

LECTURE ON
TASBIH of Fatima Zahra (AS)
Dr. Murtadha Alidina

Audhu Billahi Minash Shaytanir Rajim

Bismillahir Rahmaanir Rahim

Because we believe in Allah
The absolute perfect being
The source of all goodness and perfection and secondly
We return to him because we believe that he is Rahman
His mercy is universal. Thirdly,
He is Rahim
His mercy is endless but is especially available for those of us who believe in
Him and submit to Him.

We send our salutation and greetings on the Holy Prophet
And on his Holy progeny
Who we believe to be the most perfect role models for our guidance.

Elders, Brothers and Sisters

Salaamun Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah

- One of the important Dhikr that we have been taught to engage in after Salah is what is famously known as the Tasbih of Fatima ZAHra (SA).
- I wish to remind ourselves of the significance of this Tasbih and what effective role it can play for us after Salat.

If you look at the reward, the significance is mentioned in these terms,

This Tasbih has got three components.

- We start with Takbir 34 times – ALLAHU AKBAR
- 33 Hamd – ALHAMDU LILLAH
- 33 Tasbih – SUBHANALLAH

A hundred units.

**Whoever recites this after his Salat,
the effect is that he shall be forgiven**

What is there in this Dhikr that enables me to qualify to receive that special grace from God, whereby I shall be forgiven?

We need to think on this. Is it the mere recitation or something should be happening.

In the Qur'an, we have been instructed to Remember God , not only remember God occasionally, remember Him frequently.

- In Surah Ahzab, verse 14, *“O You who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance”*
- and Surah Jumuah, *“ Remember Him frequently”*
- Surah Ahzab 21, *“And remembers Allah much”*

How to remember him frequently?

We have different ways to do that:-

One way is to constantly remember any one of His Names and you have remembered him frequently.

But the Imams of Ahlulbait they have said, that

If somebody engages in the Tasbih of the Holy lady Fatima after his prayer then indeed he has done his duty of remembering God frequently.

How?

In some Riwayat, we are told that this was a special gift given the Prophet to the Lady Fatima.

It is narrated that the Prophet received a gift of some slaves from one of the neighboring empires, so Imam Ali asked her to go ask for a helper, a servant, a maid.

So she comes to the Holy Prophet and he responds by saying, “Let me suggest something else, Ya Fatima, I will give you something that is better than what you ask. It will be better for you than whatever is in this world and its possessions and then

He (Prophet) teaches her this Tasbih

What is there in this Tasbih, that makes it so important, that is more useful to me than perhaps other things; the comfort of having a helper and having some free time with myself?

I have a helper so I have time for other things. Why is it that this Tasbih plays such a big role?

Incidentally there is another Riwaya that says, if at all there was a gift better than this, then the Holy Prophet would have given it to this Daughter. Something is there in this that makes it the best.

Another Riwaya says,

God cannot be worshipped, or God has not been worshipped with a praise more powerful than this Tasbih.

How?

The sixth Holy Imam says that,

To me, it is better for a person to engage in this Tasbih rather than to pray a thousand rakaats every day

Why or How?

Finally there is this Riwaya that that

This Tasbih is only a hundred units by our tongue that we pronounce. When it translates into Mizan, it becomes a thousand fold.

It dispels and removes Shaytan and it pleases the all Merciful Lord.

How?

Mizan is the scale that will demonstrate the degree to which our actions are truthful and closer to the truth.

Surah Araf, *“the scale on which our deeds will be measured will be the truth.”*

- If I want to measure your temperature, than I need something whereby the body temperature can be compared with and gives me a measurement.
- If I want to measure the weight of someone, so I need something heavy that can give me a scale of heaviness.

What will be measured on the Day of Judgment will not be the temperature or the physical weight or any other material parameters.

What will be weighted and measured on that day will be the

- Truthfulness, the degree to which my actions accorded to the truth existing in the universe; and explained to us by the lord,
- To what degree my feelings and emotions and my feeling and my spirituality
- To what degree my thoughts and belief and my attitude was on the Sirate Mustaqim and the yardstick of truthfulness,
- To that degree my scales will be heavier.

The measuring unit is Haqqa closer to Haq (Truth). My aims and means would be my actions and belief and character; heavier would be the scale that measures the truth.

So if this Tasbih is only hundred in terms but is a thousand times on the Mizan that means this Tasbih brings me closer to the truth in all aspects of my life.

How?

You notice it all revolves around this fundamental concept that is basically a Dhikr of Allah and Dhikr of Allah means that

- a. I recognize my own a status versus Allah
- b. I try to understand who God is and what his attributes are and
- c. I relate to him accordingly.

There are different ways to doing that, but one of the most effective ways is this Tasbih; because the fundamentals of Dhikr are summarized in these three statements we mention here. In fact there is a fourth additional statement and that is,

“There is no god but god”

and is mustahab, once we finish the Dhikr of a hundred units, you stop by reciting *“there is no god but god”*.

Inshallah, when we consider the meaning of each of these components we will discuss how they perform the effect of Dhikr in our lives.

So, the first Dhikr is ALLAHU AKBAR

In the Qura'n the Takbir is mentioned in Surah Bani Israel the last verse.

- Praise belongs to God and God alone who is so perfect in his godhead and divinity that he has not taken any son.
 - He is so unlimited in his power and dominion and kingdom that in his kingdom there is no one equal to Him as partner.
 - And neither does He have an assistant forget anyone being equal to Him even somebody lower to Him subjugated to Him but somebody who shares a part of His godhead in a lower scale even at that level there is no one to assist him.
 - If that is your Lord who has no body equal to him
1. No body even of the lowest level can possibly assist Him in any way.
 2. and in fact He cannot produce anything because He is initially indivisible therefore He cannot have a component that separates from Him and becomes His son and shares His godhead. If that is your true Lord? "Allahu Akbar". Therefore represents this fundamental core concept.

*When I say Allahu Akbar therefore I need to understand what I mean?
God is great or the greatest?*

God is greater than others, it does not make sense because when you say great then you are comparing. I have a group but in this group he is the greater one. There is no group to which he belongs because there is none like unto him. Is He the greatest?

Again the concept of greatest is superlative, the supreme amongst whom?

Again there is a shade of comparison - therefore the Imams have warned us don't even think that He is the greatest in that sense.

This hadith is narrated from the 6th holy Imam where somebody says Allahu Akbar and the Imam asked him "greater than what?" What are you comparing with? So the man said, "When I say Allahu Akbar, I imagine him to be greater than every thing." So the Imam said, "You have limited Him in one sense, you have compared Him and then decided He is greater but there is no comparison" So the man said, *How should I think of Him When I say Akbar,* so the Imam said.

- He is greater than that which can ever be described.
- He is not greater than other, He is not the greatest, no - there is no comparison.

- And therefore He is indescribable. What can I say, I cannot describe Him. Allahu Akbar that is the highest you can conceive of Him who is unlimited in His core fundamental essence and therefore beyond comprehension.

The 7th Imam explained,

God is greater, more exalted, more majestic than that which can be described.

Why?

For someone to be able to describe Him through His core essence. If therefore He is indescribable, then how should we describe Him? How can we talk about Him? How should we turn to Him? How should we worship Him? Before you worship you have to the object you worship in your mind. If He is indescribable then how do I speak to him? What do I refer to Him? How do I refer to Him?

Describe him the way he describes Himself, because no body understands Him better than He Himself.

In one of the battles, Khandaq, Imam Ali (AS) is narrated to have recited one Dua that was the secret of his victory in Khandaq. This Dua was taught to him by Prophet Khizr. “Ya Hu”, “O He”, “He” meaning the one “Hu” when you say “Hu Huwa, Qul Hu wa Allah Ahad” When you say “Hu” referring to the pronoun “he” it means, he came and he went and he did this and he did that.

If I don’t speak about this person you don’t know whom I speak about. But the Surah “Qul” starts by “Qul Huwa”. He, everybody knows, He is there, every body knows its God but yet they do not know Him.

There is one aspect we know that He is there; there is another aspect we don’t know who He is.

Imam Ali describes Him the way He describes Himself. “ Ya Hu, Yaman La Ya’lamu man huwa illa Hu”. *O He who none knows but He Himself*. So how do I describe the indescribable? I describe the indescribable the way He describes Himself. Or how do I know how he describes himself? Let me listen from those who only speak that which God puts in their hearts.

In Surah Safaat God says, “ *Exalted is God from all the descriptions that any ordinary human being can make except for those who are the purified ones once their actions are purified from all sins*”

1. And therefore their minds, and hearts are not affected and distracted by the traces and effect of sins,
2. Therefore, their thoughts and feeling and spiritual state is totally pure
3. Therefore, they can be totally submissive to God without any sort of distraction
4. Therefore, they can receive pure inspiration from God
5. Therefore, when they speak they speak nothing but what God inspires in them
6. Therefore, when they speak they praise God the way He deserves to be praised.

The Prophet speaks to Fatima, “ *Should I give you a gift which is better for you than [everything] anything in this world?*” Because the Prophet speaks nothing but that which has been inspired to him.

How do I describe the indescribable?

- Allaho Akbar,
- Alhamdu Lillah,
- Subhan Allah and then you end by saying
- La Illaha Ilallah.

For this Takbir to have an effect on my life in such a way that for the rest of the day I have engaged in Zikr Khathir and for the rest of the day it is better for me than to have prayed a thousand rakats - the Takbir must be something to me. And what is that? Observe.

In the Book Lantern of the Path or Misbahus Shariah we have a tradition narrated from the 6th Holy Imam - Imam says,

When you speak the Takbir then consider everything between the lowest level of existence to the highest level of existence as nothing before God.

Remember this much, don't only reduce everything in your eyes before God that means nothing is important to you now.

How I am busy and I can't engage in prayer and now I will have to wait. If truly Takbir is being pronounced by logically understanding that God is the indescribable greatest one. If Takbir is pronounced from the bottom of the heart Truly Allah you are Akbar, then the effect is this that everything else in this world for me before God is insignificant.

O I am busy, I am preoccupied, I have some other priorities – that doesn't conform with Takbir.

I keep on saying that there is an interesting slogan when the Islamic state was established in Iran, one of the first President there had this motto or slogan there - That when the time for prayer comes, tell the client or citizen who comes to you and asks for any work to be done for him don't tell him *Excuse me, it is prayer time but prayer can wait I will attend to you or I have work to do.*

He says the slogan should not be don't say to prayers, *wait I have work to do* - tell the work that *wait, I have prayers to do.* Takbir - the meaning of Takbir expresses in this way.

1. Reduce everything from the lowest level of existence to the highest level of existence, in front of God nothing is more important
2. If you don't do that then you know what happens - the tradition says, *Whoever pronounces the Takbir by his tongue but in his heart he still gives important to other things therefore he is distracted, therefore he is worried, therefore he is thinking and preoccupied elsewhere.*

Wait a minute you are standing before the One who knows everything, who knows your thoughts before they come to your mind , as they come to your mind and after they leave your mind.

He knows it.

Therefore he speaks to you “ Ya Kadhib.” You are speaking to the one who knows everything, “ You are the greatest” and He answers “ No you are a liar - You speak something but your heart does something else.” “You are trying seduce and deceive and fool me? I shall surely find my Majesty and by My power, I shall punish you for this lying and hypocrisy of yours. I shall punish you and the punishment is I will remove the sweetness of communication with your Lord from your heart.”

It becomes a burden to engage in Salat - When will Salat finish? The reason being our sincerity is not there when we say the Takbir for example.

Lets pray to Allah to have the tawfiq to be able to understand what Takbir means, to be able to believe it logically, to be able to accept it with our hearts and to be able to sincerely pronounce it, and therefore for God to accept us and enable us to engage in a sweet and enriching meaningful communication.

Salam Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah

LECTURE (2) ON
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- Shaitan has been expelled from God's kingdom of special mercy.
- He was expelled because of his defiance and his arrogance.
- If we determine to avoid arrogance and defiance and we rely on god then we shall be granted that protection from Shaitan.

❖ Bismillah

- We turn to God, ask for his help and guidance because.
- He is the all perfect one, the source of all goodness.
- Because He is Rahman by His love we come to live and by His love and mercy we remain alive.
- And by His love and mercy we grow to and thrive.
- We turn to Him because He is Rahim, a special type of his love and mercy is available only to some those who respond to Him believe in Him and submit to Him.

❖ Salawat

- We send our salutation and greetings on the Holy Prophet of Islam and on his Holy Progeny who were the best role models as guides to mankind till the end of time for mankind.

Elders, Brothers and sisters, we were discussing about the significance of the Tasbih of the Holy Lady Fatima and we said that there is tremendous rewards promised for the recitation of this Tasbih.

- ❖ One Riwaya said; whoever says this Tasbih, his sins will be forgiven.
- ❖ There is another riwaya; as a believer it is your duty to engage in the Zikr of God, not occasionally, not some time of the day, but frequently. Surah Ahzab and Jumuah. How do I remember God frequently? There are different ways to do that and one way explained is to engage in the Tasbih of Holy Lady Fatima If we do after Salat we have somehow acquired the Zikr, which is frequent.
- ❖ The Riwaya say this Tasbih was given as gift when she went to the Prophet and requested for some assistance and he said, *I will give you something much better than all this* and he taught her the Tasbih. It says, had there been a better gift the Prophet would have given her. So this is the best of Gifts.
- ❖ The Riwaya says there is no better way to praise God, than to engage in this Tasbih.

- ❖ Imam Ali said; rather than pray a thousand rakats everyday, *if you engage in this Tasbih after every Salat; it is better.*
- ❖ So, it is a very deep profound and influential Ibada and Zikr; or for example, the Riwaya that says that it is only 100 beads but it is thousand on the scales. And the Shaitan is repelled and the Rahman is pleased with this particular Zikr. Something is happening during this Zikr that is bringing us closer to Rahman further away from the Shaitan.

We dealt with meaning of Takbir in the last session and what could be the possible meaning of Allahu Akbar. That Allah is great, greater, and greatest; those could be the possible meaning. But the highest meaning the Imams have taught us is that, because God is beyond any description in the highest sense means that *God the greatest beyond any description.*

He is so ultimate and absolute in perfection that it is beyond description.

So there are stages of meanings, levels of meanings - we recite them 34 times - but why, I don't know. There is no Riwaya that gives the meaning or the explanation why this particular number.

I thought let me share with you what could be the possible meaning of Allahu Akbar in the Salat.

We notice one of the most frequent Zikr in slat is Takbir.

- You start with Takbir and
- every change of position and posture in Salat is preceded and succeeded by Takbir.
- In Qiyam before we go to Rukuh Takbir,
- as we raised our heads Takbir, as we raise our heads from Sajdah Takbir,
- we go to Sajda, Takbir
- raise our heads, again Takbir.

It performs a very important function so what could it possibly mean?

Allah, the exalted one, is absolute in His perfection, unlimited, but as He manifests Himself we come to know of different aspects of His being, but each aspects in itself is supreme in perfection, and therefore Allahu Akbar could have different meanings in different positions.

Observe.

In Takbiratul Ahram we say Allahu Akbar, what could be the possible meaning; and in it is optional to recite it seven times and after every Takbir, there is a Dua till the seventh one becomes the Takbiratul Ahram.

One of Duas we are supposed to recite optionally is Labbek Allhumma 'Alabek, It is not only Hajj where it is Wajib. In Salat it is optional. Although you called b n me but there are many other things calling me, the Duniya is called me the nafs is calling me, the Shaitan is calling me, Labbaik.

Why should I not answer you and you alone, because all the goodness belongs to you alone, any evil does not belong to you, if I am in trouble I cannot go anywhere but come back to you.

If I have sinned and am suffering, if I have disobeyed and run away from you I cannot escape where ever I go I have to come back to you.

This is the spirit of Labbaik; the idolaters also said Labbaik; they would say up to this point, which is Tawhid but observe the next two phrases, *O Allah you called me* (they receive this ritual from Ibrahim), and they were practicing it and it become a ritual. Later one idol worshipping was introduced and they used to respect the reverer the idols also. They said *You have no partners*, but the partner that is already there for you.

So this Takbir, in one sense, is the negation of all partners unto God.

In Surah Hajj, there is a parable, which is being drawn and let every one in mankind listen to it. Whoever you pray to and expect help from and feel that other entity has some power or knowledge or any perfection; they are so power less that they cannot even create a fly and in case the fly could sit on an idol and take away something.

O Yes, one of things the idolaters did was to take the idol and plastered it in honey, perfume and sweet smelling flowers; obviously to attract flies. Qur'an says to look at this phenomena and that this idol is so powerless and helpless. First of all it did not have the power to create a flower forget creating it; it does not even have the power to repel if the fly comes and sits on it. The example is of the idol, but the principle applies to every thing but god. No body other than god has the power to create and they don't even have the power to sustain.

- When we say Allahu Akbar, one aspect of the meaning of the absolute supremacy of God that we want to remind ourselves is that *There is no God but God* who is the creator and sustainer. Allahu Akbar.

- And the next, seeker and sought, both of them are weak, the worshipper and the worshipped one, both of them are weak. The problem with these Musrikin and the people who have not been guided by the guidance from God is that they do not understand God properly. God is strong, not only strong but Aziz, irresistible, His power is overwhelming and no body can against him. Allahu Akbar.

So, this is one shade of meaning that we can think about when we say Allahu Akbar.

We have another Takbir that is there before the Rukuh. What could the meaning possibly be there?

- ❖ Notice the Qur'an condemns some people who do not make Rukuh, Surah Mursilat 77 towards the end *Woe be to those who see the truth and then deny it.*
- ❖ In Surah Rahman we have, *How many of the graces will you two deny?* repeated 30 times.
- ❖ In Surah Mursilat it is repeated ten times. Towards the end Allah says *Woe be these disbelievers and deniers, when they are told - bow down before God - they refuse.*
 - There is the story about the tribe of Saqif and they were invited to Islam. They said; in Islam the pillars are *La Lillaha Illalah* and *Muhammad Rasul Allah*, then you have pray. It is the pillar of the practice of the faith.
 - You can't say it and not pray because you say there is no God but Allah and Allah it is who has sent a Messenger and the Message is Salat.
 - They said they don't want to pray. So what you don't believe in the message of the Messenger?
 - The message is Salat.
 - But I don't want to bow down,
 - *Me bow down?*
 - The pride and arrogance prevents this act, and Allah condemns this attitude.
 - They do not make Rukuh.
 - In contrast there are those whenever you remind them of god they bow down.

In Surah Zumar, verse 23 Allah says, *This book is from the all powerful one.*

In Surah Hashar God says, *If ever we were to send this Qur'an on the mountains and if the mountains were able to receive it and under stand; if ever they were not only able to receive but to respond to it you will find two things; they would be humbled before the majesty of the Lord - not only that they would crumble out of fear.*

Mountains can do that; where is the human heart?

One of the reasons we have been asked to recite Fatiha is that it summarizes the whole of the Qur'an and a Surah after Fatiha, because according to some Riwaya the reason why a Surah has been legislated in the Qiyam after Fatiha is to keep the Qur'an alive in a Muslim's life for he is supposed to recite the Qur'an on a daily basis; optionally 50 verses a day.

It is Mustahab; Muslims don't do that. Wajib is at least one Surah five times a day, ten times. Why? To keep the spirit of Qur'an alive. It is not possible for a believer to be a true believer of the true Message and to listen to the Message and to understand and to experience the majesty of the speaker but to feel humility and to bow down.

Surah Zumar verse 23, *Allah has revealed the best announcement, a book conformable in its various parts, repeating, whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah; this is Allah's guidance, He guides with it whom He pleases; and (as for) him whom Allah makes err, there is no guide for him.*

A book, which is in many parts similar to other parts, and oft repeated. When those who have the awareness and the realization of the Lord when they recite the Qur'an, you see their skin shiver, and quiver because they feel the awe, the majesty of their lord. They not only feel, they express it How do they express it? They spontaneously bow down!

The Takbir before the Rukuh is the expression, O Lord I have received your Message, I have listened to it. In the Salatul Juma, I have noticed all the rules. Listen! Listen! Take the effect, feel the power and then express the humility. Allahu Akbar! I understand I believe, I feel humility and I want to bow down. That is the Takbir before the Rukuh and then there is the Takbir after Rukuh before Sajda, for they are the stages of expression of humility before God.

In Surah Bani Israel 107 to 109, *Say: Believe in it or believe not; surely those who are given the knowledge before it fall down on their faces, making obeisance when it is recited to them. And they say: Glory be to our Lord! most surely the promise of our Lord was to be fulfilled. And they fall down on their faces weeping, and it adds to their humility;* in their books there is information and prediction that the good news that there will come an apostle towards the end of time.

When it is recited t it is recited to them they fall down spontaneously on their chins and on their foreheads in Sajda. It is very natural, its very spontaneous , its very automatic for any who understands the majesty of their Lord.

The first reaction is Allahu Akbar, you are great, I go down to Rukuh, you are Adhim, and as you recite the Adhim, more of the majesty of the lord is experienced so you want to express the higher stage of humility in Sajda and you say Allahu Akbar. Incidentally when we say Allahu Akbar after Rukuh it is Mustahab to recite a short Dua.

Our Muslim brothers, if you have had the opportunity to listen after *Sami' Allah* they say, *O Lord all praise belongs to you. Samai' Allah, God listens and answers the prayers of he who praises him.* So God is going to listen to the one who praises, so I want to Praise him.

It is Mustahab to say *Allamdu Lillah Ahlal Kibriyai wal Adhamati Wal Jabarut - O Lord I praise you! You are the one with Majesty, you are even greater, greatest, absolute greatness; no You are the one with Jabarut, absolute Majesty, The ultimate, the absolute Majesty.*

And then go down in Sajda.

Something is happening in the heart, it is being experienced and then it is being expressed - You are the one who has Aghamat. And Kibriya and Jabarut and then spontaneously with Allahu Akba,r and then fall down in Sajda.

Lets pray to Allah to give the Tawfiq to be able to engage in this Takbir with an appreciation and realization of its meaning and then to think about the meaning first and then express Allahu Akbar genuinely. Wassalam