53)

GOD APPRECIATES OUR THANKS

It is the duty of believers to express their thanks to Allah. Allah

accepts our thanks and rewards us for our service. In contrast, those who are ungrateful are only harming themselves, for Allah does not like ingratitude from His servants. As human beings we cannot harm Allah, nor help Him. Our thanks do not increase His kingdom, and our ingratitude does not diminish His authority.

﴿ إِن تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِن تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴾ [الزمر: ٧]

"If ye reject (Allah), truly Allah has no need of you; but He likes not ingratitude from His Servants: if ye are grateful, He is pleased with you. No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. In the End, to your Lord is your Return, when He will tell you the truth of all that ye did (in this life). For He knows well all that is in (men's) hearts" (Az-Zumar 39 : 7)

Further, if we remember Allah and appreciate His blessings, He has promised to remember us and to bestow more of His grace upon us.

﴿ فَادْكُرُونِي أذكُرْكُمْ وَأشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴾ [البقرة: ١٥٢]

"Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and reject not Faith" (Al-Baqara 2 : 152)

GOD WILL GIVE US MORE

Why should Allah punish us if we believe and are grateful for His blessings? Allah knows His servants and He appreciates their service.

﴿ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِن شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴾

[النساء: ١٤٧]

"What can Allah gain by your punishment, if ye are grateful and ye believe? Nay it is Allah that recognizes (all good) and knows all things" (An-Nesa'a 4 : 147)

If we are sincere in worshipping Allah and fulfilling our obligations, then Allah will reward our effort and service in the best possible way and He will forgive our sins.

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ ﴾ [فاطر: ٢٩]

"Those who rehearse the Book of Allah, establish regular Prayer, and spend (in Charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a Commerce that will never fail:"

(Fatir 35 : 29)

﴿ لِيُؤْفِقَهُمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ﴾ [فاطر: ٣٠]

"For He will pay them their meed, nay, He will give them (even) more out of His Bounty; for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (service)" (Fatir 35 : 30)

The just reward for our efforts and the overflowing grace of Allah for our good deeds and sincere efforts is balanced by the severe punishment that He inflicts upon those who disobey Him and are ungrateful!

﴿ وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ﴾

[إبراهيم: ٧]

"And remember! your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; but if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed"

(Ibrahim 14:7)

THANKING PEOPLE

Allah made people love one another and be kind to each other; therefore, we should appreciate the effort of others and thank them for their help and kindness. This proves that we are indeed thankful to Allah. Abou Horaira (May Allah be pleased with him) related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

“He, who does not thank and is ungrateful to the people, has not thanked and is ungrateful to Allah.”

Narrated by Abou Dawood, Termedhi, Ahmad, Ibn Hibban and Adab Mufrad for Bokhari

In another Hadith, also related by Abou Horaira (May Allah be pleased with him) the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

“While a man was walking he felt very thirsty, so he descended to a well and drank from it. As he came up, he saw a dog panting eating the ground out of thirst. The man said, ‘This dog is feeling what I felt and is suffering.’ He brought water from the well in his shoe, held it in his mouth, came up, and let the dog drink. Allah appreciated his service and forgave him.”

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

We learn from this Hadith:

- We should help everyone that needs our help, including the animals.
- We should feel for the suffering of others and put ourselves in their place and not hesitate to support them.
- Whatever we do, Allah is well aware of it and will reward us for our efforts.
- Thanking others is not lip service, but going out of our way to help them.

EXAMPLE OF GOD'S PROPHETS

The Qur'an praises Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) for he was ever thankful to Allah and appreciated His blessings. He was sincere and devoted in his service to Allah. Allah bestowed on him many blessings and made him a leader of mankind.

﴿ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴾ [النحل: ١٢٠]

"Abraham was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to Allah, (and) true in faith, and he joined not gods with Allah" (An-Nahl 16: 120)

﴿ شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ آجْتَبَهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾ [النحل: ١٢١]

"He showed his gratitude for the favours of Allah, Who chose him, and guided him to a Straight Way" (An-Nahl 16 : 121)

﴿وَأَتَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ﴾ [النحل: ١٢٢]

"And We gave him Good in this world, and he will be, in the Hereafter, in the ranks of the Righteous" (An-Nahl 16 : 122)

We should also follow the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He would stand up at night praying to Allah, saying Du'aa, thanking Allah for His blessings and seeking His forgiveness. When his wife Aesha asked him why he was praying so much since Allah had already forgiven all his sins, his answer was,

"Should I not then be a thankful grateful servant of Allah?"

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

Abi Bakra (May Allah be pleased with him) also related,

"That whenever the Messenger of Allah received good news or was told something that made him happy, he would prostrate to Allah thanking Him showing his gratitude."

Narrated by Abou Dawood and Ibn Majja

An example of the prophet's du'aa thanking allah

Aesha (May Allah be pleased with her) related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said in his Du'aa,

"O Allah I seek protection in Your pleasure from Your anger; and in Your forgiveness from Your punishment; and I seek protection in You from You. I cannot thank You enough; You are as You praised Yourself."

Narrated by Muslim

BENEFITS OF SHUKR

- Is a sign of faith.
- If we are thankful, Allah has promised to give us more and maintain our good fortune.

- Being thankful indicates that we understand Allah's blessings and that we are indebted to Him.
- It is a way of gaining the pleasure of Allah.
- A person who thanks others and appreciates their service is well-liked.
- A person who thanks others is not envious and wishes good for other people.