

A Jumuah Khutbah

Allah s.w.t. says in Suratul-Mulk:

67:23 Say: "It is He Who has created you (and made you grow), and made for you the faculties of hearing, seeing, feeling and understanding: little thanks it is ye give. In Suratul-Baqarah:

2:152 Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith.

The Islamic term Shukr can be translated as gratefulness or thankfulness. It is such a comprehensive term that it can be viewed as another name for Islam. Its opposite is Kufur, ingratitude.

Allah T'ala says in Surah Ibrahim:

14:7 And remember! your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): "If you are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; But if you show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed." Allah s.w.t. also says in Surah Luqman:

31:12 We bestowed (in the past) Wisdom on Luqman: "Show (thy) gratitude to Allah." Any who is (so) grateful does so to the profit of his own soul: but if any is ungrateful, verily Allah is free of all wants, Worthy of all praise. When Prophet Sulaiman (a.s.) and his army of people, jinn, and animals happened to pass by a colony of ants, and he heard an ant speak of its fear of getting

crushed by the army, he smiled and prayed to Allah s.w.t., as it is in Surah An-Naml: 27:19 So he smiled, amused at her speech; and he said: "O my Lord! so order me that I may be grateful for Your favors, which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please You: And admit me, by Your Grace, to the ranks of Your righteous Servants." It is a very inspiring supplication and there are many lessons which one can draw from it, but for today, let us move on. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) would weep a lot in Qiyam, Rukoo and Sujood during his Tahajjud prayer. Aisha (r.a.) asked him, Ya Rasoolullah, what causes you to weep, when Allah s.w.t. has forgiven you your earlier and later sins? His reply was, Should I not be a thankful servant of Allah s.w.t.? Story of a Prophet's encounter with a stone: It is said that one of the Prophets [Anbiya'] (peace be upon them all) once passed by a small stone, from which a large amount of water was gushing forth. He was astonished at the sight, but Allah caused the stone to let him know that it could speak, so he asked it about its condition. It told him: "Ever since I heard Allah (s.w.t.) speak of a Fire of which the fuel is men and stones. (66:6) I have been weeping from fear of it." So that Prophet (peace be upon him) offered a prayer of supplication, pleading with Allah s.w.t. to grant that stone asylum from the Fire. Allah (s.w.t.) thereupon conveyed to him by way of inspiration [awha ilai-h] : "I have already granted it asylum from the Fire." That Prophet then continued on his way. When he returned later on, he found that the water was still gushing from the stone, but even more copiously than on his previous visit. He was bewildered, but Allah (s.w.t.) again caused the stone to let him know that it could speak, so he said to it: "Why are you still weeping, when Allah has already forgiven you?" The stone explained: "That was the weeping of sorrow and fear, but this is the weeping of thankfulness [shukr] and joy." Thankfulness should be expressed by the tongue [shukr bi'l-lisan] by praising Him, glorifying Him. Thankfulness should be expressed by the body and the limbs [shukr bi'l-badan wa 'l-arkan] by praying to Him and obeying His commands. Thankfulness should be expressed from the heart [shukr bi'l-qalb] to show inner feelings. All these forms put together will produce a true sense of gratefulness to Allah s.w.t. ash-shukr 'ala 'sh-shukr It is also important to realize that the ability of a person to thank Him is itself a blessing! This can be called Thankfulness for thankfulness [ash-shukr 'ala 'sh-shukr]. Now this can cause ad infinitum. However, Daud a.s. comes to our rescue. [The Prophet] David a.s. once said: "Ya Alah, how can I thank You, when my thankfulness to You is itself a blessing from among Your gracious favors?" So Allah s.w.t. conveyed to him by way of inspiration: "Now you have thanked Me indeed!" Countless Blessings The mere fact of a person's existence is enough for him to be grateful to Allah s.w.t., as His blessings are countless regardless of how he sees his condition. If you look and observe the people of the world, you may find many in worst condition than you are. There are millions of people in the world, who are struggling to find food for themselves and their children. Over here, regardless of how small you think your house or apartment is, compared to millions in the world, you're living in a palace. So many in the world do not have A/C, electricity, internet, phone or even running water in their homes, if they have a home to begin with. In the 30's, 70% of the houses in the USA did not have running water. Turning a knob and getting a hot shower in cold is a blessing. A Muslim scholar who visited a village in Mauritania, Africa, tells the life story of three Muslim women. They spend five hours every day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to fetch water. It takes them two hours to reach the water source, one hour to get it and load the donkeys, then two hours to go back home. They reach their homes, drink the water and say, Alhamdo Lillah, Shukr Al-Hamdolillah. Their water is brown. Most of them have urinary infections. But they say Al-hamdo Lillah. The blessings that come to us, night and day, are beyond numeration. These blessings come in all

forms – what we see and touch (by way of material goods: food, clothing, shelter, wealth, and the like), but also what we can not see (like safety, friendship, love, health, and protection from harm and calamities.) To deny Allah s.w.t.'s blessings can lead to outright disbelief and denial of Allah s.w.t. When we look at benefit or harm of what we do, there are four outcomes:

There are things that benefit a person in the short and long term. Examples of this are knowledge and excellent character.

There are things that are harmful to a person immediately and in the long run, like ignorance and obnoxiousness (Very annoying or objectionable; offensive).

There are things that offer immediate gratification, but the long-term benefits are nil. Carnal desires (shahawat) are generally like this. If a person over-eats, he experiences immediate gratification; but in the long-term, it invites health problems.

Things that are beneficial in the long term, but somewhat uncomfortable in the short. It may be difficult for a person to stop himself from eating until he is filled, but the long-term benefits are obvious.

Ignorance urges people to see only short-term relief as a blessing and to ignore the benefits of patience and temporary discomfort. Knowledge opens the eyes to the long-term benefit, which lasts forever. Once the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked a man, "Do you know what the completion of a blessing is?" The Prophet told him, "Entering Paradise." The best of blessings are those which are connected with entering Paradise. Faith, patience, good character, swiftness in doing good, and promptness in prayers are blessings of Allah s.w.t. and they are everlasting. Islam itself is the completion of Allah s.w.t.'s blessings upon humanity: "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (part of 5:3)

The ornaments of this life are such things as a house, furnishings, and clothing. The more that one has of these blessings, the more he will be accountable for them. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said that the meat, the dates, and cool water that we consume are of those things we will be asked about, even the sandals on our feet.

Let us be grateful servants of Allah s.w.t. Remember Him & He will remember you. Let us pray regularly with devotion, humility and His fear. Let us live our lives by the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

A day is near when we will be questioned about the blessings Allah s.w.t. has given us.

May Allah T'ala forgive us and put us in His forever Mercy. Amen.

