

358543 - The meaning of the verse {And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the afternoon and the morning}

the question

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *{And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the afternoon and the morning}*. Is what is meant by “exalting (*tasbeeh*)” in the verse prayer or glorifying Allah verbally by saying “*Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdih* (glory and praise be to Allah)”?

Detailed answer

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Firstly:

Meaning of ‘ashiy (afternoon) and ibkaar (morning)

This verse appears in the passage in which Allah, may He be glorified, tells us about Zakariyya (peace be upon him):

{He said, “My Lord, make for me a sign.” He said, “Your sign is that you will not [be able to] speak to the people for three days except by gesture. And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the afternoon and the morning”} [Aal-Imraan 3:41].

What this means is:

The commentators said concerning the meaning of the words ‘*ashiy* (translated here as afternoon) and *ibkaar* (translated here as morning) that the afternoon is the end of the day, the decline of the sun until it sets, and the morning is the start of dawn, from when dawn

breaks until mid-morning. Mujaahid said: *Ibkaar* (morning) is the start of the dawn, and *'ashiy* (afternoon) is the decline of the sun until it sets. End quote from *Jaami' al-Bayaan* (5/392).

Secondly:

What is meant by exalting Allah (*tasbeeh*) in the verse is glorifying Him in the afternoon and the morning

With regard to what is meant by exalting Allah (*tasbeeh*) here, the commentators have mentioned several views:

1.. That what is meant is prayer (*salaah*).

Al-Waahidi said: The words of Allah, *{And remember your Lord much and exalt [Him with praise] in the afternoon and the morning}* mean: pray to Allah, may He be exalted. The prayer (*salaah*) may be called *tasbeeh*, because in the prayer Allah is affirmed to be one, and He is declared to be above all shortcomings. End quote from *at-Tafseer al-Baseet* (5/242).

Al-Baghawi said: It was said that what is meant by *tasbeeh* is prayer. What is meant by afternoon (*'ashiy*) is the time between the decline of the sun until sunset; hence *Zuhr* and *'Asr* are called the two afternoon prayers. The morning (*ibkaar*) is the time between *Fajr* (dawn) prayer and *Duha* (mid-morning). End quote from *Tafseer al-Baghawi* (2/36).

Ibn al-Jawzi said: Regarding the words *{and exalt [Him with praise]}*, Muqaatil said: It means pray. Az-Zajjaaj said: It may be said "*Faraghtu min subhati* (I finished my *tasbeeh*)", meaning: I finished my prayer. Prayer is called *tasbeeh* because *tasbeeh* (glorifying or exalting Allah) is venerating Him and declaring Him to be free of all bad attributes. Thus in prayer, Allah is declared to be above all shortcomings. End quote from *Zaad al-Maseer* (1/281).

Az-Raazi regarded this view as correct for several reasons. He said: With regard to the phrase *{and exalt [Him with praise]}*, there are two views:

The first view is that what is meant by it is: pray, because prayer may be called tasbeeh. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *{So exalted is Allah when you reach the evening ...}* [ar-Room 30:17].

Moreover, prayer includes tasbeeh, so it is possible to call prayer tasbeeh.

The evidence that this interpretation is possible is based on two matters:

The first is: If we understand it as referring to tasbeeh and tahleel (saying “*Laa ilaaha illa Allah* (there is no god worthy of worship except Allah)”), there would be no difference in meaning between this phrase and the one that comes before it, namely the words *{And remember your Lord much}*. Therefore this interpretation cannot be valid, because following one thing with the same thing is not appropriate.

The second is: It is very compatible with the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says: *{And establish prayer at the two ends of the day}* [Hood 11:114].

The second view is that the words *{And remember your Lord much}* may be understood as referring to verbal dhikr.

End quote from *Tafseer ar-Raazi* (8/216).

2.. That what is meant is verbal dhikr.

Ibn ‘Atiyyah said: The words *{and exalt [Him with praise]}* mean: Say “Subhaan Allah (glory be to Allah).” Some said that what is meant is: Pray.

But the former view is more correct, because it is in harmony with the idea of dhikr (“And remember your Lord much”).

End quote from *al-Muharrar al-Wajeez fi Tafseer al-Kitaab al-Azeez* (1/432).

Ibn Katheer said: Then He enjoined remembering Him, thanking Him and glorifying Him a great deal in this situation.

End quote from *Tafseer Ibn Katheer* (2/39).

At-Tabari came up with a view that reconciles between these two opinions, which is that what is meant by tasbeeh is worship: With regard to the words { *and exalt [Him with praise] in the afternoon* }, what is meant is: venerate your Lord by worshipping Him in the afternoon. End quote from *Tafseer at-Tabari* (5/391).

This is a clear view and is appropriate, as it reconciles the two opinions.

And Allah knows best.