194733 - Reciting all the adhkaar that were narrated in the religious texts, and varying them according to the situation

the question

A while ago I read some books about the virtue of seeking forgiveness (istighfaar), then I read some hadiths about saying “Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi (Glory and praise be to Allah),” and that it is the prayer of all creation, by virtue of which all creatures are granted provision (rizq), and that it is the most beloved of words to Allah. And I read that a person may be deprived of provision because of sins, but praying for forgiveness erases sins, therefore it is one of the means of attaining provision. So which is better, to pray a great deal for forgiveness, or to recite a great deal of the words, “Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi”? and is saying “Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi” one of the means of attaining forgiveness for sins?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The virtue and noble status of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) is well-known and well-established in Islamic teachings. Sufficient proof of the virtue of dhikr is found in the fact that Allah, may He be exalted, remembers those who remember Him. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his book *al-Waabil as-Sayyib min al-Kalim at-Tayyib* that dhikr has more than one hundred benefits, then he listed many of these benefits and discussed them.

Secondly:

What is prescribed with regard to adhkaar is to combine them and not to focus on one dhikr to the exclusion of others. Rather one should focus on all the adhkaar in order to attain the virtue of each dhikr and attain the reward that Allah bestows for each one. An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on

him) said:

The one who learns about the virtue of deeds should act upon each deed, even if he does it only once, so that he will be among its people. He should not ignore any of them completely; rather he should do whatever he can of them." (A*l-Adhkaar* p. 8).

Thirdly:

It is proven that “Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi” is the prayer of all things and by means of it all creatures are granted provision. Imam Ahmad (6583) narrated from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When Allah’s Prophet Nooh (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was dying, he said to his son: I am going to give you my final instructions; I shall enjoin two things upon you and forbid two things to you. I enjoin you to adhere to Laa ilaaha ill-Allah, for if the seven heavens and the seven earths were to be placed in one pan of the Balance, and Laa ilaaha ill-Allah were to be placed in the other, Laa ilaaha ill-Allah would outweigh them. Even if the seven heavens and the seven earths were to be put together as a solid mass, Laa ilaaha ill-Allah would break them. (And the second thing I enjoin upon you is to say) Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi (Glory and praise be to Allah), for it is the prayer of all things and by means of it all of creation is granted provision…” Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *as-Saheehah* (134).

It is also proven that this dhikr is the most beloved of words to Allah. Muslim (2731) narrated that Abu Dharr said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Shall I not tell you of the most beloved of words to Allah?” I said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah, tell me which words are most beloved to Allah. He said: “The most beloved of words to Allah are: *Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi* (Glory and praise be to Allah).”

The questioner’s words: “a person may be deprived of provision because of sins, but praying for forgiveness erases sins, therefore it is one of the means of attaining provision” are correct in terms of their meaning, generally speaking. Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Seek forgiveness of your Lord and repent to Him, [and] He will let you enjoy a good provision for a specified term and give every doer of favor His favor} [Hood 11:3].

And He, may He be exalted, tells us that Hood said:

{And, O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him. He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in showers and increase you in strength [added] to your strength. And do not turn away, [being] criminals} [Hood 11:52].

Undoubtedly asking for forgiveness is a means of erasing sins, and if sins are erased, their consequences will be avoided; in that case, the individual will attain provision and relief from all distress and worries." (*Fataawa Noor ‘ala ad-Darb* 3/299).

With regard to the hadith, “A man will be deprived of provision because of sins that he commits,” it was narrated by Ibn Maajah (4022), and was classed as da‘eef (weak) by al-Albaani in *Da‘eef Ibn Maajah*.

Fourthly:

Al-Bukhaari (6405) and Muslim (2691) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever says ‘Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi’ one hundred times in a day, his sins will be erased, even if they are like the foam of the sea.”

Thus it is proven that this dhikr expiates sins, but it does not replace asking for forgiveness (istighfaar), because asking for forgiveness is repentance, and seeking forgiveness and pardon from Allah is better than reciting this tasbeeh (Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi), because when a person asks for forgiveness, he calls to mind his sins and brings the fear of Allah into his heart, which will make him think positively of Him and hope for His pardon. So this tasbeeh cannot take the place of asking for forgiveness. Hence Muslim (484) narrated that ‘Aa’ishah said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) often used to say: “Subhaan Allah

wa bihamdihi astaghfirullaha wa atoobu ilayh (Glory and praise be to Allah, I ask Allah for forgiveness and I repent to Him).” I said: O Messenger of Allah, I often see you say “Subhaan Allah wa bihamdihi astaghfirullaha wa atoobu ilayh”! He said: “My Lord told me that I would see a sign in my ummah, and that when I saw it, I was to say often ‘Subhaan Allah wa bihamdihi astaghfirullaha wa atoobu ilayh (Glory and praise be to Allah. I ask Allah for forgiveness and I repent to Him).’ And I have seen it: {When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest} – the conquest of Makkah – {And you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes , Then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance} [al-Nasr 110:1-3].”

Thus he combined saying “Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi” with asking for forgiveness, which indicates that tasbeeh cannot take the place of asking for forgiveness, and asking for forgiveness cannot take the place of tasbeeh. Rather both of them are required from the individual. Moreover, one of them may be more important than the other, depending on the circumstances.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This is the proper way of understanding this issue, as we need to differentiate between the inherent virtue of a thing and its temporary virtue, so that we can give each thing its due and treat it appropriately. For the eye has a position, the foot has a position, water has a position and flesh has a position.

Maintaining the correct order of importance is something that is sign of wisdom, which is the basis of commands and prohibitions. And Allah is the source of strength.

By the same token, water and other powders are more beneficial for a garment sometimes, and perfuming it with incense and rosewater is more beneficial at other times.

I said to Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) one day: One of the scholars was asked: Which is more beneficial for a person, reciting tasbeeh or asking for forgiveness?

He said: If the garment is clean, then incense and rosewater are more beneficial for it, and if it is dirty, then soap and hot water are more beneficial for it!

He (may Allah have mercy on him) said to me: so how about if the garment is still dirty?" (A*l-Waabil as-Sayyib* 232-233).

What is meant – and Allah knows best – is that a person cannot do without asking for forgiveness under any circumstances.

Moreover he cannot do without tasbeeh and tahmeed (glorifying and praising Allah), as we have noted above, or do without saying both of them. Then he may choose what is more appropriate in different circumstances. This is the right way of worshipping Allah and of understanding the importance of doing the right thing in the right context.

For more information on the virtue of asking for forgiveness, please see the answer to question no. 104919 .

For more information on the wording of prayers for forgiveness, please see the answer to question no. 39775 .

For more information on the meaning of “Subhaan Allah wa bi hamdihi,” please see the answer to question no. 104047 .

And Allah knows best.