

## 4 – Promises of Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ's second promise is:

لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ...

**Ibrahim [14:7]...** *If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...*

Our whole life seems to be geared around the principle of 'MORE'. Ever more money, fun, for some of us, knowledge. More happiness, more power, more freedom. More everything. Even though growth for the sake of growth is the philosophy of the cancer cell; for the body and for society.

But when Allah ﷻ promises increase, it means increase in goodness, in Baraka, in Khair, in quality and in lasting impact and enjoyment. Let us reflect about which of Allah ﷻ's bounties, we thanked Him for today? One way to do that is to imagine what life would be like without that particular gift from Allah ﷻ? What about sight? Or hearing? Or understanding? What about Wi-Fi? I bet that one is easy to understand. But everything we have is a gift from Allah ﷻ for which we paid nothing. Yet do we stop to reflect on this and thank Allah ﷻ?

Let us remember that to thank Allah ﷻ means to use what He blessed us with only in ways that He permitted and for things that He permitted. Never in anything that He prohibited. To use something that Allah ﷻ gave us in an action or for a purpose that angers Allah ﷻ is to challenge Allah ﷻ and to commit treason against Him ﷻ. I certainly don't think that is a good idea. That is the reason why Allah ﷻ said about those who He blessed with all good things of this world and who still disobey Him and rebel against Him and don't care to abide by His rules, all made for our own benefit:

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ

**Ana'am 6: 44.** *So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened to them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given, all of a sudden, We took them to*

*punishment, and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows.*

Playing games with Allahﷻ's rules is a hazardous activity.

About His blessings, Allahﷻ challenged us and said:

وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

**Nahl 16: 18.** *And if you would count the graces of Allah, never could you be able to count them. Truly! Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

To successfully do something is one thing. But never to make an effort? How about that? The tragedy is that with most of us, we only think about a blessing of Allahﷻ when it has been taken from us. As long as we have it, we take it for granted, as if it is our birthright. Little do we look around us and notice those just like us, but who don't have even a fraction of what we have. Seldom, if ever do we ask, 'Why me?' We do that when we lose something, which is a statement of ingratitude. But do we ask, 'Why me?' about what Allahﷻ blessed us with? If not, ask, why not?

On February 6, 1993, tennis champion Arthur Ashe, the only African-American man to win Wimbledon and the U.S. and Australian Opens, died of complications from AIDS, contracted in a blood transfusion he had to have for heart surgery. He was 49. More than tennis he was a great social activist and a constant fighter against injustice and that is what he is remembered the most for. Many asked him as to why God chose him of all the people to have AIDS, while he had not done anything wrong in his life? To this Ashe's reply was, "All over the world a million teenagers aspire to become tennis players. Out of these may be a hundred thousand reach to some sort of proficiency. Of them only a few thousand play in some circuit and only a hundred or so play the Grand Slam. Finally, only two reach the final of Wimbledon. When I was standing with the trophy of Wimbledon in my hand, I never questioned God, "Why Me?" So now, what right do I have to ask God, "Why Me?"

Just think about this; if we look at how we live, most of the Musallees of this masjid anyway; you have climate control in our homes, fridges which provide us with cold

water and ice. The Mughal Emperor sweated in the heat and breathed a sigh of relief when he got a cool gust of breeze from a manually operated fan. Ice had to be brought for him from Kashmir and stored in underground chambers. All this was done for him and his family and highest nobility alone. Not for the likes of you and me. We travel in cars which on an average give us a speed of 50 kilometers per hour. Julius Caesar marched 16 miles in a day while 50 kilometers is 31 miles. So, on an average in one hour we do twice the distance that the Roman Army marched in a full day. And we do that in airconditioned comfort while the Legionary marched in the sun carrying a full load of armour, weapons and equipment amounting to 30 kilograms. And nobody flew.

We fly as a matter of routine and remark about the bad service of cheap airlines or the long lines at airports; not about the miracle of a Boeing 737-800 that weighs 80 tons, taking to the air and cruising at 40,000 feet at 900 kmph. (*The Boeing 737-800 has a maximum takeoff weight of about 80,000 kg (175,000 lbs). This includes the weight of the plane, which is about 41,000 kg (90,000 lbs), and the weight of the fuel which is about 18,000 kg (40,000 lbs). This leaves about 20,000 kg (45,000 lbs) for passengers, cargo, and crew.*) I am not going to list all the multiple blessings of Allah ﷻ that we take for granted in our lives. Conveniences that even the most powerful and wealthy kings of the past didn't dream of. Yet how many times do we reflect on them and thank Allah ﷻ for them? We must ask, 'Why not?', before we are asked the same.

Let us do this exercise. Please go home, sit in a place without any disturbance and list your top ten blessings. You have more than that, but list in order of priority, the top ten. As I said, if you have difficulty in choosing, imagine life without that blessing and it will become clear, how much you value it. Then go into Sujood and thank Allah ﷻ for each of them, one by one. May Allah ﷻ increase your blessings.