



# The Art of Gratitude: Qur'anic Themes on *Shukr*

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## Author Biography

**Dr. Tamer Desouky** is a social scientist working on the Survey Research and Evaluation team. As a methodologist, his passion lies in using various research tools to discover and generate knowledge relevant to the intersection between psychology and religion.

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## Introduction

Kareem, a 40-year-old IT professional, feels a crushing sense of bitterness. He's successful in his career, does not have any health problems, and his income puts him in the top 1% of US household income (\$350,000 and above). He even has healthy kids and a supportive wife, yet, somehow, life just feels like it's not what he had in mind. He might have everything in the world to some people, but he simply cannot find that contentment he is so desperately looking for.

Zainab, on the other hand, is a single mother of four children. Her husband, the main breadwinner of the family, tragically died from a sudden cardiac arrest at the age of 36. Zainab was left to both mourn the loss of her husband and care for her family single-handedly. Her salary of \$37,000 is enough to feed everyone and pay the bills, but she's only one disaster away from homelessness and poverty. Despite living paycheck to paycheck, she has made it a habit to always give a portion of her little income to other individuals in need. Her tongue is in constant praise of Allah in gratitude for everything He has blessed her with.

The stories of Kareem and Zainab, while anecdotal, illustrate two very real lived experiences. Too often, we find ourselves drowning in countless blessings. And while we have so much beyond our basic needs, a sense of contentment never settles within us. We long to be like Zainab, who despite her numerous challenges as a single, working mother, has unlocked a key to true happiness and pleasure: gratitude.

Being grateful for what we have benefits us in so many more ways than we can imagine. And the data proves it. Research studies have demonstrated how a sense of gratitude is associated with increased well-being,<sup>1</sup> physical health,<sup>2</sup> and a reduced desire for material gains.<sup>3</sup> Given how life-changing gratitude can be in

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<sup>1</sup> Alex M. Wood, Jeffrey J. Froh, and Adam W. A. Geraghty, "Gratitude and Well-Being: A Review and Theoretical Integration," *Clinical Psychology Review* 30, no. 7 (2010): 890–905.

<sup>2</sup> Anna L. Boggiss, Nathan S. Consedine, Jennifer M. Brenton-Peters, Paul L. Hofman, and Anna S. Serlachius, "A Systematic Review of Gratitude Interventions: Effects on Physical Health and Health Behaviors," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 135 (2020).

<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel M. Lambert, Frank D. Fincham, Tyler F. Stillman, and Lukas R. Dean, "More Gratitude, Less Materialism: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 4, no. 1 (2009): 32–42.

regard to our well-being, one might think that it would be readily practiced. Shockingly, however, one poll found that only roughly half of Americans regularly express gratitude (52% of women and 44% of men).<sup>4</sup> And even when people agreed that gratitude is important (~90% of respondents), only about half of those individuals (~50% of respondents) admitted to regularly expressing it to family, friends, and colleagues. The classic sentiment, “I think it’s very important, but I don’t do it,” appears to be common when it comes to gratitude.

This sentiment also holds true for the Muslim community. However, we have a responsibility to understand the centrality of gratitude in our religion. Our faith provides us with the answers as to *why* Allah expects gratitude from us and, more importantly, why He is so deserving of our praise. With this understanding, we are uniquely equipped with the proper motivation to act upon our beliefs and regularly express thankfulness.

So let’s take a deep dive into the role of gratitude in the Muslim tradition, which is often captured by the Arabic word *shukr*. When used in an Islamic context, the meaning of *shukr* extends well beyond general notions of gratitude and thankfulness as they’re used in contemporary society. Embodying *shukr* in its fullest sense is, in fact, a way of life that cultivates endless worldly and otherworldly rewards. The Qur’an and Sunnah are replete with reminders to express *shukr*. Ibn al-Qayyim went as far as saying that half of our entire belief (*īmān*) rests on practicing it.<sup>5</sup> In this paper, we are going to explore how the Qur’an, in particular, encourages us to be grateful by looking at the various contexts in which the concept of *shukr* arises. In doing so, we hope that you will not only walk away with divinely-rooted motivation to express *shukr* in your own life, but to reflect on how the Qur’an offers us truly comprehensive guidance in living our most satisfying lives.

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<sup>4</sup> Janice Kaplan, *Gratitude Survey*, John Templeton Foundation, 2012, [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/JTF\\_GRATITUDE\\_REPORTpub.doc](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/JTF_GRATITUDE_REPORTpub.doc).

<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *‘Uddat al-sābirīn wa dhakhīrat al-shākirīn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019), ch. 19; Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr* (Kuwait: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), no. 58; based on the narration in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2999.

## *Shukr*: A core element of faith

In its pure essence, *shukr* is to recognize the goodness one receives.<sup>6</sup> This can manifest as a feeling, behavior, or social transaction. Above all, it is a form of worship. *Shukr* not only helps instill appreciation and cooperation between people, as well as love for the Creator, but it also brings about a profound change in us as individuals. For these reasons, I wanted to offer a holistic framework for gratitude in Islam to inspire Muslims to reevaluate and reinvigorate their practice of *shukr*.<sup>7</sup> With the right mindset and a few moments of praising Allah, one unlocks greater well-being, physical health, and ultimately success in this life and the next.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH)<sup>8</sup> offers us a concise, yet comprehensive definition of *shukr* when he states,

*Shukr* is [manifested] through

- (1) the heart, by feelings of subordination and submissiveness
- (2) the tongue, through verbally acknowledging the blessing and praising/thanking [the benefactor]
- (3) acts of obedience and unwavering devotion.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> 'Abū al-Baqā' al-Kafawī, *al-Kuliyāt* (Beirut: Al-Resalah Publishers, 1998), chap. on the letter *nūn*.

<sup>7</sup> The Qur'an was used as the primary source for extracting "themes" on *shukr*. Approximately seventy different Qur'anic verses were identified that had words derived from the triliteral root of *shukr* (*shīn, kāf, rā'*). I grouped the verses together to create cohesive themes that revolved around the same concept. The results identified four main themes (see Table 1). *Shukr* is to be experienced and expressed through reflection on the following: (1) Allah's blessings, (2) Allah's attributes and names, (3) Allah's warnings, and (4) Allah's commands to be of those who engage in *shukr* (*shākirūn*). Specifically, 30% of the verses were grouped into theme 1, another 30% in theme 2, followed by 16% in theme 3, and 24% in theme 4.

<sup>8</sup> Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr (691–751 AH), the theologian, jurist, and prolific author of nearly one hundred works touching on all subjects of the Islamic sciences. Ibn Kathīr, his student, once said: "He used to be compassionate to others, never envious, and he never hurt anyone... I do not know of anyone in this world during our times more in worship than him." He was imprisoned with his teacher, Ibn Taymiyyah, for two years, during which he found the most benefit from exclusively studying the Qur'an. His full biography is discussed in Ibn Rajab's *al-Dhayl 'alā tabaqāt al-Hanābilah* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-'Ubaykān, 2005), no. 600.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madārij al-salīkīn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019), chap. on the virtue of *shukr*, subsection on the linguistic origins of the word *shukr*.

Note that, in this definition, Ibn al-Qayyim combines both outward expressions and inward experiences. *Shukr* is to be felt in the heart and exemplified in our external behavior.

*Shukr* is not simply an optional, supererogatory practice. Rather, it is a fundamental obligation that sets the foundation for and encapsulates the essence of worship (Qur'an, 16:114; 2:172). So much so that Allah divides His creation based on those who express *shukr* and those who do not. In one verse, for example, He states:

(76:3) Indeed, We guided him [i.e., man] to the way, be he **grateful** (*shākir*) or be he ungrateful (*kafūr*).

While *shukr* means to acknowledge and openly show appreciation for a blessing, *kufr* is the exact opposite. *Kufr* is derived from the root word *kafara*, which means to cover something and make it hidden.<sup>10</sup> In this context, *kufr* means to refuse to appreciate these benefits, thus hiding one's appreciation and not openly showing gratitude. Those who are ungrateful are ultimately labeled with disbelief (*kufr*), illustrating the magnitude of being ungrateful to Allah. Thus, knowing the signposts on the path of *shukr* and how to stay on it is essential to attain the mercy of Allah (4:147).

And what better way is there to define the path to *shukr* than turning to the Qur'an itself? For this paper, I conducted a content analysis that extracted every instance of the root letters for *shukr* in the Qur'an. In doing so, I was able to highlight every verse that referenced *shukr*, which I analyzed and categorized according to four interrelated themes. This holistic approach offers us a comprehensive way to first understand and then embody gratitude in our lives.

## Theme 1: So that you would be grateful (لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ)

*Count your blessings*

Allah has blessed us with numerous tangible and intangible blessings, be they material objects or states of being. Ultimately, a blessing is *anything* that brings us

<sup>10</sup> Al-Kafawī, *al-Kuliyāt*, chap. on the letter *kāf*. Allah ﷻ uses the linguistic meaning of the term in Qur'an 57:20.

closer to our Creator.<sup>11</sup> Oftentimes, we assume only “good” things are blessings, like having a home, attending a good school, or finding a suitable spouse. It’s important that we recognize that even events we perceive to be negative (e.g., death of a loved one, divorce, or loss of a job) in reality can still be seen as blessings if they end up bringing us closer to Allah. That it is why it comes as no surprise to find a Successor (*tābi’ī*) like Shurayḥ al-Qāḍī (d. ca. 80 AH)<sup>12</sup> stating, “A tribulation does not overtake a servant except that Allah presents with it three blessings: that the tribulation was not a test of his religion, that the tribulation was not greater than it was, and that it was an event that passed (i.e., it was not permanent).”<sup>13</sup> We need to place every difficulty we experience in life into context by recognizing that our challenges are temporary and could have always been more severe. With this mindset, even tough setbacks are an opportunity to reflect on our blessings.

Similar to tying up an animal so it doesn’t escape, scholars point out the only way you can “bind” or tie up your blessings in order to hold on to them and preserve them is through the rope of *shukr*.<sup>14</sup> That is, by counting your blessings and not taking them for granted. This is one of the easiest starting points to begin embodying *shukr* in your life. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 281 AH),<sup>15</sup> shared a narration in his book “*al-Shukr*,” of when Prophet Mūsā عليه السلام asked Allah how Adam عليه السلام, the father of humanity, gave *shukr* for everything he was blessed with. Allah answers Prophet Mūsā by saying, “O Mūsā, he understood that all (of these

<sup>11</sup> Rā’ d Muḥammad Ziyadah, *al-Ni’ma bayn al-dawām wa al-zawāl* (Gaza: Islamic University of Gaza, 2008), 25.

<sup>12</sup> Shurayḥ b. al-Hārith (d. ~80 AH). A *tābi’ī* and a renowned judge of the city of Kufa for sixty years. The *ṣaḥābah* respected his knowledge and would defer to his judgments. He was strict in his approach to judging fairly, to the point that he avoided all interaction with any parties using him as a mediator. Once a man stayed in his house as a guest and then asked him to judge on a private matter, to which Shurayḥ replied: “Either you stay as my guest and I’ll leave the case, or you leave my house and I’ll stay as the judge.” His full biography is discussed in Ibn ‘Asākir’s *Tārīkh Dimashq* (Amman: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), no. 2733.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 79.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Abū Bakr Abdullah b. Muḥammad (208–281 AH), *ḥafīẓ* of hadith, prolific writer, and author of over two hundred works on various Islamic sciences. He is known for his extensive knowledge of the Islamic sciences and for benefiting the general population of Muslims through his essays on ethics, morals, and asceticism. His full biography is discussed in al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī’s *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002), no. 5162.

blessings) came from Me so he praised Me, and that (praise) was *shukr* for what I have done for him.”<sup>16</sup>

In order to count our blessings, we need to first spend time reflecting on what Allah has given us. One way to do so is by thinking about our source of sustenance (*rizq*). Nine different Qur’anic verses combine the words *shukr* and *rizq*. In one verse, for example, Allah states:

(2:172): O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you and be **grateful** to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.

So why the emphasis on sustenance? Think about it for a moment. What exactly do you do to grow and consume food? Are you an essential part of this process or is it almost automated? The main argument these Qur'anic verses convey is that these different types of good and pure provisions, from water and rain, to fruits and livestock, are provided to us solely from Allah, ready to be consumed without much preparation. The fact that inhabitants of barren lands still consume some form of sustenance speaks to the reality that, no matter our situation, Allah is there to sustain us, and that is yet another reason to be grateful to Him. Vegetation grows and develops along a specific and predetermined process. The fact that the vegetation’s nourishment (sunlight and rain) also comes from Allah is an additional reason to experience and express *shukr*.

Another blessing we take for granted is the fact that Allah is lenient with us regarding our obligatory acts during times of inconvenience like traveling or illness. For example, if we are not feeling well or are traveling during the month of Ramadan in which fasting is obligatory, Allah, out of His immense mercy, allows us to break our fast. When Allah mentions concessions like these in the Qur’an, He reminds us that He does so “in order for us to be grateful” (*la ‘allakum tashkurūn*). Take for example the concession we are granted when we cannot find water to make *wuḍū’*:

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<sup>16</sup> This is a biblical (*Isrā’īliyyāt*) narration from the People of the Book. As a result, its authenticity cannot be confirmed nor can it be denied unless it is in definitive contradiction with Islamic teachings.

(5:6): O you who have believed, when you rise to [perform] prayer, wash your faces and your forearms to the elbows and wipe over your heads and wash your feet to the ankles. And if you are in a state of ritual impurity [*janābah*], then purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself, or have been intimate with your wives and cannot find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it. Allah does not intend to make difficulty for you, but He intends to purify you and complete His favor upon you so that you may be **grateful**.

Had He so willed, Allah could have required His servants to fast despite the circumstances or purify ourselves no matter the cost. But in so many different situations, Allah is lenient with us in our obligations and expects only gratitude in exchange.

A final grouping of verses revolve around the blessing of knowledge and the ways that we acquire it. Two verses specify the human faculties of hearing, sight, and intellect and how we should be grateful for such gifts. Additionally, the blessing of being taught knowledge by Allah, whether through direct instruction (2:31), indirect teaching (55:2; 55:4; 96:4), insight and inspiration (28:7), or revelation (21:80) is another reason to experience gratitude and express thanks. For example, Allah says in the Qur'an:

(16:78): And Allah has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect] that perhaps you would be **grateful**.

These sets of verses illustrate the numerous blessings we take for granted. It is only by actively reflecting on the fact that it is out of Allah's generosity that we have our daily sustenance, our hearing and vision, our very abilities to think and act, that we can recognize Allah's immense favors upon us and be grateful for them.

**Suggested exercise: Identify blessings and cultivate contentment**

Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah (d. 198 AH)<sup>17</sup> used to often repeat, “Allah blessed us in so-and-so, He did for us so-and-so, He did for us so-and-so....”<sup>18</sup> Identifying and acknowledging the numerous blessings we have is the first step in engaging in *shukr*. By attributing Allah as the main cause behind every good thing in our lives, our mindset changes and *shukr* becomes second nature.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Look at those who are lower than you and do not look at those who are higher than you, lest you belittle the favors Allah conferred upon you.”<sup>19</sup> There is no better way to recognize the extent to which you are drowning in blessings than by heeding the Prophet’s advice in this hadith. How can you not be compelled to be grateful to Allah when there are countless people in the world who would do anything for your home, your health, or your family? Visiting a local homeless shelter or helping individuals less fortunate than us are small ways to remind ourselves to acknowledge that we have what these individuals are missing. Simply carrying several heavy bags of groceries for an elderly individual makes you appreciate your strength as well as your independence. Want to give *shukr* for your knowledge? Tutor someone who needs your guidance. Want to give *shukr* for your wealth? Give some of your money to someone who needs it.

A Successor (*tābi’ī*) by the name of Bakr b. ‘Abdullāh al-Muzanī (d. 108 AH)<sup>20</sup> said, “O Son of Adam, if you seek to know the extent of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you, then simply close your eyes.”<sup>21</sup> It is far too common in our society today to assume that only wealth and prosperity are blessings, blinding us to the reality that something as common as eyesight is one of the biggest blessings

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<sup>17</sup> Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah (107–198 AH), *tābi’ al-tābi’īn*, *ḥafīẓ* of hadith, fully trustworthy narrator and scholar of Islam. Many well-known scholars benefited from his knowledge, such as Imām al-Shāfi’ī and Imām Aḥmad. He was considered the most knowledgeable individual of his time in *tafsīr* and hadith. It is said he performed the Hajj seventy times asking Allah not to cause him to die before the next Hajj, until he stopped this prayer the year before he passed. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar ‘alām al-nubalā’* (Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risalah, 1985), the eighth generation, no. 120.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr* (Kuwait: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), no. 144.

<sup>19</sup> *Sahih Muslim*, no. 2963c.

<sup>20</sup> Bakr b. Abdullah al-Muzanī (d. AH 108), a *tābi’*, jurist, and trustworthy narrator of hadith. People used to say that he was “*mujāb al-da’wah*,” that is, that Allah would always answer his prayers. His full biography is discussed in Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī’s *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl* (Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risalah, 1980), no. 747.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr* (Kuwait: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), no. 182.

we will ever be afforded. There are many other blessings that we take for granted. Our mother ‘Ā’ishah<sup>22</sup> (rA) said, “There is no slave that drinks from clean and pure water, and it enters the body without injury, and it exits the body without injury, except that it becomes obligatory on this slave to engage in *shukr*.”<sup>23</sup>

With a broader understanding of blessings, even individuals who have little material wealth have reason to be [grateful](#). Abū Ḥāzim Salamah b. Dīnār (d. 133 AH)<sup>24</sup> once said, “A blessing by which Allah took away something from my worldly affairs is greater than a blessing by which he gave me something from it (i.e., the world).”<sup>25</sup> In this case, a blessing extends to situations where we are not tested in our faith. What this attitude ultimately cultivates is a sense of contentment with whatever Allah has given us.

The Prophet ﷺ advised us, “Have *qanā’ah* (contentment), [and] you’ll be the most grateful of people.”<sup>26</sup> If we are content with whatever Allah has decreed for us, anything that comes our way turns into a blessing we did not take for granted for which we become immensely grateful. Building contentment does not require hours of learning, praying, or practice. All it requires is a sincere action in the heart where you say “*alḥamdulillāh*” with full acceptance and joy for the blessings you have received. Even if you can identify only a few blessings, remember that blessings, in reality, are innumerable and therefore can never be fully measured.<sup>27</sup> Allah says:

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<sup>22</sup> ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr (d. 58 AH), the beloved wife of the Prophet ﷺ and the Mother of the Believers. She narrated over two thousand sayings of the Prophet ﷺ and greatly benefited the *ummah* through her scholarly opinions. Allah declared her innocence and purity in Chapter 24 (al-Nūr) of the Qur’an. She was also honored by Allah by being the last person to see the Prophet ﷺ alive, as he took his final breath in her embrace. Her full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar ‘alām al-nublā’*, the first generation, no. 19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr* (Kuwait: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), no. 192.

<sup>24</sup> Abū Ḥāzim Salamah b. Dīnār (d. 133 AH), of the younger *tābi’in*, trustworthy narrator, a true worshiper, and one of the foremost scholars of Medina. He was known for his wisdom. He once said: “I am more terrified of being prevented from making *du’ā* than I am of my *du’ā* being prevented from being answered.” His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar ‘alām al-nublā’* (Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risalah, 1985), the fourth generation, no. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr* (Kuwait: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), no. 118.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-ahādīth al-ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 930.

<sup>27</sup> Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Zahrat al-tafāsīr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-’Arabī, 2001), chap. 14, verse 34.

(14:34) And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should [try to] count the favors [i.e., blessings] of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and **ungrateful**.

Finally, the greatest blessing that we have is the blessing of Islam. Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104 AH)<sup>28</sup>, one of the famous students of ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās and ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib, was asked regarding the Qur’anic verse 31:20, “Have you not seen that Allah has subjected for you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and has lavished His blessings upon you, both seen and unseen?” He replied, “[The blessing is] *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There’s no deity except Allah).”<sup>29</sup> Whenever Islam was mentioned to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (d. 65 AH),<sup>30</sup> he would reply, “By the blessing of my Lord [I am Muslim], not through my own works, nor through my own will power...”<sup>31</sup>

We were created to worship Allah. We were also created with numerous blessings in order to show gratitude. By understanding this basic premise, we can start to build the proper mechanism to worship Allah by embodying *shukr* (as Theme 2 discusses).

As knowledge necessitates action, please take a moment and read Worksheet 1. These worksheets are designed to help you engage in *shukr* to Allah relevant to each theme of this paper.

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<sup>28</sup> Mujāhid ibn Jabr (21-104 AH), the *imām*, scholar, trustworthy narrator, and famous exegete (*mufasssir*). He reviewed every single verse of the Qur’an with Abdullah b. Abbās on thirty separate occasions. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar ‘alām al-nubalā’*, the second generation, no. 175.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 95.

<sup>30</sup> Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (2–63 AH), a *ṣahābī*, jurist, and trustworthy narrator of hadith. He was the fourth caliph of Bani Umayya. Although his political participation was controversial (just like any political participant), he showed love and respect to Ahl al-Bayt, was strict about enacting the Shariah, and was deeply attached to the Qur’an. He is considered the founder of the Marwanid House of Bani Umayya who ruled the Islamic world for three centuries. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar ‘alām al-nubalā’*, the first generation, no. 102.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 121.

## Worksheet 1 - Count your blessings

**Instructions:** Reflect on your day today and list five blessings Allah bestowed upon you. These can be anything from material things you own, cherished memories, or different states you experienced.

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5. 

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## Theme 2: Allah is Appreciative, so learn to appreciate His blessings (الشَّاكِر - الشُّكُور)

*Acknowledge the ultimate benefactor*

When one of the pious scholars was asked, “How are you doing this morning?” he would reply, “We are drowning in blessings, yet we are oblivious to [our need] to exhibit gratitude. Our Lord seeks our love while having no need for us, while we seek His wrath despite being utterly dependent on him.”<sup>32</sup>

It is truly out of Allah’s magnificence that He is deserving of our gratitude. Even reflecting on a single of His 99 Names is powerful enough to illustrate why we need to worship Him. Among them is al-Mujīb, or the One who answers our prayers, especially from His servants praying out of desperation. The Qur’an paints a vivid image of how Allah responds to our calls, whether it is when we are in need of being saved from the darkness of the land or fierce storms at sea, or the terror of a worldly oppressor as was the case for the children of Israel during the Pharaoh’s reign of terror. One verse, for example, reads:

(6:63): Say, “Who rescues you from the darkneses of the land and sea [when] you call upon Him imploring [aloud] and privately, ‘If He should save us from this [crisis], we will surely be among the **thankful**?’”

Allah is constantly there, answering our calls and protecting us at every turn. He is the Most Compassionate, the Most Generous, the All-Hearing, the Most Loving, and the [list](#) goes on and on. Allah even describes Himself throughout the Qur’an with the very same attributes of manifesting *shukr* as *Al-Shākir* and *Al-Shukūr*.

It is through these names in specific that we learn that Allah exemplifies *shukr* towards His creation! The Qur’an describes three ways in which this occurs: when He rewards us abundantly, when He accepts our repentance, and when He appreciates our good works.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 45.

An example of this theme is represented by the following verse:

(42:23): ... And whoever commits a good deed, We will increase for him good therein. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and **Appreciative** (*Shakūr*).

When Our Creator embodies *shukr*, it takes on the form of appreciation and results in His multiplying our little deeds many times over. Defining this type of *shukr* is similar to the example of a camel, which can survive up to two weeks without drinking water. If a camel consumes food high in water content, it can even survive months without drinking water. Linguistically, we can say that the camel in this case underwent a form of *shukr*—it took the little that it had and multiplied it into larger and longer-lasting benefits. Similarly, Allah's *shukr* towards His creation involves graciously giving large rewards for the little good works His creation initiates, as well as multiplying those rewards many times over.

## Suggested exercise: Reflect on the Greatness of Allah and His perfect attributes

By reflecting on the ultimate, eternal, and perfect attributes of Allah, one can better connect to Allah through a relationship of love and admiration. Developing this form of spiritual connection naturally feeds into a higher quality form of *shukr*. Ṣāliḥ b. Mismār (d. 245 AH)<sup>33</sup> said, “I don't know what is better: a blessing He bestowed upon me, or a blessing by which something was taken away from me.”<sup>34</sup> When you truly recognize Allah's magnificence through His Names and Attributes, you cannot help but gain a sense of full trust for what He has planned for you. You know that He is al-Shākīr and al-Shukūr, One who is always ready to abundantly reward you for your little efforts. This understanding of Allah is essential for giving sincere *shukr*.

<sup>33</sup> Ṣāliḥ b. Mismār (d. AH 245), from the scholars of Merv (in present day Turkmenistan). He was a trustworthy narrator of hadith, and Imām Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Naysāburī narrated from him in his *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. See Ibn Manjuwayh's *Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1987), the chapter of the letter *ṣāḍ*, no. 688 and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl* (Beirut: Mu'assat al-Risalah, 1980), no. 2838.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 203.

Allah's love, mercy, and [affection](#) towards His creation also extends to protecting us from social shame. Ibn Abī āl-Dunyā narrates the following, based on the wisdom of Muslim sages, "We are in a situation where we have God's blessings that we cannot count, despite the fact that we sin and often disobey Him. So we don't know what to give *shukr* for. Is it for the beautiful things that have occurred (blessings), or is it for the ugly things He has hidden (i.e., our sins from people)?"<sup>35</sup> In other words, it is out of Allah's Mercy and Generosity that He not only gives us abundant blessings, but that He also hides our shortcomings from others. The latter, in and of itself, is also a blessing to be grateful for.

Once you acknowledge that you are blessed, and you acknowledge the blessings are all from Allah, then be cognizant of the fact that Allah is the Most [Generous](#). Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161 AH)<sup>36</sup> once said, "Allah will not bless a [believing] servant in this world and then disgrace him in the hereafter, for it is a responsibility upon the benefactor to complete His favors and blessings on the beneficiary."<sup>37</sup> That is, your blessings will be fully actualized because Allah is generous and gracious with His gifts. Abū Mu'āwiyah al-Aswad,<sup>38</sup> the famous ascetic and a friend of Sufyān al-Thawrī said, "Allah is too generous to bless someone with a blessing except that He will complete it, or to [allow the servant] to use it for a good deed except that He will accept it."<sup>39</sup>

In summary, Theme 1 showed us that Allah has given us numerous things to be thankful for, while Theme 2 illustrates that it is only by reflecting on Allah's greatness that we can build a strong foundation for *shukr*.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibn Abi al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 194.

<sup>36</sup> Sufyan ibn Said al-Thawrī (97–161 AH), *tābi' al-tābi'in*, one of the famous ascetics, Imām of hadith, who had his own independent *fiqhi* school of thought. He had over six hundred teachers and his opinions are highly regarded in all areas of the Islamic sciences. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nublā'*, the sixth generation, no. 82.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 142.

<sup>38</sup> Abū Mu'āwiyah al-Aswad, in the ninth generation according to Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nublā'*. He was of the *tābi' al-tābi'in*, a famous ascetic, and was considered one of the *Abdāl* (select group of Allah's saints according to Sufi tradition). During his last years he became blind. However, his eyesight would miraculously come back whenever he desired to read the Qur'an from the *muṣḥaf*. As soon as he completed his recitation, his blindness would return. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nublā'*, the ninth generation, no. 21.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 144.

Please take a moment now and read Worksheet 2. This time, consider Allah's attributes of kindness, compassion, mercy, generosity, and love in the blessings He has bestowed upon you.

## Worksheet 2 - Allah's attributes in your blessings

**Instructions:** *Think about five blessings in your life where Allah's attributes were apparent. It could be events that occurred that you thought would be impossible, or where you were saved from impending doom, or simple everyday things that only Allah can accomplish for you.*

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5. 

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## Theme 3: Most people are not grateful (وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ)

### *Avoid ungratefulness*

Abū al-Dardā' (d. 32 AH)<sup>40</sup> once said, “He who does not know the blessings that Allah has conferred upon him except in his food or drink, then he indeed has little knowledge, and his punishment is hastened.”<sup>41</sup>

In the Qur'an there is a third theme regarding gratitude. This theme is particularly chilling as it tells us that few people will indeed be grateful. This reality unfolds in a number of verses that begin with Satan predicting that few of humankind would be grateful, after which Allah confirms that this is the case despite the fact that He constantly blesses us with His bounties and favors. This theme is best exemplified by the following verse:

(7:10): And We have certainly established you upon the earth and made for you therein ways of livelihood. Little are you grateful.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.110 AH)<sup>42</sup> was asked about a similar verse (100:06), “Surely humankind is ungrateful to their Lord.” He explained it by saying, “He (the human) counts his calamities, but forgets [to count] his blessings.”<sup>43</sup> If we persist in ignoring Allah's warning, not following His commands, and not engaging in *shukr*, then the Qur'an details how punishments could unfold for such sins. For example, in Chapter 16, Allah says:

(16:112): And Allah presents an example: a city that was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it **denied** the

<sup>40</sup> Abū al-Dardā' al-Anṣārī (d. AH 32), a *ṣahābī*, *qaḍī*, and reciter as well as compiler of the Qur'an. He was known for his asceticism and his love of knowledge and wisdom. He recited the whole Qur'an back to the Prophet ﷺ the way he heard it from him ﷺ. He died in Damascus in 32 AH before the assassination of Uthmān b. 'Affān. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nubalā'*, the first generation, no. 68.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 92.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Ḥasan b. Abī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (21–110 AH), a famous *tābi'*, preacher, ascetic, and scholar of Islam. He was raised in Medina associating with the *ṣahābah* and was revered for his knowledge of the Qur'an and asceticism. The majority of Sufi traditions trace their spiritual lineage/chain back to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nubalā'*, the second generation, no. 223.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 62.

favours of Allah. So Allah made it taste the envelopment of hunger and fear for what they had been doing.

Verses related to this theme serve not only as a reminder to be grateful, but as a warning in the event that we are not. Warnings are beneficial because they alert us to the potential for punishment if we persist in our actions (28:59). The Qur'an itself was primarily revealed to warn people (6:19) from wrongdoing and following the path of ungratefulness (76:3). When a person takes these warnings seriously, they should be inclined to embody *shukr* to avoid punishments.

In ignoring these warnings, we make the lethal mistake of focusing on our calamities instead of our blessings. A man came to Yūnus b. 'Ubayd (d. 140 AH)<sup>44</sup> to complain of his condition, so Yūnus said, "Would you be pleased to accept one hundred thousand dirhams<sup>45</sup> in exchange for your eyesight?" The man said no. Yūnus said, "Your hands in exchange for one hundred thousand?" The man said no. Yūnus said, "What about your legs?" The man said no. So Yūnus kept mentioning the different blessings Allah has given him and then said, "I see that you have hundreds of thousands [of blessings], yet you complain of not having your needs met."

By reflecting on the fact that all of the blessings we are showered with could be taken away, it helps to be thankful for these blessings while we are still enjoying them.

## Suggested exercise: Fear the punishment of ingratitude

In order to enjoy our blessings, we also need to understand the risk of using them in the wrong way. First, we must abandon sins, especially if these sins are only made possible by a blessing Allah bestowed upon us. For example, driving your

<sup>44</sup> Yūnus b. 'Ubayd (d. AH 140), one of the younger *tābi'īn* and a trustworthy narrator. His students would say they never saw anyone making more *istighfār* than him. He wasn't necessarily a person who performed more prayers or fasting compared to his contemporaries, but he was strict in ensuring the rights of Allah were always enforced. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nublā'*, the fifth generation, no. 124.

<sup>45</sup> This would be equivalent to \$238,882.06 as of November 14, 2021, according to the price of pure silver. 1 Dirham = 2.975 grams of pure silver.

new car (i.e., a blessing) to a place where sins will be committed is a prime example of not showing *shukr* for the car. Ziyād (d. 53 AH)<sup>46</sup> said, “One of the obligations one must perform to Allah for the blessings he has received is not to use them for disobedience and sins.”<sup>47</sup> The same argument can be applied to your eyesight, hands, speech, and other blessings used while committing sins.

Second, we need to be aware of a significant punishment if we continue in disobedience by refusing to engage in *shukr*. Abū Ḥāzim (d. 133 AH)<sup>48</sup> stated, “If you see that He has showered His blessings upon you while you are disobeying Him, then beware of Him.”<sup>49</sup> This is because Allah warns us in the Qur’an through the example of former nations who were inundated with blessings. Rather than express *shukr*, they took what they were given for granted and were thereafter punished. This process of gradually testing a community with blessings is known as *istidrāj*.

When Thābit al-Bunānī (d. 127 AH)<sup>50</sup> was asked about *istidrāj*,<sup>51</sup> he replied, “It is the plotting of Allah for the wasteful servants.” This concept of *istidrāj* was further explained by the Prophet ﷺ said, “When you see Allah gives to the servant what he loves from the *dunyā* despite his disobedience, then know it is preparing them for punishment [*istidrāj*].” Then the Messenger of Allah recited (6:44), “When they became oblivious to warnings, We showered them with everything they desired. But just as they became prideful of what they were given, We **seized them by surprise**, then they instantly fell into despair!”<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Ziyād b. Abīhi (also known as Ziyād b. Abi Sufyan), a famous *tābi*'. He was the governor of Basra and worked both in the Rashidūn and Umayyad caliphates. He was known for his nobility, intelligence, and decisiveness. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nublā*', the first generation, no. 112.

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 82.

<sup>48</sup> Abū Ḥāzim Salamah b. Dīnār (d. 133 AH).

<sup>49</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 31.

<sup>50</sup> Thābit al-Bunānī (7–127 AH), a famous *tābi*', scholar of Islam, trustworthy narrator, and Imām. He studied with Anas b. Mālik for forty years and is considered his top student. He used to pray that if Allah would give any of His creation the ability to pray in their graves after they die, he wanted to be that person. His prayer was answered when one of the righteous people saw him in a dream praying in his grave after his passing. His full biography is discussed in Imām al-Dhahabī's *Siyar 'alām al-nublā*', the third generation, no. 91.

<sup>51</sup> An irresistible lure that eventually becomes a sudden trap.

<sup>52</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 32; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 17311; al-Arna'ūt classified the text as *ḥasan*.

Islam requires a balance between fearing Allah's warnings and hoping for His mercy, so we need to come to terms with our negative thoughts and past behaviors. Only when we are able to confront the wrong we have done can we begin to move forward. The third worksheet offers instructions on how we can compensate for the times that we did not engage in *shukr*. This requires taking the first small step, which is to simply acknowledge our blessings and be grateful for them.

## Worksheet 3 - Blessings I took for granted

**Instructions:** Reflect on five blessings that you took for granted. These blessings can be people, material objects, or different states and circumstances you experienced (e.g., graduating from school, being healthy, being continuously employed, living in an intact household, etc.).

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2. 

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## Theme 4: Be among the grateful (وَكُن مِّنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ)

*Show gratitude and give thanks*

The fourth theme revolves around Allah commanding His creation to give *shukr*. In Arabic, this follows the imperative verb (*fi'l amr*) that signifies a command or, less commonly, a request. Six verses were categorized into this theme, best represented by the following verse:

(39:66): Rather, worship [only] Allah and be among the **grateful**.

To obey this command and properly pursue a life of gratitude, Allah provides us with countless models in the form of both prophets and everyday Muslims. The precedent for being grateful also extends to individuals who are altruistic and those who acknowledge their parents' contributions. In particular, there are two people Allah highlighted in the Qur'an as having *shukr*: Prophets Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm. For Prophet Nūḥ, the following verse honors how he was a grateful servant:

(17:3): O descendants of those We carried [in the ship] with Noah. Indeed, he was a **grateful** servant.

As for Prophet Ibrāhīm, the following two verses indicate why Allah highlighted him as a grateful and thankful servant:

(16:120): Indeed, Ibrāhīm was a [comprehensive] leader, devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah.

(16:121): [He was] **grateful** for His favors. He [i.e., Allah] chose him and guided him to a straight path.

By learning about those who are grateful (*shākirūn*), we are offered a precedent after which we can model *shukr* ourselves. It is important to learn how, when, and why they engaged in *shukr* in order to imitate them and join the ranks of the grateful.

## Suggested exercise: Enjoy the blessing

When Allah commands us to engage in *shukr*, we can do several simple things. One of these small acts is to openly benefit from the blessing. That is, we should not deny the blessings we have received from Allah with the desire of being ascetic and refraining from worldly provisions. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "Eat, drink, give charity and wear clothes so long as neither extravagance nor pride is mixed up with it. For Allah likes the mark of His blessing to be seen on His servant."<sup>53</sup>

## Suggested exercise: Express verbal praise

Another simple action we can all engage in is *dhikr* and verbally praising Allah. For example, Allah highlighted that Prophet Nūḥ was "*shakūr*" (17:3). Scholars explain that Prophet Nūḥ may have earned this title because he wouldn't eat, drink, wear his clothes or shoes, or even answer the call of nature except that he would say "*alḥamdulillāh*."<sup>54</sup> Additionally, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The best *dhikr* is *lā ilāha illā Allāh* (None has the right to be worshipped but Allah), and the best *shukr* is *alḥamdulillāh* (praise be to Allah)."<sup>55</sup>

## Suggested exercise: Prostrate with gratefulness

The prostration of *shukr* (*sajdat al-shukr*) is yet another simple behavior anyone can do whenever they recognize and appreciate a blessing they have from Allah. This form of worship does not require ablution or even facing the *qiblah*, and hence offers us an easy, but meaningful way to submit to our Creator for the blessings we have received. Abū Bakrah narrated, "When anything came to the Prophet ﷺ which caused pleasure (or, by which he was made glad), he prostrated himself in gratitude to Allah."<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1990), no. 7188; al-Ḥākim classified it as *ṣaḥīḥ*.

<sup>54</sup> Muhammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'an* (Cairo: Dār Hajr, 2001), surah 17, ayah 3.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-ahādīth al-ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 1497.

<sup>56</sup> *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, no. 2774; al-Albānī classified it as *ṣaḥīḥ*.

To tie everything together, Theme 1 of *shukr* in the Qur'an gave us reasons to be thankful. Theme 2 showed us how to build a proper foundation to give *shukr*, namely, by appreciating what Allah has given us by reflecting on His perfect attributes and names. Theme 3 showed us the consequences of not engaging in *shukr*, while Theme 4 revolved around the command to engage in *shukr* and to be of the *shākirūn*. The last worksheet shows us how we can holistically engage in *shukr* given everything we have learned.

## Worksheet 4 - Show gratitude

**Instructions:** Go back to Worksheets 1, 2, and 3 and put the list of blessings in the first column of this worksheet. Now write down a form of gratitude you will engage in for these blessings. Include a combination of heart, tongue, and limb exercises (e.g., feeling content, saying praises, or prostration of shukr).

|     | Blessings | My Islamic form of gratitude |
|-----|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1.  |           |                              |
| 2.  |           |                              |
| 3.  |           |                              |
| 4.  |           |                              |
| 5.  |           |                              |
| 6.  |           |                              |
| 7.  |           |                              |
| 8.  |           |                              |
| 9.  |           |                              |
| 10. |           |                              |
| 11. |           |                              |
| 12. |           |                              |
| 13. |           |                              |
| 14. |           |                              |
| 15. |           |                              |

## Conclusion

Every single human is blessed beyond count or measure. Allah guided every single one of us, provided us with sustenance, and gave us multiple opportunities to gain His favor as well as more gifts and blessings. Despite recognizing this, you might still think to yourself: how can I ever be truly thankful if I'm unable to give thanks for everything? Prophet Dāwūd realized the limitation of our acts of *shukr* and reportedly stated, “O my Lord, if every hair on my body had two tongues, praising you day and night, for all of eternity, then it would never repay the full debt of having just one blessing.”<sup>57</sup>

The reality is that we can never give *shukr* for everything we have. In fact, we need to sincerely recognize and admit to our shortcomings in this regard. Only by admitting the impossibility of praising Allah in exchange for everything He has given us can we truly attain the ranks of the grateful. Prophet Mūsā came to this realization and asked, “O my Lord, how can I give *shukr* to You when the smallest blessing You bestowed upon me cannot be properly repaid with all of my good deeds?” So a revelation came to him: “O Mūsā, now you have thanked Me.”<sup>58</sup>

As the Prophet ﷺ imparted to us, “The best *shukr* is [to say] *alḥamdulillāh* (praise be to Allah).”<sup>59</sup> Not only does praising Allah through *alḥamdulillah* help us practice *shukr*, but as Bakr ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Muzanī reminded us, “There’s not an instance when a slave [of Allah] says *alḥamdulillāh* (praise be to Allah) except that a new blessing was bestowed upon him due to his utterance of *alḥamdulillāh*. Someone asked, ‘What is the repayment for such a blessing?’ He [al-Muzanī] said, ‘To say *alḥamdulillāh* [again], so a different blessing will come, and as a result, the blessings of Allah will never end.’”<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Kitāb al-zuhd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1999), no. 361. This is a biblical (*Isrā’īliyyāt*) narration from the People of the Book. As a result, its authenticity cannot be confirmed nor can it be denied unless it is in definitive contradiction with Islamic teachings.

<sup>58</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 6. This is a biblical (*Isrā’īliyyāt*) narration.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-ahādīth al-ṣaḥīḥah*, no. 1497.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Shukr*, no. 99.

May Allah give us the ability to give *shukr* and to be counted among the *shākirūn*. Our closing prayer<sup>61</sup> is “*alḥamdulillāh rabbi l-‘ālamīn* [All praise is for Allah—Lord of all worlds]”, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His messenger Muḥammad ﷺ, his family and descendants, his companions, and all those who follow him in righteousness until the Day of Judgment. *Amīn*.

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<sup>61</sup> Qur’an 10:10.

**Table 1 - Themes of Qur'anic *Shukr***

| Themes                                                   | Number verses and example                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Action                              | Why?                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Allah's Blessings</b>                                 | <p><b>20 Verses</b><br/>(30% of Verses)</p> <p><b>Example Verse</b><br/>And out of His mercy He made for you the night and the day that you may rest therein and [by day] seek from His bounty and [that] perhaps you will be grateful. [28:73]</p>                                                                                                                                                                           | Count your blessings                | So that you would be grateful |
| <b>Allah's Attributes &amp; Names</b>                    | <p><b>20 Verses</b><br/>(30% of Verses)</p> <p><b>Example Verse</b><br/>What would Allah do with [i.e., gain from] your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And ever is Allah Appreciative (Shākir شَاكِر) and Knowing. [4:147]</p> <p><b>Example Verse</b><br/>... And whoever commits a good deed - We will increase for him good therein. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Appreciative (Shakūr شَكُور). [42:23]</p> | Acknowledge the Ultimate Benefactor | To learn gratitude            |
| <b>Allah's Warnings</b>                                  | <p><b>11 Verses</b><br/>(16% of Verses)</p> <p><b>Example Verse</b><br/>And indeed, your Lord is the possessor of bounty for the people, but most of them are not grateful. [27:73]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Avoid ungratefulness                | Most people are not grateful  |
| <b>Allah's Commands &amp; Mention of <i>Shakirin</i></b> | <p><b>16 Verses</b><br/>(24% of Verses)</p> <p><b>Example Verse</b><br/>Rather, worship [only] Allah and be among the grateful. [39:66]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Show gratitude and give thanks      | So the blessings increase     |

## Table 2 - Themes of Qur'anic *Shukr* and Suggested Exercises

| Themes                                                   | Suggested Exercises                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Allah's Blessings</b>                                 | <b>Heart (<i>Experience</i>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify your blessings</li> <li>• Cultivate contentment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Allah's Attributes &amp; Names</b>                    | <b>Heart (<i>Experience</i>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect on the greatness of Allah and His perfect attributes</li> </ul>                                                                                                              |
| <b>Allah's Warnings</b>                                  | <b>Heart (<i>Experience</i>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear the punishment of ingratitude</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Allah's Commands &amp; Mention of <i>Shakirin</i></b> | <b>Tongue (<i>Expression</i>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Express verbal praises</li> </ul> <b>Behavior (<i>Expression</i>)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy the blessing</li> <li>• Prostrate with gratefulness</li> </ul> |