

MODULE 2

Class Title: Thank you Allah.

Aim of the lesson: To understand meaning of *shukr* & realize what all we should be grateful for

Category: Worship

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah At Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Allah (swt) says a very powerful statement in the Quran:

... *وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ*

And have *shukr*, be grateful towards Me and do not deny (Surah Al Baqarah 2: Verse 152)

Shukr means to have gratitude for the blessings of Allah (swt).

In a very powerful way, Allah (swt) has equated *shukr* with *kufir*: **Washkuruli** – have *shukr* towards me, **wa la takfurun** – and do not have *kufir*; because *kufir* in Arabic means to deny.

Today, *inshaAllah* lets explore this *shukr*.

How would we define *shukr* ?

To acknowledge the blessings of Allah (swt) and therefore be thankful & grateful for them

A person, who does not have *shukr*, is in reality denying the blessings of Allah (swt) which is a kind of denial of Allah (swt) Himself. Serious matter this.

So, ‘Be grateful to me and do not be ungrateful’ = “Be grateful to me and do not be an unbeliever”

Now, what exactly is this *Shukr*?

Before we get into details of *shukr*, lets quickly go over some world statistics and figure out where you and I stand in terms of worldly blessings of Allah (swt).

Slides 1 – 8:

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, shoes on your feet and a roof over your head you are richer than 75% of this world.

Slides 9 – 10:

If you have money in the bank and in your wallet and some spare saved for a rainy day, you are amongst the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

Slide 11:

If you own a computer you are part of that 1% in the world who has this opportunity. For us it seems *everybody* has a computer, the sad reality is that just 1% of the people of this world can actually afford it and have access to it.

Slides 12 – 15:

If you have never experienced fear in battle, loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, you are ahead of 20 million people around the world who face these calamities.

I don't know how many of you watch what is happening around the world these days. From Syria to Iraq to Palestine to Kashmir to just right at home in Karachi - the violence, the injustice is staggering. Ever experienced any of this?

Slide 16:

If you can hold your head up and smile, you are an exception, not the norm.

Slides 17 - 18:

Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read or write. Can you imagine that? One billion people. Everybody we know, even our servants' children go to school and yet, one billion people cannot read or write or sign their names when required.

Slide 19:

1.6 billion people, a quarter of humanity, live without electricity. Yes, we have power cuts in our city all the time, yet in our homes generators turn on and voila – life goes on. We do not stay awake in sweltering heat with mosquitos buzzing around when there is load-shedding.

Slide 20:

World poverty statistics show that 800 million people go hungry every day. You know, two three days ago I saw on TV, that in Pakistan the poverty level has risen by 1.6% in the last one year. 1.6% sounds very little but in reality it is that many more people going hungry and facing life

without the bare necessities. Have you ever noticed queues of beggars, street kids and laborers outside local *dhaabas* (small restaurants serving cheap local food) at meal times? They wait there in the hope that someone might buy them food.

Slides 21 – 23:

126 million children work in the worst forms of child labor. That's their life, hard work from morning till night. That's one in 12 among the world's five to 17 year olds. Have you ever cleaned your own home? If mum asks you to clean your room, you probably frown and complain!

Slide 24:

Where do you stand? Sobering though, right?

So, when you think of all that you have, where do you think it has come from? don't you think we should say thank you to Allah for all that He has given us?

Now, let's try to understand *shukr*.

When Allah (swt) told *shaitaan* that you leave paradise, he asks, give me respite till the day of resurrection (Surah Al 'Araf 7: Verses 13 -15). So Allah (swt) said, all right, you can have this opportunity. And then *shaitaan* added "I will be an ambush for mankind on your right way; I will come upon them from the front, from the back, from the right and from the left." (Surah Al 'Araf 7: Verse 17)

Even before mankind came on earth he said that. He said that "you will not find most of them to be grateful." (Surah Al 'Araf 7: Verse 17)

لَا تَتَّبِعُهُمْ مِّن بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

He didn't say that you will find most of them weak in faith, or they are going to disobey you, no. He just said that you will not find them grateful. Because he knew that gratitude is a very important thing in keeping us on the right path and keeping us on the *sirat-e-mustaqeem*.

You know what *sirat-e-mustaqeem* is? The right path.

And you know we should realize that *shukar*, being thankful and grateful is a very strong barrier between us and *shaitaan*.

Why is that you think? What possible connection can there be between *shaitaan* leading us astray and us doing *shukar*?

Actually there is a very deep connection. You see when you are ungrateful it is as if you are

putting out the welcome mat for shaitaan, you are leaving the door open for him to walk right in and attack you because it is very easy to start feeling sorry for yourself and that's the first step in the wrong direction.

You know, when you want an iPhone because all your friends have it or you want the latest laptop or an iPad or an iTouch, whatever it is. Because all your friends have it and your parents are so mean they got you a laptop last year and they think you should be happy with that. You don't need one this year. Or you don't need to get the latest model of the cell phone in the new hot pink color. Then you think to yourself, my parents are so mean. They never give me anything! Or if they give me something, they always put a condition to it: that you have to get an A star or an A in your report. Or you have to help save up for whatever you want. And all your friends just seem to get it because it is their birthday or just because their parents think that it is alright to give it to them because they love them so much and my parents don't love me at all!! Isn't that so? So many times we think like that.

And then, when you start thinking like that, naturally you start feeling very sorry for yourself: Poor me! And that is where ingratitude comes in.

A very small fraction of people have what you want, what you are dying to get, but it seems like everyone because you are concentrating only on what you don't have.

When you are busy complaining to yourself or to your friend, have you ever thought of your maid's daughter that she's exactly your age and she doesn't have even a fraction of what you have?

These children also go to school and unlike you, come home walking. They don't come home in an air-conditioned car like we do. When they come home they have to cook food, they have to help in the house, and they have to do all the house-work as their mothers also work to earn a living. And when the electricity goes, there is no generator switched on for them. They have to rush through their homework while there is still daylight because there is no chance that the electricity situation will improve, especially these days, as it is going to become hotter, the season is going to change, more and more electricity will go. We are all used to it here in Karachi. But we never feel the effects of it because the generator is always switched on.

So, just think about it. And when you start comparing these things then you realize how much Allah (swt) has given us. How much we have to be thankful for.

We are just talking about "stuff" right now. What about your sight and hearing and hands and feet and respiratory system and hair and skin and we could go on and on and on ... your life itself!

If you tried to number Allah's blessings, you could never count them. Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surah an-Nahl: Verse 18)

The question is, how do you do *shukr*?

There are three kinds of *shukr*.

First is, of course, *shukr* of the heart.

When you think about all the blessings that Allah (swt) has given you - acknowledge that Allah (swt) alone is the Bestower of all your blessings.

Did Allah (swt) give you a list before you were born? These are the various people, which household would you like to go in to? No. We just happened to be born where we were born. Right? You could have been easily, instead of being your parent's daughter been the *maali's* (*gardener's*) daughter. Or you could have been the *maasi's* (*maid's*) daughter.

That feeling of gratitude in your heart – *Alhamdulillah*, Allah (swt) is so kind and merciful to me.

Ok, now second is *shukr* of the tongue.

To be grateful and thankful with your tongue i.e. what we normally do in our lives with one another. You'll be amazed that we're so trained in being polite that if anybody gives us something it is considered impolite if we don't say thank you i.e. for a fellow human being we are so insistent on doing *shukr*. Somebody can give you a single coke and you will feel obliged to say thank you. While Allah (swt) can feed us a whole meal and we still forget to say *Alhumdulillah* after it.

To do *shukr* of Allah (swt) with our tongue is by means of doing *Hamd* of Allah (swt), saying '*Alhumdulillah*.' Saying thank you Allah, as much as we can.

And you know Allah (swt) says,

...لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ...

and that means;

“if you are thankful I will give you more”. (Surah Ibrahim 14: verse7)

Just imagine you get a really nice gift for a close friend. And what does she do? She just puts it aside. She doesn't even look at it or she barely looks at it, puts it away and says oh, thank you. That's all and she never mentions it again and you don't know if your present went in to the well or if she even looked at it or she threw it away. What are you going to think to yourself? You'll say, next time catch me giving her anything! I'll just give her any old thing that I have in the house. She doesn't deserve a nice gift.

On the other hand, if there is somebody else who is not such a close friend and you give her an average gift and she thanks you so nicely for it, and says; ‘thank you so much this is so beautiful and I just love it!’ Also, she shows it to everybody; ‘see what a nice gift this girl has given me, see how beautiful it is!’ Won’t you feel happy? And what will you think to yourself then? I’ll give her something even nicer next time.

Allah (swt), who has given us so much, shouldn’t we be thanking Him?

When things go wrong it is very easy to say, why me? Why did this happen to me? Have you ever said this when things went right and you got a prize and you came first, did you ever say why me? What did I do to get all this good luck? We can say that oh, I’m so unlucky that I missed my A by one mark but did you ever say that I’m so lucky that I got an A star just because I got my questions right and thank you Allah because I remembered all my information.

We are very quick in making petitions, very quick in asking Allah for things and when Allah gives us those things we forget in an instant. It goes right out of our mind.

Allah (swt) says in the Quran in Surah Yunus, “When affliction touches a man, he calls on us whether lying on his side or sitting or standing but when we remove his affliction from him, he passes on as if he never called on us on account of the affliction that touched him” (Surah Yunus 10: Verse 12)

Isn’t that so? Has anyone of you ever thought in the past six months or even since January, have you gotten something at school or at home and you said thank you Allah at that time.

Alhamdulillah.

Rasool Allah (pbuh) used to stand for the night prayer and sometimes his feet would swell and crack. Aisha (ra) asked him, why he did that since his past and future sins were already forgiven. You know what he (pbuh) said: “Should I not be a grateful servant”? [Muslim]

And he (pbuh) has taught us such beautiful dua’s for daily activities like eating, drinking, going out of the house, travelling on a vehicle, going to sleep – you name it and there is a cool du’a for it. Most of these duas are acknowledging Allah (swt)’s favour and blessing on us and are a great way of doing *shukr* of the heart and of the tongue.

For example, when you wake up – *Alhamdulillah alladhee ahyana ba’da ma amatana wa ilay hin nushoor*

Alhamdulillah – to Him who resurrected us after our death and to Him is our return [Bukhari]

Then there is a way to do *shukr* is with our actions, through obedience – a grateful servant is an obedient servant i.e. to do *shukr* of Allah (swt) by obeying His commandments.

If your parents gave you say an ipad – would that be a good present? Yes. And you are glued to it even at dinner time, ignoring mum’s instructions, dad’s conversation – what kind of attitude

would that be? Downright rude and ungrateful. What do we do with Allah (swt)? Do we pay heed to Him? Something to think about if we want to be grateful servants.

Another way is to use the blessings that Allah (swt) has given us in His obedience or at the very least not to use them in His disobedience.

E.g. If a person is truly grateful for having eyesight – he will say that Allah (swt) you have blessed me with this gift of vision and my *shukr* to you will lie in using these eyes in Your obedience and not Your disobedience.

Part of *shukr* is to remember our humility.

True Story: RasulAllah (pbuh) said that there were three men of the Bani Isra'il, a leper, a bald man and a blind man. Allah (swt) sent an angel to test them. The angel met the leper and asked him, "What would you like best?" He said that he would like a beautiful complexion and skin and a relief from this sickness which drove people away from him. The angel stroked his body and he had what he wished for. The angel then asked him what he would like for wealth and gave him a pregnant camel when he asked for camels, saying 'May Allah bless this for you.'

Next the angel met the bald man, and asked him the same questions. He wished to have healthy hair and a cure from the disease which drove people away from him. On a stroke of the angel's hand, he got beautiful strong hair and when he wished for cows, the angel gave him a pregnant cow, praying for Allah (swt)'s blessings.

The angel then went to the blind man who wished to have his sight restored to him. The angel passed his hand over his eyes and he regained his sight. "What wealth do you wish for?" "Goats" the man said. The angel gave him a pregnant goat and prayed for Allah (swt)'s blessings for that.

All the animals procreated and soon there were camels, cows and goat with them in large numbers. Then Allah (swt) sent the angel in the same form as before and he said to the leper, "I am a poor man who has exhausted all his provision and means and cannot reach home. I ask you in the Name of Allah (swt) who has blessed you with a nice skin and complexion give me a camel that it may take me home." He shouted, "Away with you, I have other things to do and do not have anything to give you." The angel exclaimed, "Oh I think I do recognize you! You were the poor leper whom people despised but Allah blessed you with wealth. He shouted, "Nonsense!" This wealth I inherited from my ancestors." The angel prayed, "If you lie, you may become as you were."

The angel went to the bald man after that and he turned out to be no better than the first and the angel said, "If you lie you may become as you were."

Next, the angel went to the blind man and repeated his plight to him, seeking a goat from him in the name of Allah (swt) Who had given him eyesight. He replied, "That's right, I was blind and the Merciful gave me eyes to see. Take away whatever you want and leave for me whatever you

like. The angel said, “By Allah, I have not come for anything except to try the three of you. Allah is pleased with you but displeased with the other two.” [Bukhari]

Just like this, we also get into the same process. We do our A levels with A stars, get into the best universities, get MBAs and all sorts of fancy degrees, get good jobs etc and forget that all these are simply the bestowals of Allah (swt).

If you have a Mercedes etc you feel like you are on top of the world that you are something really great. The reality is that we are nothing in front of Allah (swt). So, we should remember our humility.

So, we need to make ourselves among the *shakireen* (those who are grateful); if we become *shakireen*, we will automatically be amongst the *zakireen* (those who remember Allah much).

Gratitude’s importance was emphasized by the Prophet (pbuh) when he took the hand of Mu’aadh ibn Jabal (ra) and said: “O Mu’aadh, by Allah I love you, by Allah I love you.” Then he said, “I advise you, O Mu’aadh, do not fail to say this after every prayer: ***O Allah help me to remember You, to thank You and to worship You properly.***”

The Arabic version of this Hadith is the following. Let’s ensure that we memorize it and recite it after every prayer.

اللَّهُمَّ اعْنِي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ ، وَشُكْرِكَ ، وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

Allahumma A’inni Ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni ibadatika

And *shukr* like sugar makes life sweet. It makes us better human beings.

And finally I’d like to end with a poem.

Ya Allah, Forgive Me When I Whine

Today upon the bus I saw a girl with golden hair

And wished I was as fair

When suddenly she rose to leave

I saw her hobble down the isle

She had one leg and wore a crutch

But as she passed, a smile

Ya Allah, forgive me when I whine
I have two legs the world is mine
I stopped to buy some candies
The lad who sold it had such charm
I talked with him, he seemed so glad
If I were late it would do no harm
And as I left he said to me
I thank you, you have been so kind
It's nice to talk to folks like you
You see, he said, I'm blind
Ya Allah, forgive me when I whine
I have two eyes the world is mine

Later when walking down the street
I saw a child with eyes of blue
He stood and watched the others play
He did not know what to do
I stopped a moment and then I said
Why don't you join the others dear?
He looked ahead without a word
And then I knew he couldn't hear
Ya Allah, forgive me when I whine
I have two ears the world is mine

With feet to take me where I go

With eyes to see the sunsets glow

With ears to hear what I know

Ya Allah, forgive me when I whine

I have been blessed indeed the world is mine.

(Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*