

REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

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There are various dimensions of remembrance and it is an important function of the human mind. Without remembrance a human cannot be successful neither can he develop good moral character.

The term 'Dhikr' literally means 'to call back to memory', 'to have something in conscious mind' or 'to recall something by heart or tongue'.

Imam Raghیب Asfahani in his 'Al-mufradaat' has mentioned the following meanings of the term 'Dhikr' (Imam Raghیب Asfahani, Al-Mufradaat, P. 179-180)

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| 1) Divine revelation | 2) To recall something |
| 3) To narrate something | 4) Advice |
| 5) Calling out a name | 6) Remembrance |

Allah has warned mankind that Satan is our open enemy and thus he will try his utmost to make us forget the remembrance of Allah and His Messenger by deploying various strategies. The Qur'an says:

"Satan has gained mastery over them. So he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. It is they who are Satan's army. Know that indeed it is the party of Satan who are the losers." (Irfan-ul-Qur'an, 58:19)

After Satan was rejected in the divine court, he challenged that he would lead astray the whole of mankind:

"He said: 'By Your Honour, I shall certainly turn all of them away from the straight path with persistence, except those of Your servants who are chosen and exalted ones.'" (Irfan-ul-Qur'an, 38:82,83)

Thus a human has to face this challenge of Satan every moment of his life. The only way a human can protect himself from Satan's attacks is to engage himself in the remembrance of Allah and His Messenger. The Prophetic traditions have precisely emphasised this point.

Anas ibn Malik, May Allah be please with him, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, Peace Be Upon Him said: "Satan has placed his mouth upon the heart of Adam's son. If he remembers Allah, Satan moves

away, and if he forgets Allah, Satan eats the mouthful of his heart. And this is (referred to in Allah's words as), 'The Whisperer of evil who withdraws.' (Abu Yala, al-musnad (7:278#4301))

Undoubtedly, 'Dikhr' is the symbol of Islam, the polish for the hearts and they key for all success. However many of us have forgotten this reality and have lost of ourselves in the battle for the gain of this world. Our hearts have hardened beyond the hardening of the stones; such stones from within which streams burst out and benefit the surroundings and such stones that explode in fear of their Lord.

The importance of Dhikr is established by the following narration:

Abu Musa, May Allah be pleased with him narrates that, the Holy Prophet, Peace Be Upon Him said, "He who remembers his Lord and he who does not are like the living and the the dead." (5Al-Bukhari, as Sahih (5:2353#6044))

Thus life in its metaphorical sense is in fact the remembrance of Allah and if this does not exist then man is considered to be dead.

As-Sayyid 'Ali al-Hujwiri, May Allah be pleased with him writes in his famous book Kashf al-Majoob:

"It is recorded that Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah B. Khubayq has said: 'God created men's hearts to be the homes of His praise (remembrance) but they have become the homes of lust; and nothing can clear them of lust except an agitating fear or a restless love.' Fear and love are the two pillars of faith". (Kash al-Mahjub, p.128 (English translation by R.A.Nicholson).

During the night of Isra' and Mi'raj, the Prophet was taken up to a point where he heard the screeching of the Pens (writing the divine Decree). He saw a man who had disappeared into the light of the Throne. He said: "Who is this? Is this an angel?" It was said to him, no. He said: "Is it a Prophet?" Again the answer was no. He said: "Who is it then?" The answer was: "This is a man whose tongue was moist with Allah's remembrance in the world, and his heart was attached to the mosques, and he never incurred the curse of his father and mother." Shaykh Muhammad `Alawi al-Malaki cited it in his collated text of the sound narrations on that topic entitled al-Anwar al-bahiyya min isra' wa mi'raj khayr al-bariyya.

The masters of spirituality have said that when ones heart is

inundated with the remembrance of Allah and the servant is lifted out of himself in the ecstasy of love, the divine bliss enters the blood stream and illumines every cell of the body with a glow. (Shaykh-ul-Islam Dr Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, Dhikr & Dhakireen, p. 15)

Imam Abu'l-Qasim al-Qushyri has recorded an incident in al-Risala al Qushayriya (Sufi Book of Spiritual Ascent) illustrating this station of the rememberer of Allah:

"I heard Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami say that al-Jurayri said, "There was a man among my companions who was always chanting: God, God! One day a tree fell on his head and fractured his skull. Blood flowed, and it wrote upon the earth: God, God!" (Al-Risala al-Qushayriya, p. 199 (English translation by Rabia Harris)

Dear reader! If you wish to restore your broken relationship with your Lord and cleanse the filth in your heart then turn to the remembrance of your lord whose word it is: 'Beware that it is only the remembrance of Allah that brings to your hearts freedom from all anxieties' (Irfan-ul-Quran, 13:28)

Abu Huraira narrates from the Messenger of Allah, Peace be upon Him that Allah said, "I am to My servant what he thinks of Me. I am with him wherever he remembers Me. So if he remembers Me in his heart (quietly), I remember him in secret (quietly). If he remembers Me in an assembly (loudly), I remember him in an assembly better than theirs (loudly). If he nears Me a cubit, I get near him a fathom. If he comes to Me walking, I go to him running." (Ibn Hibban, as-Sahih (3:93#811)

The question is man remembers Allah by glorifying his praise and chanting his names but how does Allah remember his servant? The answer is that when Allah remembers his servant his remembrance descends down to the earth and pours into the hearts of the believers. As a direct consequence the believers becomes inclined to that person and consider him to be the beloved of Allah.

This is the reason that the honoured Sultan Bahoo lived approximately 400 years ago but even today flocks of people visit his shrine, Baba Fareed Ganj Shakr engaged in the remembrance of Allah approximately 800 years ago but today people remember his extreme

spiritual status, Abdul Qadir Gilani died approximately 1000 years ago but many thousands of people consider him to be the saint of all saints and Sayyid Ali al-Hujwiri died nearly 1100 years ago but many devotees continue to take blessings at his shrine.

The remembrance of Allah has been a practice of the early saints and scholars. We shall mention a few examples for the attention of the reader.

It is said about Imam Hassan al-Basri that one night he sat in the remembrance of Allah on the last floor of his house. He was crying in such a state that when a passer by walked past his house, he felt drops of water falling onto him. Seeing no obvious sign of water he asked where has this water come from? The great Hassan al-Basri replied; "please wash your clothes for these are the tears of a very sinful slave of Allah!"

'I am with My slave when he remembers Me
and till his lips move while remembering Me'

The one who engages in 'Dhikr' has the highest rank of all. Of course 'Dhikr' must not only be felt by the heart and uttered with the tongue, but must also effect good deeds.

Thus whoever observes the commandments of Allah applicable to any given time under all circumstances and observe his responsibilities toward his family he in fact carries out the 'Dhikr' of Allah even while he engages in them.

May Allah give us the ability to implement such teachings in our lives and draw nearer to our Lord.