

Qur'ānic Reflections

SESSION 1

تَسْبِيحٌ
the tasbeeh project

Overview: Reflecting on the Holy Qur'ān

“

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ...

Those to whom We have given the Book
read it as it ought to be read... ”

SŪRAH AL-BAQARAH (2:121)



Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as): “They recite its verses **slowly**, and **understand** it, and **act** according to its orders, and **hope** for its promises, and are **afraid** of its threats, and take **lessons** from its stories, and **obey** its commandments, and **desist** from what it prohibits.”



**A truly immersive,
transformational
experience!**

“ O mankind! There has certainly come to you an **advice** from your Lord, and a **cure** for what is in the hearts, and a **guidance** and **mercy** for the faithful. ”

SŪRAH YŪNUS (10:57)

مَوْعِظَةٌ

1. Advice against sin (restrain intermingled with warning and awakening).



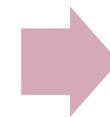
شِفَاءٌ

2. Cure / purging of the soul / heart from spiritual diseases (ethical and social evils).



هُدًى

3. Guidance to happiness and prosperity in this life and the Hereafter for the faithful.



رَحْمَةٌ

4. Bestowal of divine blessings and mercy (forgiveness and proximity) for the faithful.

Tafsīr and Tadabbur

Tafsīr: reveal the meaning of a verse. The task of the Holy Prophet (saw), his righteous successors and specialist scholars.

Tadabbur: reflection and pondering on the message of a verse, internalising the implicit meaning of the verse, taking admonition and making changes. An order for all - Surah Muhammad (47:24):

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not contemplate the Qur'an, or are there locks on the hearts?

Session 1:

Surāh Ibrāhīm

(14:34)

“

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا...

If you enumerate Allah's blessings,
you will not be able to count them...

”

Indeed man is most
unfair and ungrateful!

SURĀH IBRĀHĪM (14:34)

Indeed Allah is all-
forgiving, all-merciful.

SURĀH AN-NAHL (16:18)

Man's ungratefulness is met by Allah (swt)'s mercy and forgiveness!

Du'ā
Iftitah

So, I have never seen such a noble Master more accommodating to such a dissatisfied servant than You are to me.

O Lord! You give an invitation but I turn down, You become familiar with me but I do not care for You, and You show affection to me but I do not correspond to You, as if You are overreaching me!

Yet, all that has not stopped You from having mercy upon me, doing favours to me, and blessing me out of Your magnanimity and generosity...

“

When you see Allah continuously sending you His blessings, then beware of Him and secure the blessings by being grateful for them. ”

IMAM ALI (AS), GHURUR AL-HIKM, H.9872

If you are thankful you will love Allah (swt) for all His favours.



If you love Allah (swt) you will believe in Him and obey Him.



So the virtue of *shukr* (thankfulness) is at the core of *imān* (faith).



The Arabic terms for ungratefulness and disbelief are identical.

Ungratefulness = *Kufr*

Some examples where thankfulness (*shukr*) is contrasted with ungratefulness (*kufr*):

- ▶ **Sūrah Az-Zumar (39:7):** “If you are ungrateful, indeed Allah has no need of you, though He does not approve ingratitude for His servants; and if you give thanks He approves that for you...”
- ▶ **Sūrah Luqmān (31:12):** “...‘Give thanks to Allah; and whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own sake. And whoever is ungrateful, [let him know that] Allah is indeed all-sufficient, all-laudable.’”
- ▶ **Sūrah al-Insān (76:3):** “Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful.”

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

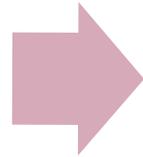
Thankfulness

- ▶ Is connected to faith, and should be reflected in our actions.
- ▶ It brings about more blessings (Surah Ibrahim 14:7): "...*If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing]...*"

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ

- ▶ Manāzil al Sāirīn (Khājeh Abdullah Ansari): 3 main types of thankfulness:

Thankfulness from the heart: knowing that something is a gift from Allah. *Brings about:*



Thankfulness with words: declaring that you are thankful for divine bounties; and



Thankfulness in practice: doing something with your hands, feet, eyes, etc. as acts of worship.

Three levels of Shukr

Ordinary

Some levels are shared by ordinary people: they understand that there are some gifts from Allah that we are thankful for, and try to be pleased and praise Him.

Higher

On higher levels, people are not only thankful for what they consider to be *gifts* that Allah has given them, but for *whatever* happens to them. Even a bad thing that occurs to a believer is not caused by a lack of love from Allah (SWT), and so a believer is thankful for that.

Elite

Some people are very concerned with Allah's presence: they feel no ease or pain as they do not have any time to think about whether they are in the state of ease or pain. People who love Allah (SWT) to this extent are completely distracted and absorbed by His Essence.

Reflections

- ▶ Being thankful is an innate disposition – natural appreciation of the favours bestowed by Allah (swt). Reflecting on the blessings will bring about humility and awe. It increases our love for Allah (swt) and brings us closer to Him, strengthening faith.
- ▶ Thankfulness should bring about a change in one's heart, words and deeds. How can we be thankful yet use the blessings in a way that displeases Allah (swt)? If it's not reflected in our actions, this is ungratefulness, which equates to kufr.
- ▶ Who else deserves thanks but Allah (swt)?! We cannot properly thank Him, we can't even count His blessings! However, Allah (swt) is all-Forgiving (16:18). Also see *Imam Zainul Abidin (as)'s Supplication in Giving Thanks and Whispered Prayer of the Thankful*.
- ▶ Gratitude is good for our bodies as well as our souls. The brain releases dopamine and serotonin, which contribute to feelings of happiness, and overall well-being.

Making a Change

- ▶ Tadabbur means reflection and pondering on the message of a verse, internalising the implicit meaning of the verse, taking admonition and making changes.
- ▶ **What changes will I make in my life as a result of our reflections on these verses?**

How will I make sure that I am thankful for the favours Allah (swt) has blessed me with, and that this is manifested in my heart, words and actions?