

Remembrance of

Allah

REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

An English rendering of the Urdu book

Dhikr-e-Ilāhī

*A speech delivered during the Annual Convention of
the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on 28 December 1916*

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad,
Khalīfatul-Masiḥ II (may Allah be pleased with him)



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(Originally published in Urdu as *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*)

A speech delivered by

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad

Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II^{ra}

during the Annual Convention of

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**Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad
Khalifatul-Masih II^{ra}**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥāj Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} (1889–1965), was the second *Khalīfah* of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He was the son of the Promised Messiah and his birth was the fulfilment of the Muṣleḥ Mau'ūd (Promised Reformer) prophecy. This prophecy was published by the Promised Messiah^{as} as a Sign of the truth of Islam in reply to a challenge put forth by the Arya Samaj.

From his early youth, he was gifted with knowledge—both, secular and spiritual—and a deep love for the Holy Quran. He was nineteen years old when the Promised Messiah^{as} passed away on 26 May 1908, in Lahore. The next day, on 27 May 1908, he pledged allegiance to Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Hakeem Noor-ud-Deen, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I, the first *Khalīfah* of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

He visited Egypt and Arabia in September 1912 during the course of which he performed the Hajj pilgrimage. In June 1913, he started a newspaper, titled *Al-Fazl*.

In 1914, at the age of 25, he was elected as Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II. During his almost fifty-two years of *Khilāfat*, he led the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on an international level, expanding the Movement to forty-six countries, and building dozens of hospitals,

mosques, and schools. He consolidated and formalized the system of financial contributions of the Community, and initiated the annual campaigns of *Tabrik-e-Jadid* in 1934 and *Waqf-e-Jadid* in 1957, considerably expanding Ahmadi missionary activity globally.

He was an active political figure especially in India prior to its independence. He was also one of the founding members and the first president of the All-India Kashmir Committee set up for the establishment of the civil rights of Kashmiri Muslims.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} was an avid scholar and a prolific author, who spoke and wrote extensively in defence of Islam. A twenty-six volume compilation of his works called *Anwārul-'Ulūm* contains over 800 writings and lectures (excluding several thousand sermons). His *Tafsīr-e-Kabīr*—ten-volume commentary of the Holy Quran—is revered as a treasure trove to this very day. Likewise, he was an orator of unmatched eloquence, captivating his audiences for hours on end.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} gave the Jamā'at its current organizational and administrative structure, formally establishing the Majlis ash-Shura (Consultative Council). He established the auxiliary organisations for men, women, and children. His many momentous achievements include the establishment of the Electoral College for the election of Khalīfatul-Masīḥ, and the establishment of the Community's headquarters in Rabwah, Pakistan after the partition of British India in 1947.

He passed away on 8 November 1965 in Rabwah, Pakistan, and was succeeded by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Nāṣir Aḥmad as Khalīfatul-Masīḥ III^{ra}.

FOREWORD



Dhikr-e-Ilāhī (*Remembrance of Allah*) is an English rendering of a speech delivered by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masīḥ II (may Allah be pleased with him) on 28 December 1916. This is a topic of vital importance, as Allah Himself explicitly states in the Holy Quran **وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ**, ‘And the remembrance of Allah indeed is the greatest *virtue*’ (*Sūrah al-Ankabūt*, 29:46).

The revered speaker delivered a splendid presentation on the nature, importance, and benefits of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*. He explained that *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* is of four types: 1) Prayer; 2) Recitation of the Holy Quran; 3) Narration of the attributes of Allah the Exalted in gatherings and acknowledging and making their verbal affirmation; and 4) Deliberating upon the attributes of Allah in solitude. He added the methods and timing of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* for maximum benefit, and particularly emphasised the value of *Tahajjud* prayer as a means of attaining *Maqām-e-Maḥmūd*—the praiseworthy station of nearness to Allah. He also suggested twenty-two means of fostering concentration in Prayer.

Sadly, people these days question the utility of reciting the name of God. ‘What’, they ask, ‘could be the benefit of someone

sitting alone and repeatedly saying *Lā ilāha illallāh*, ‘There is no one worthy of worship except Allah’ or that God is Holy, God is All-Knowing, God is All-Aware, God is All-Powerful, God is the Creator, etc.’? The problem is compounded further because what is commonly understood to be *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* these days has little to do with the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

This book addresses these concerns beautifully, comprehensively, and concisely. It expounds the underlying philosophy and benefits of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*. It teaches how to engage in it as presented by the Holy Quran and practiced by the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. The types and methods of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* are enumerated, as are the precautions for engaging in it.

This book is a must read for everyone, but I especially recommend it to our young men and women, as it addresses their concerns about this topic in a manner that is forthright, complete, and easy to understand.

al-Ḥāj Munir-ud-Din Shams
Additional Wakilut-Taṣnīf
London, United Kingdom
July 2021

Remembrance of Allah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ -

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. We praise
Him and invoke blessings upon His Noble Messenger.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ.*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى ۝ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسُوَّى ۝ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى ۝ وَ
الَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَى ۝ فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى ۝ وَسُقِّرُواكَ فَلَا تُنْسَى ۝ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ ۝ إِنَّكَ يَعْلَمُ الْغُيُوبَ
وَمَا يَخْفَى ۝ وَكُيُوسِرُ ۝ فَذَكِّرْ ۝ إِنَّ نَفْعَتِ الذِّكْرِى ۝ سَيِّدًا كَرِيمًا ۝ مَنْ يَخْشَى ۝ وَ يَتَّجِبْهَا
الرَّشْقَى ۝ الَّذِي يَصَلُّ النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ۝ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى ۝ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَى ۝ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ
رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ۝ بَلْ تُؤَكِّدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ۝ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ ۝ أَلَيْسَ ۝ إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَى ۝ صُحُفِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى ۝

***Sūrah al-A'lā, 87:1-20*—

-
- * I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the One who has no partner, and I bear witness that most certainly Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. After this I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the rejected. [Publisher]
- ** In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who creates and perfects, And Who designs and guides, And Who brings forth the pasturage, Then turns it black, rotten rubbish. We shall teach you *the Quran*, and you shall forget *it* not, Except as Allah wills. Surely, He knows *what* is open and what is hidden. And We shall facilitate for you *every* facility. So go on reminding; surely, reminding is profitable. He who fears will soon heed; But the reprobate will turn aside from it, He who is to enter the great Fire. Then he will neither die therein nor live. Verily, he *truly* prospers who purifies himself, And remembers the name of his Lord and offers Prayers. But you prefer the life of this world, Whereas the Hereafter is better and more lasting. This indeed is *what is taught* in the former Scriptures—The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses (*Sūrah al-A'lā, 87:1-20*). [Publisher]

As I had stated yesterday, my topic today relates to a matter concerning which I am certain that it is very important. And this is not based on mere speculation or conjecture. Quite the contrary, there is a decision and a decree of the Holy Quran concerning it also. Upon hearing this some people may perhaps say that this is just an ordinary matter and that, in fact, we know it already. Of course the condition of the hearts of people is known to none except Allah the Exalted, but in view of the current conditions I can say, and indeed *do state*, that many such things will be said concerning this topic which are not known by most people and which I have also not seen in any book.

Since the topic is so general that most—upon seeing its heading—would dismiss it as ordinary and already understood prior to discussing it, I consider it necessary to inform you that this topic is extremely important and essential, so do listen to it with attention. Should Allah the Exalted grant me the ability, I shall convey in it many such things that if you take note and act upon them, God Almighty shall make them the means of much good and excellence for you. However, before I embark upon the actual topic, I wish to state one more thing and it is this.

Some people who come to participate in the *Jalsa* [Annual Convention], spend all their time roaming about. This is highly objectionable. Allah the Exalted has not given them wealth to waste. If they had come here to simply wander around aimlessly, what was the need for them to come here at all? The people who come here after suffering hardships and spending their money, do so for the purpose of listening and benefiting. Nevertheless, the complaint has reached me that some people get up and leave when a speaker is presenting his topic, thinking that they have heard

these things already. I say to such people that if this statement of theirs is correct—that what has been heard before should not be listened to again—then they should also not read the Holy Quran again and again and abandon it after reciting it once. They should also do the same in regard to the five daily Prayers and Fasting, but this is not right. Thus, even if something that is being narrated has been heard before, it should still be listened to with full zeal and heartfelt attention; for, even this will beget great benefit, and that concept will become more deeply impressed upon the heart.

Then, if one person gets up from a gathering, a second one also stands up upon seeing the first, and then a third, and so a number of people begin to leave and this is a very unpleasant situation. But yes, if someone has an urgent need to leave; for example, to go to the washroom, such a one may get up and leave. However, the individual should quickly return upon fulfilment of the need so that he may be able to attain the purpose and objective for which he has come and to acquire the gain and benefit for which he is participating in the *Jalsa*.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said that when a person sits in any gathering of virtuous people, he benefits even without listening to the things being said there or acting upon them. It is narrated in the hadith that some men were sitting in a gathering and God Almighty inquired from the angels as to what such and such of His servants were doing. (The Holy Prophet^{sas} says that Allah the Exalted did not ask about them because He did not know; actually, God Almighty knew the whole story all too well.) They said that they were engaged in the remembrance of Allah. God Almighty replied that whatever they had asked for, He had bestowed it upon them. The angels said that there was also a man sitting with them

who was not engaged in the remembrance of Allah; he was just sitting with them. God Almighty said that the individual sitting with them cannot be unfortunate. He would reward and honour him as well (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb ad-Da‘wāt, Bāb Faḍli Dhikrillāhi ‘Azza wa Jall; Hadith 6408).¹

This means that even though the one sitting in the company of the virtuous may not receive guidance at one time, he will certainly be blessed with it at some other time. It cannot be that despite sitting in such a gathering with sincerity of heart, such an individual should remain a disbeliever; albeit true, the one who sits just once or twice—never to return thereafter—remains a disbeliever. This statement does not apply to him. Therefore, one should try to the utmost to remain seated in the gathering and if someone is faced with some urgent need, he should go and quickly return after attending to it.

Recently, I had delivered some sermons concerning the subject of prayers, and within them, such topics were mentioned, by the grace of Allah the Exalted, from which many people benefited. I have received many a letter in which it was written that much benefit was derived from these sermons. A person from Lahore wrote to me about these sermons, but his name was illegible. It appears God Almighty has employed His attribute of *Sattār* [the Concealer] with respect to him. He expressed amazement at what I had done, that I had disclosed those methods which had been kept secret and hidden all along, and from amongst which the sufis [mystics] would disclose barely one such method after exacting years of service from people, whereas I had readily disclosed everything.

In addition to this, he also wrote that I was indeed obliged

to do so, for I had much love for my Jamā'at and this is why I had informed them of those methods. Concerning this, I say that it is not only out of love for my Jamā'at that I had explained those techniques. There is no doubt in that I have love, and such a love that no one would have even for his own kith and kin, but I communicated those ways for this reason as well, that I know the God who has informed me of those ways is such a God that as much as one spends from the wealth He has given, He causes it to increase that much more and it becomes the means for the bestowal of yet greater rewards. This is indeed why I did not empty my home by informing people to the extent that I did; rather, I filled it all the more.

Then again, I was certain that by informing people of these, I would suffer no harm at all, for knowledge is not the kind of thing that diminishes upon being spent, but rather it increases upon being spent. But even if I had believed that [it diminishes upon being spent], then, as the Noble Companions^{ra} said, if they had a sword placed upon their neck and they were to remember something that the Holy Prophet^{sas} had said, but which had not yet been communicated to anyone, then before the sword could sever their neck, they would convey that information (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul 'Ilm, Bābun al-'Ilmu Qabl al-Qauli wal-'Amal).²

Accordingly, I also affirm that even if all the ways that I was expressing were to come to an end as I was communicating them, I would still have set forth all of them. Thus, at that time I conveyed as many as I could, and the thought crossed my mind that I had expressed all the ways relating to prayer that I knew of. However, when I returned home after Prayer and started supplicating, God Almighty taught me so many ways as I had never imagined before.

Even now, I had written down notes to the extent that I was capable for the topic that I wish to speak on, but on my way here, God Almighty had made many more things clear to me. Thus, I had mentioned the ways of supplicating which were highly essential. Nonetheless, what I wish to say now is even more important than the way to make prayers. If one comes to understand this well, and acts upon it, then his prayers will naturally find acceptance.

Last year I had intended to talk about this very topic, but since I had started another subject, this was left behind. The wisdom of God Almighty in this was that now when I began to write down notes about it, the notes of last year looked like those of a student as compared to those of a teacher, because I have been given to understand many more things than before. In short, I wish today to convey to you some things about the topic of *Remembrance of Allah*, and I want to do it on this occasion because most people do not read the newspapers. Thus, things conveyed upon some other occasion reach only those people who are in the habit of reading the newspaper.³

The methods I had conveyed regarding how to make prayers have been published, but there are likely many among you who may have only come to learn today that I had related something about prayer as well. Thus, I have selected this occasion to talk about *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* so that in this way thousands of people will be able to hear it and through them, this matter will be disseminated further.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT



What is *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*

These are the things that I want to mention under this topic:

What is meant by *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* or *Dhikrullah* [Remembrance of Allah]? What need is there for *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*? How many types of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* are there? What precautions need to be taken in *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*? What mistakes have people made in understanding the subject of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*? For those individuals who complain that they cannot remain focused during Prayers and that Satan whispers into their hearts, what are the means and methods for such people to drive Satan away and retain focus?

I shall relate something regarding these aspects of the topic today, should God Almighty grant me the ability to do so. Having heard these topics you may have realised that this is not the type of subject that pertains only to certain category of people. Rather, it pertains to every individual, be he lofty or low, rich or poor, young or old. Thus, if you hear something from me that appears

ordinary, do not ignore it because when you put it into practice, you will be convinced that it was nothing ordinary, but rather, something capable of bringing about magnificent, beneficial results.

Dhikr means *to remember*. *Dhikrullah* means *remembering God Almighty*. Thus, *Dhikr* or *Dhikrullah* refers to the way of remembering Allah the Exalted. In other words, it means keeping the attributes of Allah the Exalted in mind, uttering them repeatedly, affirming them wholeheartedly, and reflecting upon His powers and capabilities.

How important and essential this topic is! Concerning this I would say succinctly that it is of great import. Someone might presume that I claim it to be of immense importance simply because I have started delivering a speech on it, but I don't say it for that reason. I say this because God Almighty has called it great. Thus, Allah the Exalted says in the Holy Quran:

Sūrah al-'Ankabūt, 29:46—وَلِكَيْذُرَّ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

That is, remembrance of Allah is greater than all matters and loftier than all forms of worship. Thus, when God Almighty has decreed that the remembrance of Allah is greater than everything, this is not my statement, but that of God Almighty—that this topic is greater than all and important.

Now, the question arises that if this subject is greater than all and important, then there should also be a command to pay attention to it above all things. So when we turn to the Holy Quran, we learn that attention has been drawn to it with great frequency,

that people should turn their attention to the remembrance of Allah. Thus, God Almighty states:

Sūrah ad-Dahr, 76:26—**وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا**

O My servant! Remember your Lord morning and evening.

Similarly, the Holy Prophet^{sas} says that the angels surround all four sides of any gathering in which God Almighty is being remembered and rain down Allah's mercy upon it.

This is also why I had kept this subject to deliver during the *Jalsa*, when thousands of people gather together from great distances, so that the angels would shower Allah's mercy and blessings upon all. And then, when they return home and take these teachings with them, conveying them to those who did not come here, the blessings would spread throughout the Jamā'at in this very manner. So, for this purpose as well, I have chosen this day to discuss this topic.

I have just mentioned that the Holy Prophet^{sas} says that the angels gather around the meeting in which the remembrance of Allah is taking place and they bring the blessings and mercy of Allah and shower it upon those sitting there. Thus, when the remembrance of Allah is so lofty a deed that even angels congregate to hear it, and shower God's mercy upon those listening to it, it should be appreciated how valuable a commodity it is! And then, how highly would they esteem the one who is the teacher of the angels; for, the angels gather around the one who engages in the remembrance of Allah, and the more *dhikr* he does, the more angels come and urge him to do good and virtuous deeds.

The descent of angels is not a figment of human imagination; it is a certainty. I myself have seen angels and once, I actually conversed with them with great informality. So, the angels do come to the one who engages in the remembrance of Allah and develop a friendship and bond with him. Then, God Almighty says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ —

Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63:10

O ye who believe! let not wealth and children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. You should not permit any obstacle to stop you from the remembrance of Allah and there should be no occupation of yours that causes you to abandon the remembrance of Allah while performing it.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ذُكِّرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۝ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۝ —

Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33:42–43

O ye who believe! remember Allah with much remembrance. And glorify Him morning and evening.

Similarly, the Holy Prophet^{sas} has said, as narrated by Ḥaḍrat Abu Musa Ash‘ari^{ra}:

مَنْ لَمْ يَذْكُرْ رَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي لَا يَذْكُرْ مَثَلِ الْحَيِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ۔ (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb ad-Da‘wāt, Bāb Faḍli Dhikrillāhi ‘Azza wa Jall; Hadith 6407); لَا يَتَعَدُّ قَوْمٌ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَّا حَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ.

Muslim, Kitāb ad-Da‘wāt, Bāb Faḍlil-Ijtimā‘ ‘Alā Tilāwatil-Qurān wa ‘Aladh-dhikr; Hadith 2700).*

The comparison between a person who remembers his Lord and one who does not is akin to the living and the dead.⁴ That is, he who remembers Allah the Exalted is alive, while he who does not is dead. This clearly shows how important and essential the remembrance of Allah is.

Then, there is a hadith reported in *Tirmidhī*.

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَلَا أَنْبَأُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَزْكَاهَا عِنْدَ مَلِكِكُمْ وَأَرْفَعَهَا فِي دَرَجَاتِكُمْ وَخَيْرٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِتْفَاقِ الذَّهَبِ وَالْوَرِقِ وَخَيْرٍ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْ تَلْقَوْا عَدُوَّكُمْ فَتَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَهُمْ وَيَضْرِبُوا أَعْنَاقَكُمْ؟ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالَ ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى.

Ḥaḍrat Abi Dardā^{ra} relates that while addressing the Companions^{ra}, the Holy Prophet^{sas} asked them whether he should tell them something that is the best of all and most desirable, even better than spending gold and silver, and better than someone striving in the path of Allah and fighting the enemies and attaining martyrdom. The Companions^{ra} replied in the affirmative and the Holy Prophet^{sas} told them that it is the remembrance of Allah the Exalted (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Abwābud-Da‘wāti, Bābu ma jā’a fi Faḍlidh-Dhikr; Hadith 3377).

In another hadith, it is narrated that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said

* Two hadith reports have been referred to here. We have provided the full text of these *aḥādīth* in the Publisher’s Endnotes. Please refer to Endnote no. 4 on page 119. [Publisher]

that the remembrance of Allah holds a very high rank. The Companions^{ra} asked the Messenger of Allah whether its rank was even higher than striving in the cause of Allah? He replied in the affirmative, that it was even greater in rank than this [jihad] because the remembrance of Allah encourages one to undertake the striving.

Need of Greater Attention to *Dhikr* in Our Community

This, then, is the importance and necessity of *dhikr*. Yet there are some aspects of *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* towards which our Jamā'at is not paying attention, or if there is interest, it is very little. From my childhood, God Almighty has naturally inclined me to reflect and ponder. Since the very time of my maturity, I have been thinking about it and even now I am concerned that the deficiency regarding the remembrance of Allah which exists in our Jamā'at, must be removed.

The Promised Messiah, peace be upon him, has laid great emphasis on prayer. And thanks are due to God Almighty that our Jamā'at makes much use of prayer. The Promised Messiah^{as} has likewise laid great stress on the remembrance of Allah, but the attention that needs to be paid to this has not yet been given to it. One primary reason for this is that British education has somewhat changed the thinking of people and under the influence of European education, people question what the utility of

reciting the names of God could be. And what could be the benefit of someone sitting in solitude, repeatedly reciting لا اله الا الله [Lā ilāhā illallāh—There is no one worthy of worship except Allah] or God is *Quddūs* [the Holy], God is *ʿAlīm* [the All-Knowing], God is *Khabīr* [the All-Aware], God is *Qādir* [the All-Powerful], or God is *Khāliq* [the Creator]? None whatsoever, so there is no need for this.

In addition, because the members of our Jamāʿat are enrolled in Western education, they too have come under its influence. Secondly, there are people in our Jamāʿat who belong to the farming community. These people had never truly understood what *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* is, and what its benefit is. Hence, until they are all fully informed, and unless they are made to understand in an excellent manner, they cannot pay heed to it. This is the reason why they are deficient in the remembrance of Allah.

Ṣalāt is also the remembrance of Allah which, by the grace of Allah, our Jamāʿat observes very regularly. However, there are other forms of remembering Allah which are necessary and obligatory. Concerning these, although I cannot say that they are non-existent in our Jamāʿat, I will definitely say that they are lacking. And some people do not put them into practice and this also is a very big flaw.

Listen! If someone has beautiful facial features, but has deformed eyes, ears, or nose, will he be called handsome? Not at all! Everyone would call him unattractive. In the same way, if some people of our Jamāʿat do not employ some methods of remembering Allah, then their example is akin to a person who is wearing a very expensive coat, shirt, jacket, and trousers, but fails to wear shoes or a turban over his head. Despite his attire being decent,

the missing shoes or turban will make his appearance defective. And people of high status do not accept a defect in anything of theirs.

Thus, when not engaging in the remembrance of Allah in all the ways is a defect, and on top of that, when we also prove that Allah the Exalted has commanded that methods of remembering Allah other than *Ṣalāt* be adopted as well—whether anyone fully comprehends the underlying wisdom or not—and the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} has also directed along these lines, then it is essential that in order to achieve excellence in spirituality, we should also act upon these ways of remembering Allah.

The reason for proper attention not being given in our Jamā'at to the offering of *Nawāfil* [supererogatory worship] is also that these people have not understood the benefits of this way of remembering Allah. They think that by performing the obligatory worship they have done their duty, whereas the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} says, and he does not say so himself, but rather says that Allah the Exalted told him that: وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالتَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ . . . كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا. —By offering *Nawāfil*, My servant gets so close to Me that I become the ears with which he hears, the eyes with which he sees, the hands with which he holds, and the feet with which he walks (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābur-Riqāq, Bābut-Tawāḍu'; Hadith 6502).

From this you can understand the rank that God Almighty has accorded to *Nawāfil*, and how great a status has been given to the person who performs them. It is as if through them, God Almighty elevates a human being to such a degree that he begins to absorb His attributes within himself. Therefore, *Nawāfil* are not an ordinary matter. But alas, many people pay them no heed!

The truth of the matter is that there is immense weakness and laziness in man. Therefore, he puts in the least amount of labour. This is indeed the reason why God Almighty, who knows the weaknesses of His creatures, and who is Most Merciful towards them, has appointed some acts of worship as obligatory and others as voluntary. He appointed the obligatory acts of worship so that anyone who fulfils them will be above reproach.

Thus, it is narrated in a hadith that a person came to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and enquired about Islam:

خَمْسُ صَلَوَاتٍ فِي الْيَوْمِ وَاللَّيْلَةِ فَقَالَ هَلْ عَلَيَّ غَيْرُهَا؟ قَالَ لَا إِلَّا أَنْ تَطُوعَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَصِيَامَ رَمَضَانَ قَالَ هَلْ عَلَيَّ غَيْرُهُ؟ قَالَ لَا إِلَّا أَنْ تَطُوعَ قَالَ وَذَكَرَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الزَّكَاةَ قَالَ هَلْ عَلَيَّ غَيْرُهَا؟ قَالَ لَا إِلَّا أَنْ تَطُوعَ قَالَ فَأَذْبَرَ الرَّجُلُ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ وَاللَّهِ لَا أَرِي نِدَى عَلَى هَذَا وَلَا أَنْقُصُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَفْلَحَ إِنْ صَدَقَ.
The Holy Prophet^{sas} said to him, ‘Five Prayers during the day and night.’

He asked, ‘Are there any more other than these?’ The Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘No, unless you offer by way of *nafl* [voluntarily].’ Then the Holy Prophet^{sas} continued, ‘Fasting during the month of Ramadan.’

Again the man asked, ‘Are there any more fasts other than these?’

The Holy Prophet^{sas} responded, ‘No, unless you perform it by way of *nafl*.’ Then the Holy Prophet^{sas} told him that in Islam there is also Zakat—the giving of alms.

Upon hearing this the person left saying, ‘By God, I shall neither add anything to these, nor shall I subtract anything from them.’

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘If he speaks the truth, he has

attained success.’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Īmān, Bāb az-Zakātu min al-Islām; Hadith 46)

From this we learn that the person who fulfils the obligatory affairs properly, achieves success. However, the prudent and far-sighted person does not restrict himself to the discharge of only obligatory matters, but rather he enters the field of *Nawāfil* so that if there remained any shortcoming in the observance of the obligatory works, they may be compensated for in this way.

For example, five daily Prayers have been prescribed for the day and night. A person who offers these Prayers but does not offer the *Nawāfil* [Prayers] may run into a situation possibly that due to some error on his part, one of his Prayers gets rejected. So, on the Day of Judgement he will have to face the penalty for this shortcoming.

Thus, it is narrated in a hadith that once when the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} was present in the mosque, a person came and offered his Prayer. He asked him to repeat his Prayer, so the man offered his Prayer again. The Holy Prophet^{ṣas} asked him to repeat it again, and so the man offered his Prayer for a third time. When the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} asked him to offer it for the fourth time, he said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, by God I do not know how to pray better than this; tell me how I should offer the Prayer.’ The Holy Prophet^{ṣas} responded, ‘You were rushing with your Prayer and therefore it was not accepted. Pray slowly’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Azān, Bāb Wujūbil-Qir’ati Lil-Imāmi wal-Ma’mūmi fiṣ-Ṣalawāti Kullihā fil-Ḥaḍari was-Safari wa mā Yujharu fihā wa mā Yukhāfatu; Hadith 757).⁵

Thus, errors of this type sometimes occur, as a consequence

of which the Prayer is not accepted. However, for the person who also offers the *Nawāfil* together with the obligatory Prayers, if some Prayer of his is not accepted, then the *Nawāfil* can come in handy and may fulfil that deficiency. The example of this is just like the case of someone who goes to take a test for which he needs just fifty marks to pass, so he goes and solves just that many questions as are worth fifty marks, walking away believing that he has passed. This would be a mistake on his part because it is possible that some question that he attempted may have been answered incorrectly and, thus, he may be unable to secure the fifty marks and he may end up failing. It is for this very reason that the students who are smart and intelligent do not do this, but rather they attempt the questions that they know, and even the ones that they don't. They try to solve all of them thinking that perhaps the marks combined may help them to pass.

Similarly, if a traveller embarks upon a journey and takes just enough money with him as he expects will be needed, it sometimes occurs that his estimate turns out to be wrong and he ends up enduring extraordinary hardship. It is for this reason that shrewd and intelligent people begin their journey taking with them more than what they think is needed so that if they end up facing any unexpected expenses, they won't have to face any difficulties. So, *Nawāfil* are like the unexpected expenses and are most essential. Accordingly, special attention needs to be paid to offering them.

The second reason for why the people of our Jamā'at do not pay full attention to *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* is the following. The Promised Messiah^{as} has written a lot to refute the so-called sufis [mystics] born in this age, who spread many kinds of innovations.

Addressing them, he said that their uttering of prayer-phrases repetitively—parrot-fashion—will produce no results: ‘What are you doing sitting on your prayer mats when Islam is being attacked from all four sides? Why don’t you get up and give a reply?’

The Promised Messiah^{as} has denounced them in this way—and they indeed deserved denunciation. Nonetheless, by this, some people have mistakenly understood that perhaps the very act of sitting and engaging in the remembrance of Allah is frivolous in itself, whereas remembering Allah in this way is not pointless. Rather, the very purpose of it is that God’s holiness and praise should be proclaimed in this way.

Nevertheless, since those people merely engaged in the remembrance of Allah sitting in their homes and did nothing in the outside world where God Almighty was being condemned, it is for this reason that the Promised Messiah^{as} reprimanded them and said that if those people actually love God Almighty and proclaim His holiness and praise, then just as they declare His purity and praise Him while sitting in their homes, they should do the same outside of their homes as well. Since they had abandoned performing their duty of calling people towards goodness and forbidding them from evil due to their laziness and negligence, they were reprimanded for being hypocritical; for, if they held true love and passion for God Almighty in their hearts, then what would be the reason withholding them from coming out and responding to the opponents when they were attacking God Almighty? And what was the reason for them not to glorify God Almighty on the public platform as they did in the quiet corners of their homes?

MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT DHIKR



Misguided Forms of *Dhikr*

Moreover, another reason for the Promised Messiah^{as} reprimanding them was that according to the saying, ‘Whatever an ill man adopts becomes an illness’, these sufis and *gaddī nashīns* [the custodians of shrines] exploited *Dhikrullah* in such ways and forms that they defaced it altogether. And no trace was left of the manner in which Islam had presented it.

So what is understood by *Dhikrullah* nowadays? It is a heart-rending cry raised to a high pitch and shouted out so loudly that the peace of the whole neighbourhood and the worship of all those nearby is disturbed. This is what they call delivering a strike upon the heart—as if the heart, for them, is something into which

لا اله الا الله [Lā ilāha illallāh—There is no one worthy of worship but Allah] can be thrust by force!

Similarly, some others have invented the practice that they gather to listen to poetry or arrange for *qawwālis* [sufi devotional songs employed as a form of worship], and female dancers come and perform—yet they contend that this a gathering getting warmed up for the remembrance of Allah. They then appease the heart so that the sounds of ‘Allah, Allah’ emanate from it. In short, strange and sundry things have been invented.

At some places hearts are being enlivened; at others, blows are being struck upon hearts; while yet at others, attempts are made for sounds to emanate from the soul—and they have assigned these names themselves! At times they say that they raise the remembrance of Allah from the heart, which goes to prostrate at the very Throne of God before returning. And at other times they say that they cause the sound of ‘Allah, Allah’ to emanate from every limb of their body. These and many other such innovations have been invented by them.

There are also others who recite some verse of the Holy Quran and dance. Some engage in the remembrance of Allah in the manner that one person recites some couplets of poetry etc. and others dance and say that they are in a state of ecstasy and have become unconscious. Then, while they are seated in the gathering, they burst out yelling, ‘Allah! Allah!’ and jump suddenly. So these are the strange and sundry types of *dhikr* that have been introduced, whereas they have absolutely nothing to do with the religion of Islam. Notwithstanding, on account of this, it cannot be said that

Dhikr-e-Ilāhī is a bad thing. Yes! It can be said that these innovations which these people have created are bad.

These people, however, are not bothered in the least, despite the fact that the Holy Prophet^{sas} has said: **كُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ صَلَاةٌ وَكُلُّ صَلَاةٍ فِي النَّارِ**. ‘Every innovation that is introduced into the Faith is misguidance and misguidance leads to Hell’ (*Sunan an-Nasa’i*, Kitāb Ṣalātul-Īdāini, Bāb Kaifal-Khuṭbah; Hadith 1578).

This indeed is why the forms of *dhikr* invented by these people are incapable of taking them closer to Allah; on the contrary, they take them even further away from Him. Thus, ever since these types of *dhikr* have been introduced—precisely since then—the Muslims have been drifting farther and farther away from God Almighty. As all of these are innovations, and when people act contrary to the directives of Allah and the Holy Prophet^{sas}, their spirituality will inevitably weaken, and it is for this reason that spirituality is being obliterated from among the Muslims.

Secondly, these innovations have a particular quality that makes one feel pleasure and exhilaration on the surface, but because all that pleasure and exhilaration is artificial, for that reason—ignorant of true pleasures—a person chases the artificial ones and is thus destroyed. This is like a person suffering from a stomach ache who, instead of seeking proper treatment, takes opium and sleeps. The temporary result of this will be that the person will feel comfort due to the loss of consciousness but, in reality, he will be moving towards destruction and there will be a time when that very pain will kill him.

***Dhikr* Versus Mesmerism**

The reality is that what people refer to as *Dhikr* these days is actually a discipline that is called the science of *al-Tarab* and in English it is known as Mesmerism. And there is another science that is called Hypnotism which a doctor in France has invented. It has nothing to do with spirituality; rather, it is related to thought and God Almighty has placed such capability in thought that when it is especially drawn towards a particular direction, there develops in it a particular effect and through it, pleasure and exhilaration can be developed in the heart. However, this pleasure is just like the type attained by consuming opium, cocaine, or marijuana. In reality, however, that is not pleasure but a state of unconsciousness that is damaging for one's health. In the same way when an effect is impressed on the nerves by focused attention, a state of drowsiness is induced which makes one feel pleasure, and these people think that this pleasure is due to saying 'Allah, Allah,' whereas if they had been saying 'Rām, Rām' at the time, they would have experienced the same sort of pleasure.

It is narrated that a revered Muslim was traveling in a boat when he started doing *dhikr* and did so with such power that the other people who were mainly Hindus also started saying, 'Allah, Allah.' However, there was a Hindu ascetic present who did not recite, 'Allah, Allah.' Thereupon the Muslim started especially focusing his thoughts upon the Hindu ascetic, but while he was still doing this, he himself started saying 'Rām, Rām' uncontrollably. This was because the Hindu ascetic had started focusing his attention on him to have 'Rām, Rām' issue forth from his lips.

Seeing this, he was utterly amazed and from that very day he abstained from doing *dhikr* in that way, as he came to understand that that was the result of a discipline and not the effect of *dhikr*; for, had it been the result of saying ‘Allah’, the same would have issued forth involuntarily from the mouths of others as well. Then why would ‘Rām, Rām’ issue forth?

The condition of those who perform such rituals is akin to a person travelling through a wilderness in a state of extreme hunger and discovering a bag filled with what he imagines to be grains, whereas in reality the bag contains only pebbles. This is verily the condition of that man who walks along such paths and imagines that he is attaining the nearness of God Almighty. He is actually in a state of intoxication in which he becomes inebriated. And this is indeed the reason why, despite his thinking that he has attained a special lofty station, his heart remains as impure and unholy as it ever was. Thus, this is an intoxication like that of opium etc.

Pleasure from *Dhikr*

A sincere member of our Jamā‘at would always tell me that one derives great pleasure from following these methods. I would tell him as well, that just as one derives pleasure from opium and cocaine, similarly one derives pleasure from this and the proof is that no spiritual cleanliness results from such forms of remembrances of Allah. Indeed, even those who say that their

dhikr reaches right up to the very Throne of Allah, are devoid of spiritual cleanliness. Upon this, he said that this is very true. He related that there was a person who used to say he had traversed all the stages, but in spite of that, he would go around begging grain and cereals from people and I used to think that if he had attained such a lofty station then why does he go begging from people?

The Promised Messiah^{as} narrated about a certain person who thought himself to have reached a very high spiritual status. However, once while visiting a follower, the *pīr* [a spiritual mentor] demanded, 'Bring my tax [tribute].' There was a famine at the time. The follower, who could find nothing to offer, begged to be excused, but the *pīr* kept on fighting and disputing with him for a long time and in the end made the follower sell something and took the proceeds, finally leaving the follower in peace.

In short, such weaknesses and impurities are found in those people who otherwise make grandiose claims.

Difference between *Dhikr* and Mere Influence of Thoughts

The fact is that God Almighty has also placed a special kind of effect in the human voice and thoughts. For example, if a person keeps thinking that something has happened, his mind will be inclined to believe accordingly. Similarly, if a person thinks that 'Allah, Allah' is emanating from his heart, then, sitting there, he

starts hearing the same kind of sound as if his heart is speaking; whereas, if his heart was actually speaking, then what is the reason that he does not become purified? Then there are many more people among the Hindus as compared to the Muslims who not only can call upon their own hearts, but call the hearts of others as well.

It is my intention to write a book to tell people the difference between Prophets and conjurers. This is a rather ordinary kind of knowledge but the result of it is that man becomes heedless of his own reformation because he begins to imagine that he has reached God Almighty, whereas in reality he has not. If someone wishes to attain a particular stage and, having actually arrived at some other station, thinks that he has arrived where he had intended, he will settle right there and, as a consequence, suffer great loss. Similarly, those who indulge in such practices imagine that they have reached their true destination while, in reality, they are miles away from it and, like an opium addict, remain in a state of intoxication.

So these are the frivolous kinds of *dhikr* that the Promised Messiah^{as} urged his followers to stay away from, and he criticized those who practiced these things; for, if even the Hindus and Christians can do the very same things, then how can it be called the remembrance of Allah?

Reciting *Dhikr* Aloud

What then about reciting *dhikr* aloud or listening to songs and music? So, as I have already mentioned that the human nervous

system has been endowed with a unique capability to influence as well as to be influenced. And the ear is one of the doors through which these influences are conveyed. They respond to pleasing sounds, and this not only applies to human beings, but to other creatures as well. Play a flute to a snake, for example, and it starts writhing, but can this be understood to be happening under some special spiritual influence? Not at all! Similarly, if someone starts to dance upon hearing a song, it cannot be said that his spirituality has been affected thereby; on the contrary, it would be said that his senses have been influenced by something that has nothing to do with spirituality. Thus, anyone who understands singing etc. to be capable of having a spiritual effect, is mistaken and it is his folly because just as a snake sways to a flute, the sufis of today begin to dance to music and songs. Moreover, it is an innovation [in the faith of Islam] to perform any *dhikr* in such a loud and blaring manner.

Once, the Holy Prophet^{sas} was walking along with his companions when suddenly they said *Allāho Akbar, Allāho Akbar* loudly. On this the Holy Prophet^{sas} said: **اِزْبَعُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَإِنَّكُم لَا تَدْعُونَ** **إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ**. **أَصَمٌ وَلَا غَائِبٌ إِنَّهُ مَعَكُمْ** Ḥaḍrat Abu Musa narrates that the Holy Prophet^{sas} advised them, ‘Have mercy on yourselves. Why do you not speak softly? The One Whom you are calling is neither deaf nor absent; quite the contrary, He hears you well and is near you and with you’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Jihādi was-Siyari, Bābu mā Yukrahu min Raf‘iṣ-Ṣauti fit-Takbīri; Hadith 2992).

However, look at the sufis of today. Wherever they hold a gathering for the remembrance of Allah, that whole neighbourhood begins to resound with noise. And they consider this to be a highly noble act, whereas it is in contravention of the Shariah.

Their practice—poetry, dancing, screaming and shouting, falling, and swaying their heads—none of these are substantiated by the Holy Prophet^{sas}.

Poetry as *Dhikr*?

It is said that the Holy Prophet^{sas} also used to listen to poetry, but it has not been proven from any source that he used to hear poetry by way of remembrance of Allah. The manner in which he would listen to couplets being recited was that Hassan^{ra} comes and submits to him that, ‘O Messenger of Allah, such and such opponent has composed couplets against you and I have prepared a reply.’

He would listen to the reply or it would happen that a person, against whom he had issued a death sentence, presented himself and after receiving permission, recited a few couplets asking for forgiveness by stating that when he was coming to see him, the people told him that the Messenger of Allah had issued an order for him to be killed and that he would have him killed. However, he did not consider these things credible and wondered that when he would go to him and seek his forgiveness, would he still be killed? Hearing this, the Noble Messenger^{sas} spread his mantle upon him forbidding anyone from killing him. After that, he said, ‘It was not out of fear of my life that I sought forgiveness like this; rather, it was the fear that I might be killed in this very state of *kufi* [disbelief], whereas I have come to realize that the religion of Islam is the true faith.’

So these are the kinds of poetic couplets that the Holy Prophet^{sas} used to listen to, but how does it become established from these that people used to sit in front of him and sing songs together or dance, or recite poetry about the love of God and that the Companions used to dance thereupon and lose consciousness? So all that is being perpetrated these days is an innovation which has become generally widespread.

Then, the Holy Prophet^{sas} used to listen to such poetry: For example, a battle is taking place against the disbelievers and to arouse fervour, a Companion recites, ‘This day we will either be victorious or lay down our lives, but we will not retreat!’

Thus, this argument that since the Holy Prophet^{sas} would listen to poetic verses, so do we listen to them as well, is totally wrong and frivolous. Then, upon listening to such poetic verses, all the behaviour that ensues is totally opposed to the Shariah. No trace of them is found in Islam.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE DHIKR



Five States of a Person Engaged in *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*

Contrary to them, what is known from the Holy Quran about the condition of a person engaged in *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*, is that nowhere does the Holy Quran say that a swoon ensues or unconsciousness overtakes the person while doing *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*, or that the listeners sway their heads and start jumping. Quite contrary to this, Allah the Exalted says again about *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*:

* *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:3— **إِنَّمَا السُّعُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ**

* True believers are only those whose hearts tremble when *the name of Allah* is mentioned. [Publisher]

Then He says:

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ مِنْهُمْ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ لَمَّا تَلَيْنُ جُلُودَهُمْ وَقَالُوا هُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ^ط
**Sūrah az-Zumar, 39:24*

Then He says:

إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ حَرَّوَأَسْجَدُوا وَبُكِيًّا
***Sūrah Maryam, 19:59*

The states of those who remember Allah are the following:

1. When the believers remember Allah, their hearts become afraid and the fear of Allah develops in them because they understand that their Lord possesses great glory and majesty.
2. Their skins creep; that is, their hair stands on end out of their state of fear.
3. Their bodies become relaxed, and their hearts become tender.
4. They fall down in prostration; that is, they become occupied in the worship of God.
5. They begin to weep.

These are the five states [of a person engaged in *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī*,] that God Almighty has mentioned. If dancing, jumping, falling unconscious, or shouting very loudly had been included, God

* At which do creep the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. [Publisher]

** When the Signs of the Gracious *God* were recited unto them, they fell down, prostrating themselves *before God* and weeping. [Publisher]

Almighty would have spoken of them too. And He would have said that the believers are those who—when Allah is remembered in their presence—tear their clothes apart and throw them away and start jumping and making noise, or that they begin to hang upside down and wave their heads about and become thrown into ecstasy, but Allah the Exalted mentions none of these things. From this, we come to learn that such things have absolutely nothing to do with the remembrance of Allah.

True *Dhikr* Rules out Dancing and Shouting

How filled with wisdom is the Word of God Almighty that it has rejected all these types of actions from the very beginning! Someone can say it does not matter if the Holy Quran has not mentioned these types of actions—these are apart from the ones that have been mentioned. Firstly, it is absurd to even say such a thing. But when we look at the verses of the Holy Quran in which the state of a person at the time of his being engaged in the remembrance of Allah is mentioned, we learn that God Almighty has placed such words therein that refute all such things that are declared these days to be permissible and customary.

Observe that the words used in these verses are: **وَجَلَّ - إِشْفَرَاوْ - تَلِينُنْ - جُلُودُ** [*wajlūn*, *iqshī'rārūn*, *talīnūn*, and *julūdun*]. And looking at the lexicons it is learnt that one of the meanings of *wajl* is gentleness and being worn down and that manifests a state of rest, but the sufis of today initiate movement which is opposed to it. Similarly, *iqshī'rārūn* is said of hairs standing on end suddenly due

to fear and this too requires a state of rest, because in a state of fear one is stunned and left suddenly standing motionless and not that one starts moving. Similarly, تَلِينُ جُلُودُ [talīnu julūdun] also attests to a state of rest.

The word in Arabic to indicate movement is طرب [tarb] which is used for jumping and leaping because of happiness and this word has not been used anywhere in the Holy Quran for the remembrance of Allah. Further, the lexicons say that *tarb* is the opposite of humility and lowliness while the Holy Quran tells us that the result of engaging in the remembrance of Allah is humility and lowliness. Thus, it becomes clear that on such occasions there can be no *tarb*, because *tarb* is situated on the opposite side of humility and lowliness; therefore, dancing, leaping, and jumping which are *tarb* cannot develop from the remembrance of Allah at all. On the contrary, the result should be humility, weeping, worshipping, and fearing God, and this is indeed what should be the result, because Islam establishes reason and sanity and guides one to the Straight Path and does not render one unconscious and unintelligent. However, jumping about, leaping, and shouting is the result of losing awareness and lack of intelligence so it cannot be the teaching of Islam.

Unconsciousness is Not a True Result of *Dhikr*

Similarly, fainting is nothing desirable and this is verily the reason that although Islam permits one to cry if a dear one passes away, it does not permit them to wail and weep and undergo

fainting fits. Once the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} passed by a woman who was exhibiting such lack of patience on the grave of her child. He advised her to be patient. She replied, ‘If your child had died, you would have realized how difficult it is to show patience’ (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, Kitābul-Janā’iz, Bāb aṣ-Ṣabru ‘Indal-Muṣībah; Hadith 3124).⁶

She spoke out of ignorance. The truth is, the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} had lost several of his children. In short, wailing and falling unconscious are caused by impatience and lack of hope, or are the result of a weak heart. And even if it is due to the weakness of heart it is still not a good thing.

It is stated about a revered person from the time of Ḥaḍrat Junaid^{ra} that he would fall into an unconscious state upon hearing Allah being remembered. When his disciples asked him the reason he stated it happened because he had grown old and weak. Note that he did not say that he swooned because he had attained a loftier station and reached a higher rank; instead, he attributed it to his advanced age—that is, weakness.

As for falling unconscious due to despair or lack of hope, God Almighty says concerning this:

وَلَا تَأْسُوا مِنْ رُوحِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْتِيَنَّكَ مِنَ رُوحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرُونَ —

**Sūrah Yūṣuf*, 12:88

Thus, if a person faints and becomes unconscious due to lack of hope he commits an act of disbelief and if he does so due to

* And despair not of the mercy of Allah; for none despairs of Allah’s mercy save the unbelieving people. [Publisher]

weakness of the heart, he is ill. There is no wisdom involved in imitating such a person.

This matter was discussed during the time of the companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. Ḥaḍrat Abdullah bin Zubair^{ra} asked Asmā^{ra} about fainting. She replied *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ*. [‘I seek refuge with Allah from Satan the accursed’]. Then it is narrated that the son of Ḥaḍrat Abdullah bin Zubair^{ra} said to his grandmother that I had gone to a place where some people would read the Holy Quran and have fainting fits. Upon hearing this his paternal aunt, [Ḥaḍrat] Asmā^{ra} who was the daughter of Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr^{ra} and a companion of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, responded, ‘If you saw this, you witnessed a satanic act.’

It is narrated concerning Ibn Sirin, author of the book on the interpretation of dreams, who was the son-in-law of Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah^{ra} that he was once told about someone who would faint when he heard any verse of the Holy Quran. He replied that he would consider it to be true only if the individual was made to sit upon a high wall, and would then fall down not after just one verse being recited to him, but the entire Quran!

Even now, when those who feign unconsciousness and lose control of their senses in such gatherings, it is observed that they fall where they see lots of people sitting, so that they don’t get hurt. It never transpires that they fall off a roof or that they fall where they might suffer a serious injury, although it may sometimes occur by mistake.

Prohibitions Regarding *Dhikr*

In short, all these types [of *dhikr*] are forbidden and illegitimate. They deserve as much condemnation as can be heaped upon them because they destroy spirituality and degrade men to the status of monkeys and bears. Islam came to make men into angels but in these ways men become monkeys. Thus, these things are frivolous and vain and they have no merit.

Four Kinds of *Dhikr* Enjoined by the Holy Quran

And those that are actually remembrances of Allah and those that are emphatically ordained in the Holy Quran, are different and are of four kinds. To not attend to these is to become deprived of very great spiritual rewards so these should never be abandoned. 1) The first of these is *Ṣalāt*; 2) the recitation of the Holy Quran; 3) repeatedly making mention of the attributes of Allah, acknowledging their truthfulness and verbalizing their details; 4) to proclaim the attributes of Allah in public just as one does in private.

These are those four types of *dhikr* that are proven from the Holy Quran and the doing of which is not only highly essential but obligatory for spirituality.

Now I will provide proof of the statement that the Holy Quran has presented these types of *dhikr*. Concerning *Ṣalāt* God Almighty says:

Sūrah Ṭā Hā, 20:15—إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

O human being! Verily I am Allah; there is no God beside Me. So serve Me, and observe Prayer for My remembrance.

From this it is learnt that where God Almighty has said that, ‘O ye Believers! Remember Me’, the meaning of it is that, ‘O ye Believers! Offer the *Ṣalāt*.’

Then, Allah says:

— **وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَادْأُؤْمِنْتُمْ فَأَدُّرُوا اللّٰهَ كَمَا عَمَلْتُمْ مَا كُمْ تَكُونُوا عَابِدُونَ**

* *Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:240*

After emphasizing the offering of *Ṣalāt*, Allah says that if you have any type of fear regarding the enemies, then—whether you are on foot or on horseback—you should offer your *Ṣalāt* in that very state and when you feel secure, then you should engage in the remembrance of Allah in the way that you have been taught by Him, which you did not know before. In this verse the observance of *Ṣalāt* has been called remembrance of Allah. There are many other verses concerning this, but here I will cease with the mention of these.

The second *dhikr* is the Holy Quran. The proof of this is that God Almighty says:

Sūrah al-Hijr, 15:10— **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ**

Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this *Dhikr*, and We are, most surely, its Guardian.

* If you are in a state of fear, then say your Prayer on foot or riding; but when you are safe, remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know. [Publisher]

The sending down of the Holy Quran has been called the descent of the *Dhikr*. From this we learn that where God Almighty has given this commandment اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ [‘remember Allah’], one meaning of this is that you should recite the Holy Quran as well.

Then, God Almighty says:

* *Sūrah al-Anbiyā’, 21:51*—وَهَذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبْرَكٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ أَفَأَنْتُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ

In this verse also, after presenting the Holy Quran, it is stated that We have sent down this *Dhikr* for you; will you even then reject it?

The third form of *dhikr* consists of stating and repeating the attributes of Allah, and acknowledging their truthfulness. Some people think that it is sufficient just to recite the attributes of Allah mentioned during *Ṣalāt*, but this is wrong. There is remembrance of Allah in addition to *Ṣalāt* and we find evidence of this in the Holy Quran. God Almighty says:

Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4:104—فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ

Meaning that when you have finished the Prayer, remember Allah even while you are standing and while you are sitting, and when you are lying on your sides as well.

From this it is clear that *dhikr* is in addition to *Ṣalāt*. Had the mention of Allah’s attributes in *Ṣalāt* been sufficient, then why would God Almighty have said that:

* And this is the blessed Reminder that We have sent down; will you then reject it? [Publisher]

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَسُجُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ *

‘When you are done offering the *Ṣalāt* you should remember Allah in the state of standing, sitting, or lying on your side’?

Then Allah says:

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْمَهُمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا
تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ
Sūrah an-Nūr, 24:38

In this verse God Almighty says that the people who are the companions of Muhammad^{sas} are such that their buying and selling does not stop them from the remembrance of Allah or from offering their *Ṣalāt* or from the payment of their Zakat, because they fear the day when the eyes and the hearts will be overcome. Here a form of the remembrance of Allah is mentioned that is distinct from *Ṣalāt*.

The fourth kind of *dhikr* God informs us of is that the attributes of God Almighty should be proclaimed openly before the people. The proof of this is as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَدِينَةُ ۖ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرِي ۚ وَرَبِّكَ فَكْبِّرِي ۚ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرِي ۚ وَالرُّجُزَ فَاهْجُرِي ۚ وَلَا تَمْنُنِ
تَسْتَكْبِرِي ۚ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرِي ۚ
***Sūrah al-Muddaththir, 74:2-8*

* *Sūrah an-Nisā'*, 4:104 [Publisher]

** O you who has wrapped *yourself with your mantle!* Arise and warn. And your Lord do extol. And your garments do purify. And uncleanness do shun, And bestow not favours seeking to get more *in return*, And for the sake of your Lord do endure patiently. [Publisher]

In these verses, the Holy Prophet has been commanded to arise and warn all people and to express the grandeur of his Lord. In this we have been told to communicate the greatness of God Almighty before the people. So these are the forms of *dhikr*, the doing of which has been commanded by God Almighty.

METHODS OF PERFORMING DHIKR



Obligatory and Voluntary *Dhikr*

Now the question remains: ‘What are the methods of performing these forms of *dhikr*?’ Concerning this it should be remembered that there are two categories of *dhikr*: those that are obligatory, and those that are voluntary. There is no need here to mention anything about the obligatory types of *dhikr* because, by the grace of God, the people of our Jamā‘at do indeed carry these out. So what remains are the voluntary forms of *dhikr* and there is a need to say something about them. However, since this is a lengthy topic, I leave it for now and wish to explain how the Quran should be recited.

Concerning this it should be remembered that one should establish a certain fixed amount that must be read every day. It should not be the case that the Holy Quran is picked up at some random time for some portion to be read from it. On the contrary, it should be read regularly and according to a fixed appointed measure. Irregular reading—that is, reading it sometimes—does

not yield any benefit. Thus, with regard to the reading of the Holy Quran, a certain portion should be fixed and that should be completed every day. Whether that portion is one part, or half of one part, or three or four parts, it must be recited daily and one should not fail in completing that. The Holy Prophet^{sas} says, ‘Allah loves that worship the most which one adopts as a routine and doesn’t allow hiatus’ (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb al-Qaṣdu fil ‘Amal; Hadith 1242)⁷ because a break discloses that he is not passionate about it, and the heart cannot be purified without enthusiasm and heartfelt love.

I have observed that whenever the Holy Quran is not recited due to being preoccupied with some writing or for any other reason, the heart suffers on account of it and its effect is felt in other acts of worship as well.⁸ So, firstly, the Holy Quran should be recited daily, and secondly, the Holy Quran should be read with understanding and it should not be recited so hastily that its meanings are not understood at all. It should be recited with *tartil* [slowly, clearly, and distinctly] so that its meaning is understood and the respect due to the Holy Quran is also kept in mind. Thirdly, as far as possible, *wuḍū* [ablution before offering Prayer] should be performed before the recitation of the Holy Quran, although reciting the Holy Quran without ablution is also permissible in my opinion. It is true, however, that some scholars have disliked the recitation of the Holy Quran without first performing the ablution. In my view, recitation of the Holy Quran without ablution is not forbidden, but it is appropriate to perform ablution for greater effect and spiritual merit.

A friend asks what should be done if one does not understand the meanings of the Holy Quran. Such people should try to read

the translation of the Holy Quran. Nevertheless, if one does not know the entire translation, the translation of some portion of the Holy Quran may be learnt and when the daily recitation is done, that portion of which the translation is known may be recited as well.

Someone may ask: ‘What is the benefit of reciting the parts which we do not understand?’ Regarding this, remember that when something is done with sincerity and good intention, Allah definitely rewards it. If you recite for the sake of God without knowing the meanings, He will certainly bless you because of your sincerity. Moreover, it is also true that mere words have their effect as well. Note how the Holy Prophet^{sas} has commanded that the *Adhān* [Call for Prayer] be recited in the ears of a newborn child. Even though the child is unable to know or understand anything at that time, according to the saying, ‘What is given is put to use’, he is undoubtedly influenced by the words of the *Adhān*.

Other Forms of Remembrance of Allah

Apart from the recitation of the Holy Quran, other forms of *dhikr* consist of *tasbīḥ* [expressing glory of God by reciting *Subḥānallāh* (Holy is Allah)] and *taḥmīd* [praising Allah by reciting *Alḥamdulillāh* (All praise belongs to Allah)] that one can perform while sitting alone or in company.

One type of such *dhikr* is also obligatory, like saying the *tabkīr* [reciting *Allahū Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest)] while slaughtering an animal. If the *tabkīr* is not proclaimed at that time, eating that

animal is forbidden. A second form of this *dhikr* is *nafl* [supererogatory] which is repeated in a low voice at other times. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has made this into something very vast; that is to say, he has prescribed some form of *dhikr* for every occasion. For example, when you sit down to eat he has taught us to say: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ [‘In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful’].

This does not mean that if someone does not recite this, his belly will not get filled, but what it does mean is that the true purpose behind eating will be fully achieved in this way; that is, reciting the name of Allah will greatly benefit our spirituality.

Then there is the command to recite بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ at the commencement of every activity, so that there may be blessings in that work. And when that task is completed we are taught to say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ*

so that there may be blessings in that task. Similarly, if someone dons new clothes or begins the use of something new, he should say *Alḥamdulillāh* [‘All praise belongs to Allah’] to express gratitude.

On every occasion of sorrow and difficulty we are to say:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ**

When faced with a task beyond one’s power and capability, we

* All Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds. (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:2) [Publisher]

** Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. (*Sūrah al-Baqarah*, 2:157) [Publisher]

should say: لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ [‘There is no strength nor power except from Allah’].

In short, these are the forms of *dhikr* that relate to aspects of life one faces daily. Every human being experiences either joy or sorrow during the day. Thus, when faced with joy, one says: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ [*Alḥamdulillāhi Rabb-il-Ālamīn*—‘All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds’]. And when confronting sorrow, one should say: إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ [*Innā Lillāhi wa innā ilaihi rāji‘ūn**]. Allah the Exalted says:

فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ*

The Holy Prophet^{sas} has prescribed a particular kind of *dhikr* for every occasion, so that by doing them, man remains constantly engaged in the remembrance of Allah. For example, if a person is sitting in his office working and he hears some good news concerning himself, he should say *Alḥamdulillāh*. If he should learn some such happy news while walking, then again, he should say *Alḥamdulillāh*. If he receives a glad tidings while laying down, he should again say *Alḥamdulillāh*. Thus, in this way he will be performing the remembrance of Allah while قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ [standing, sitting, or lying on your sides].

Then the Holy Prophet^{sas} says, أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ. [The best remembrance (of Allah) is, ‘there is no one worthy of worship except Allah’] (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitābud-Da‘wāt, Bāb ma jā’anna Da‘watul-Muslimi Mustajābatun; Hadith 3383).

* Remember Allah while standing, and sitting, and lying on your sides (*Sūrah an-Nisā’*, 4:104). [Publisher]

As narrated by Jabir in *Tirmidhī*, the best and the foremost way of remembering Allah is that one should attest to the statement that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah.

There are various merits of other forms of *dhikr*. Thus, the Holy Prophet^{sas} has said concerning: — **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ** [Subhān-Allāhi wa bi-ḥamdihī, Subhān-Allāh-hil-ʿAẓīm—‘Holy is Allah and worthy of all Praise; Holy is Allah, the Great’] that **كَلِمَتَانِ خَفِيفَتَانِ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ ثَقِيلَتَانِ فِي الْمِيزَانِ حَبِيبَتَانِ إِلَى الرَّحْمَنِ** ‘There are two statements which are very light on the tongue to say, but when they will be weighed on the Day of Judgement, their weight will be so much that because of them the arm of the scale containing the good deeds will become very heavy. And they are so very dear to the Gracious God’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb-ul-Īmāni wan-Nudhūr, Bāb Idhā Qāla Wallāhi lā Atakallam-ul-Yauma fa Ṣallā au Qara’ au Sabbaḥa au Kabbara au Ḥamida aur Hallala fa-hua ‘Alā Niyyatihī; Hadith 6682; *Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitāb-ud-Da’wāt, Bāb fi Faḍā’ili Subhān-Allāhi wa bi-Ḥamdihī; Hadith 3467).

This is also a *dhikr* of a very high order so much so that once, when the Promised Messiah^{as} got up to offer *Tabajjud* [early morning supererogatory prayers] during a bout of severe illness and fell down due to fainting and could not offer the prayer, he received a revelation that in such a condition instead of getting up to offer the *Tabajjud*, he should just recite this while lying down. So this too is a *dhikr* that possesses immense merit. It is narrated in the sayings of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that he used to recite it very often.

The Holy Prophet^{sas} has told us that these two forms of *dhikr* are superior. There is, however, another *dhikr* which is highly commendable. Although no hadith has been preserved about it,

reason guides us towards its very lofty merit. This *dhikr* consists of reciting the verses of the Holy Quran. If they are recited by way of remembrance of Allah, then it is twice as blessed because it yields a reward for reciting the Holy Quran as well as performing *dhikr*. Having stated the nature and the forms of *dhikr*, I will now describe the precautions about them.

PRECAUTIONS & PROPER TIMES FOR DHIKR



Necessary Precautions for *Dhikr*

1. The first precaution that Holy Prophet^{ṣāḥ} has stated is to never engage in *dhikr* to such an extreme that your heart becomes weary.
2. Do not engage in *dhikr* when the heart is not at peace. For example, if a person sits down to perform *dhikr* in the midst of some important work that must be done, then his attention will not remain focused in the *dhikr*. Thus, disrespect would be shown to the words of God Almighty and the person would be deemed a sinner. Thus, the first precaution regarding the performance of *dhikr* is that one should not prolong *dhikr* to the extent that his heart becomes weary, and secondly, he

should not engage in *dhikr* at such a time when his mind is distracted in some other thoughts so that, instead of earning merit, one is deemed to be a sinner. On the contrary, he should engage in *dhikr* with brevity and at such a time as he can maintain his focus on the *dhikr*.

Once, when the Holy Prophet^{sas} came home, a lady was talking to Ḥaḍrat A'ishah^{ra}. He asked her what she was saying. Ḥaḍrat A'ishah^{ra} told the Holy Prophet^{sas} that the lady was telling her how much worship she does and the manner in which she does it. Having heard this, he said that it was not a matter of virtue that she worshipped so much. Allah the Exalted likes the worship that is routinely done (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb al-Qaṣḍu fil 'Amal; Hadith 1242).⁹

Allah the Exalted does not get tired on account of lengthy worship, but a person does grow weary of excessive worship and when he gets fatigued, his worship becomes unworthy. Thus, if someone exceeds the limit, he invites distress [upon himself].

It is said regarding Ḥaḍrat Abdullah bin Umar bin Aus^{ra} that he was a strong man. He prayed all night, fasted during the day, and recited the entire Holy Quran in one day. When the Holy Prophet^{sas} found out about it, he said, 'This is not allowed. Pray for one-sixth, one-third, or—at the most—one-half of the night; and fast—at the most—on alternate days; and a complete recitation of the Holy Quran should not be done in less than three days' (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣaum, Bāb Ḥaqqil-Jismi fiṣ-Ṣaum; Hadith 1975).¹⁰

Abdullah bin Umar bin Aus^{ra} tried very hard to be allowed to do more, but the Holy Prophet^{sas} did not permit it.

Accordingly, he continued doing the maximum allowed, but in his old age he regretted that he had pledged to the Holy Prophet^{sas} that he would go on doing so all his life, albeit no longer being able to [in his old age]. Thus, going to extremes places one in a predicament. *Dhikr* is indeed a very good thing but, look, just like too much pilaf will upset the stomach, similarly, to go on increasing *dhikr* to the extent that it becomes such a burden upon the soul, will cause it to become averse to it. So, burden yourself gradually and only as much as can be tolerated.

3. The third precaution that should be exercised is that if initially one is not inclined to attend to the remembrance of Allah—still steeling one’s heart—man should keep engaging in it and firmly resolve that he will indeed complete it and hold the intention that no matter how much force Satan brings to bear on the matter, he will never give in to his bidding. If a person resolves to carry things out this way, then he can persuade his own disposition to come around.

It is said that Roy Tacon was a famous lawyer who once came to face an opposing lawyer who feared that Tacon would win the case. This lawyer employed a clever stratagem. While speaking with the magistrate, he said that it is the claim of Tacon that he can win over any magistrate no matter how clever he may be. Upon hearing this, the magistrate made up his mind that he would not accept whatever Roy Tacon would say. Thus, when the trial started, the magistrate would deny every submission that Tacon would make. Ultimately, he indeed gave a verdict in favour of the other lawyer. Thus, when

a man makes up his mind that he will absolutely not accept the influence of a certain person, then that person cannot bring him under his control. In the initial stages, therefore, at the time of doing *dhikr*, one must cultivate this very state of mind.

4. The fourth precaution is that at the time of doing *dhikr*, one should not be in an uncomfortable state. For example, if there is something jabbing you while you are sitting on the floor, or if there is some other similar type of pain, you should remove it and then engage in the remembrance of Allah.
5. Fifthly, adopt a state of mind that you will accept cheerfully whatever you are granted. Even if there is lack of concentration in the beginning, a time will come at some point when the habit of *dhikr* will become well established in you.
6. Sixthly, perform *dhikr* with humility and fear of Allah. If a state of fearfulness of Allah does not develop, adopt an appearance that manifests a state of fear of Allah, because some things that are initially adopted artificially, gradually become reality. Thus, when someone attempts to develop humility and fabricates a state of crying and weeping, it happens that at a certain time, a state of supplication evolves in him.

It is narrated that a professor was very kind-hearted, but later became very hard-hearted. The cause of this was that one day, due to his mild nature, he suffered some difficulty and so he resolved from that point on that he would be firm. So he adopted a firm demeanour, even though he still had the same kindness at heart. However, he appeared to be harsh and stern.

Gradually, what transpired is that he became hard-hearted. Although that professor inclined himself towards evil, if you act like this to move towards virtue, then you will see that, step by step, the fear of God will actually begin to develop in you such that if one day the true fear of God develops in you even for a second, then the second day it will last a bit longer and if you try to attain this you will certainly succeed.

Proper Times for *Dhikr*

Now that it has been proven that engaging in *dhikr* is very important as I have said, God Almighty says:

* *Sūrah an-Nisā*, 4:104 — **فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ**

So it is important to know at what times one should engage in the remembrance of Allah. Of course it is clear that one should be occupied in the doing of *dhikr* at all times. Thus, Ḥaḍrat ‘Aishah Siddiqah^{ra} says about the Holy Prophet^{sas}:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَحْيَانِهِ. The Holy Prophet used to be occupied in the remembrance of God Almighty at all times (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitābud-Da‘wāt, Bāb mā jā’ anna Da‘watal-Muslimi Mustajābatun; Hadith 3384).

* Remember Allah while standing, and sitting, and *lying* on your sides.
[Publisher]

However, there are some specific times mentioned by God Almighty in the Holy Quran and those are as follows:

* *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, 33:42-43 — اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ۝ وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ۝

That is to say, remember Allah at the time of بكرة [bukra] and اصيل [aṣīl]. Both these times are of a very high rank. In Arabic بكرة [bukra] describes the period from the first appearance of light in the sky until the sun rises. According to this, therefore, the meaning would be to engage in *dhikr* from the morning obligatory Prayer till the rise of the sun. So one time for the remembrance of Allah is this and the second time is that of اصيل [aṣīl]. We learn from the lexicon that اصيل [aṣīl] describes the time from the *Aṣr* obligatory Prayer till the time of the setting of the sun. The third, fourth, and fifth times are mentioned in this verse:

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ آنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْهَقُ

Sūrah Tā Hā, 20:131—

Meaning, bear patiently what these people say, and glorify and praise your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting (both these times have been mentioned already); and in the hours of the night and at both sides of these, so that your wishes may be fulfilled. In this verse, apart from the two times previously mentioned, the time after the rising of the sun and the early part of the

* Remember Allah with much remembrance; And glorify Him morning and evening. [Publisher]

night and its latter part are also mentioned as being beneficial for *dhikr*.

The sixth time is the time after every obligatory Prayer. The Holy Prophet^{sas} always used to continue this *dhikr* so much so that it was as if it had become his practice [*Sunnah*]. Ibn Abbas^{ra} relates that, ‘When we used to be at some distance we would learn that the *Ṣalāt* had ended upon hearing the *dhikr*: اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ [Allahumma antas-salāmo wa minkas-salāmo, tabārakta yā Dhal-Jalāli wal-Ikrām].’ Translation: ‘O our Allah! You are the [Embodiment of] Peace, and true peace comes from You. Blessed are You, O Lord of Majesty and Bounty! [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitābul-Masajid wa mawadhi‘us-Ṣalāta, Bāb Istihbabu-dhikri ba‘das Ṣalāt Hadith 591].

So this is one *dhikr* to be recited after the completion of the *Ṣalāt*; that is to say, one should recite: اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَمِنْكَ السَّلَامُ تَبَارَكْتَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ.

The second is that one should recite thirty-three times each *سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ* [*Subḥān-Allāh*, i.e. ‘Holy is Allah’], *الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ* [*alḥamdulil-lāh*, i.e. ‘All praise belongs to Allah’], and thirty-four times *اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ* [*Allāho Akbar*, i.e. ‘Allah is the Greatest’] (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitābud-Da‘wāt, Bāb mā jā’ fit-Tasbīḥi wat-Takbīri wat-Taḥmīdi ‘Indal-Manām; Hadith 3412).¹¹

There are many methods narrated for performing these remembrances of Allah, but the most authentic way is indeed that the first two sentences should each be said separately thirty-three times and the third should be said thirty-four times.¹² The time after *Ṣalāt* is a most highly esteemed period for *dhikr* and *dhikr* must be done at that time. Some people may think upon seeing me and Ḥaḍrat Maulawī [Noor-ud-Deen] Ṣaḥīb, Khalifatul-Masīḥ I,

and the Promised Messiah^{as} that perhaps we do not do *dhikr* after *Ṣalāt*. They should know that the Promised Messiah^{as} and Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I also used to engage in *dhikr*, and I do it too. But yes, it was not done in a loud voice by them, nor do I do it out loud. I say it in my heart. Thus, *dhikr* must be performed after *Ṣalāt*.

There are also other precautions relating to *dhikr* and those are that apart from those occasions that are proven from the Hadith, *dhikr* should not be done loudly in gatherings. This can give rise to pretence on some occasions, and in some situations causes difficulty for other people engaged in the remembrance of Allah or the performance of *Ṣalāt*.

Then, it should also be remembered that whatever new activity is undertaken, it initially proves to be a heavy burden and the heart shrinks from its performance and this is the reason why some people say that their heart is not inclined to the performance of *dhikr*. But can one become perfectly proficient in a new skill in one day? Certainly not! On the contrary, it happens gradually and it takes some time for this to become the case. Therefore, if someone's heart is not inclined to it in the beginning and he finds it to be a sort of burden, he should not become troubled. The heart will accept it gradually but the condition is that *dhikr* must be maintained ongoing.

Then, some people say that they do come to relish *dhikr* but they should not seek pleasure for their self in the performance of *dhikr*, and their intent in the performance of *dhikr* must not be to derive pleasure from it, but rather they should do it considering it an act of worship, because pleasure is not the real issue. Worship

is the true objective, and worship is accepted only when it is performed with that understanding.

Then, some people say that with regard to engaging in the remembrance of Allah, some days they feel costive and on other days they feel much inclined to doing it. Such people should not be troubled. This inhibition happens to every kind of people. Once a Companion came to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and said, ‘Ḥuḍūr, I am a hypocrite.’

The Holy Prophet responded, ‘No, you are indeed a Muslim.’

The Companion submitted, ‘When I come in your presence, I behold Heaven and Hell before my very eyes, but when I go home, that condition dissipates.’

The Holy Prophet said, ‘If you remain in that same condition all the time, you will die’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitābut-Taubah, Bāb Fadli Dawāmidh-Dhikri wal-Fikri fil Umūril-Ākhirati wal-Murāqabati wa Jawāzi Tarki Dhālīka fī Ba‘dil-Auqāti wal-Ishtighāli bid-Dunyā; Hadith 2750).¹³

The fact of the matter is that if one remains at all times in the same condition, then the capacity to advance and make progress would be impaired. It is for this reason that, at times, God Almighty lowers a person from his true status to make him advance beyond his previous station by leaping ahead; and similarly, He sometimes raises him to a higher station.

One particular thing should, however, be remembered regarding costiveness, and that is that one kind of it is good and another kind is bad. The difference between the two can be recognized by setting a standard of deriving pleasure. For example, there is a stage one and above it are stages two, three, four, and five. Now, if some person is at stage two, and diffidence takes him to stage

one, then it should be understood that it is a rewarding kind of costiveness. However, if he is at stage three and experiences costiveness, then it should be ascertained whether it has taken him to stage two, one, or absolute zero. If he is at stage two, it should be deemed to be the one (costiveness) that will bring progress; but, if it is at stage one or zero, then it is a dangerous level and a special struggle and effort should be employed toward it.

PRAYER—THE MOST IMPORTANT FORM OF DHIKR



Ṣalāt as Dhikr

Now I will inform you about *Ṣalāt*. This is the most essential and important form of *dhikr*, because in it man sometimes engages in *dhikr* while standing [*qiyām*], and sometimes while in a state of *rukūʿ* [bowing down] and sometimes while prostrating in *sajdah* [prostration], and sometimes while sitting [*qaʿdah*]. Then, one also recites the Holy Quran in *Ṣalāt* and then, apart from this, one also engages in repeating other sentences in the remembrance of Allah. Thus, *Ṣalāt* is a compendium of all forms of *dhikr*. I had refrained from mentioning these in the beginning because it requires a great deal of detail but I mention them now.

The Philosophy of Sunnah

There are three parts of *Ṣalāt*: (1) *Farḍ* [obligatory Prayers], (2) *Sunnah* [the Holy Prophet's practice], and (3) *Nafl* [supererogatory Prayers]. All people offer *Farḍ* and *Sunnah*. What remain are

Nawāfil [pl. of *Nafl*—supererogatory Prayers]. Most show indulgence in offering them. What must be remembered concerning the *Sunnan* [plural of *Sunnah*] is that they have been prescribed so that whatever shortcomings may have been left in the offering of the *Fard* may thereby be made up because Allah the Exalted does not accept an imperfect *Ṣalāt*, but rather accepts only the *Ṣalāt* that is perfect. Thus, if there are deficiencies, then the *Sunnan* may make up for them.

For example, if someone offered *Ṣalāt* but he failed to maintain his attention in one of the *rak'āt* [units of Prayer] and various and sundry types of whisperings kept on developing so that that *rak'āt* was not accepted, the *Sunnah* will replace them so that the *Ṣalāt* may be completed. As the Holy Prophet^{sas} was very aware of the state of man's heart and understood these things, it was for this reason that he attached the *Sunnah* with the obligatory Prayers from himself so that they may compensate for the deficiencies in the offering of the obligatory Prayers. And this was a very great favour of the Holy Prophet^{sas} on his Ummah.

The Philosophy of *Nawāfil*

Then there are *Nawāfil*. These are means of attaining nearness to God Almighty. In other words, they take a person beyond just *Nijāt* [deliverance from sin] and become the means for attaining loftier stations. Thus, anyone desiring nearness of Allah should give special attention to *Nawāfil*. Then *Nawāfil* are also of many types. Some are offered during the day; others during the night.

Those performed at night are called *Tabajjud* and these are more important and so lofty that God Almighty has expressed their excellence in the Holy Quran in the following manner:

Sūrah al-Muzzammil, 73:7—**إِنَّ تَابِعَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً**

Meaning that getting up at night is a great means to set right the human self. Thus, if a person observes after experimenting, he would know that how, in this way, a tremendously broad improvement of the self takes place and a special energy and strength is attained.

The companions of the Holy Prophet^{sas} were very regular about them. And the Holy Prophet^{sas} was so mindful of these *Nawāfil* that despite the fact that these were voluntary, he used to walk around at night to see who was offering them and who was not.

Once, in the gathering of the Holy Prophet^{sas} mention was made of Ḥaḍrat Abdullah bin Umar^{ra} that he was very good in that he possesses this beauty and this quality. Upon hearing this, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘Yes, he is very good, provided that he offers *Tabajjud* [supererogatory nightly Prayers]’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābut-Tahajjud, Bābu Fadli Qiyāmil-Lail; Hadith 1122).¹⁴

Since Abdullah bin Umar^{ra} was a young man and was slack in offering *Tabajjud* Prayers, the Holy Prophet^{sas} drew his attention to it in this way.

Then the Holy Prophet^{sas} has said that, may Allah have mercy on the husband and the wife who, if the husband wakes up at night, should get up and offer *Tabajjud* and awaken the wife so that she should also get up and offer the *Tabajjud*. And if she does

not wake up, sprinkles water on her face to awaken her. And similarly if it is the wife who awakens, let her do the same; that is, offer *Tahajjud* and awaken her husband and if he does not wake up she sprinkles some water on his face (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bābut-Taḥrīd ‘Alā Qiyāmil-Lail; Hadith 1230).¹⁵

Look, how on the one hand the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} has declared it to be highly essential for the wife to respect her husband, and yet he has permitted her to even sprinkle some water, if necessary, to awaken him for *Tahajjud*. So, that is how important the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} deemed *Tahajjud* to be! This is all from the Holy Prophet^{ṣas}.

Then the Holy Quran tells us that getting up [for *Nawāfil*] at night reforms the self. This is indeed the reason why the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} used to say to the Companions^{ra} that they must perform *Tahajjud*, even if it is of only two *rak‘āt* [units of Prayer]. Then it is also proven from the Hadith that God Almighty comes very close in the latter part of the night and accepts prayers in abundance. Offering *Tahajjud*, therefore, is very important and very beneficial.

THIRTEEN METHODS OF WAKING UP FOR TAHAJJUD



Now, the question is that *Tahajjud* should indeed be offered but how should one get up at night? Let me mention one of the less important ways first. Although there is a detriment in it, it could be beneficial as well. And that is that these days one can get alarm clocks and one can wake up using these. However, my experience is that this is not a very beneficial method. The reason is that because a person begins to rely upon it, that it will wake me up at the right time, so he does not pay attention and thought to the need to get up at night for the doing of a virtuous deed that should have been there. If he had had the idea in mind of getting up at night and had he fallen asleep with that thought in mind, then it would have been as if he had spent the entire night in worship.

Apart from this, it also happens sometimes that if one does not feel like getting up, then he switches the alarm off even while it is ringing. But if the person goes to sleep with the intention and resolve, then he will certainly get up at the right time. Then

the people who wake up using the alarm clock complain that they feel sleepy during Prayers. The reason for this is also the very same that they get up by the alarm clock and not due to their own will. So for this reason this method is not of much benefit. But yes, in the initial stages or at the time of some special need, it can be of benefit.

In my view there are thirteen methods that can help in getting up at night. If anyone acts upon them, then I believe that, by the grace of Allah the Exalted, he will certainly encounter success. There are difficulties in the beginning of every endeavour, but in the end these methods will certainly lead to success. All these things that I will say have been extracted from the Quran and Hadith alone and are not from me myself. Nevertheless, this is the special grace of God Almighty upon me that these points, which remained hidden from others, have been manifested upon me. If time had not been limited I would have also mentioned the verses of the Holy Quran and the [specific] hadith from which I have extracted these methods, but right now I will simply state the results alone.

1. **THE FIRST OF THESE METHODS** is that Allah the Exalted has embedded this rule in nature that a phenomenon that arises at a particular time, when that same time reappears, that phenomenon again comes into a state of excitement. Its examples can be found in abundance. For example, the illness that a person may have suffered from during his childhood, that same illness returns in his old age when the condition of the person again reverts to that same childlike condition. The same phenomenon is found among birds and trees. Based on

this rule, one can get help in getting up at night in the following way. Perform *dhikr* for a while after offering the ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers [night Prayer before going to bed]. The benefit of this will be that the amount of time spent by one doing *dhikr* his eyes will open that much time before morning.

2. **THE SECOND METHOD** is that one should not talk to anybody after having performed the ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers.¹⁶ The Holy Prophet^{sas} has also prohibited speaking after the offering of ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers. Although it is also established that at some times he did continue talking, as a general rule he had forbidden it. The reason for this is that if you start talking after the ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers, you will stay awake longer and, thus, will get up later in the morning. And secondly, if such talk is not about faith or religion, then your attention will be diverted away from faith on account of them. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sas} said that one should go right to sleep after offering ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers without talking to anyone so that you should go to sleep while your thoughts hover on matters of faith and you get up early in the morning. It is not forbidden to carry out office work or other important assignments after ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers, but it is necessary that one should engage in the remembrance of Allah before going to sleep. So this is the second method.
3. **THE THIRD METHOD** is that when one comes home after offering the ‘*Ishā*’ Prayers and is about to go to sleep then regardless of whether one’s *wuḍū* [ablution for Prayer] is intact or not, one should still perform ablution afresh before going to bed. This affects the heart and creates a special kind

of freshness. And when someone goes to sleep in that state of freshness after having performed the ablution, he will also get up in the same state of freshness. This is a common observation that a person who goes to sleep crying wakes up screaming, and if he goes to sleep smiling then he will also get up with a cheerful countenance. Similarly, a person who goes to sleep fresh having done ablution will also wake up fresh. And in this way he will be helped in waking up.

4. **THE FOURTH METHOD** is to recite some *dhikr* before going to sleep; the result of this will be that you will wake up again for *dhikr* during the night. This is indeed the reason why the Holy Prophet^{sas} also used to perform the following *dhikr* before going to sleep: First he would recite *Āyatul-Kursī*.¹⁷ Then he would recite the last three chapters of the Holy Quran¹⁸ and, having done this, he would gently blow upon his hands and lightly pass them over his entire body. He would do this three times. Then he would turn his face to his right and say:

اللَّهُمَّ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِي إِلَيْكَ وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَيْكَ وَأَلْجَأْتُ ظَهْرِي إِلَيْكَ رَغْبَةً وَرَهْبَةً إِلَيْكَ لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مُنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ أَمَنْتُ بِكِتَابِكَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْتَ وَبِنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ.
 [Allahumma aslamto waj hi ilaika wa fawwadtu amri ilaik raghbatan wa rahbatan ilaik. La malja'a wa la manja'a minka illa ilaik. Allahumma amanto bikitabikalladhi anzalta wa nabiyikalladhi arsalta—'O our Allah, I put myself in Your protection, and turn my face towards You and assign all my affairs to You, with complete inclination and fear of You. There is no refuge or protection from You except towards Yourself. I believe in Your Book which You

have revealed, and Your Prophet whom You have sent’] (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitābud-Da‘wāt, Bābu ad-Du‘āu ‘indan-Naum; Hadith 3574).

All believers should do likewise and then, when lying down in bed, recite this *dhikr* in their heart: **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ** *Subḥān-Allāhi wa bi-ḥamdihī*, *Subḥān-Allahil-Azīm*—‘Holy is Allah and worthy of all Praise; Holy is Allah, the Great’, or continue with some other *dhikr* until one falls asleep because the condition in which a person goes to sleep generally stays with him all night. Thus, the person who goes to sleep while performing *tasbīḥ* [glorifying Allah] and *tahmīd* [praising Allah] will be as if he had been occupied in doing that very act the entire night.

Look, if women or children go to sleep suffering in some grief or pain, then—even while they are asleep, turning over onto their sides—they utter painful and sorrowful sounds, because the effect of the sorrow or grief that they were involved in at the time of going to sleep, stays with them. But if someone goes to sleep reciting *tasbīḥ* he will indeed be heard reciting *tasbīḥ* when he will turn on his side. This is indeed the reason why God Almighty says in the Holy Quran that the believers are those who:

تَتَجَاوَى جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ—

Sūrah as-Sajdah, 32:17

Meaning that their sides keep away from their beds, and they call on their Lord in fear and hope, and spend out of what We have bestowed on them.

From all appearances this may not seem to be true because the Holy Prophet^{sas} would also go to sleep as did all the other believers as well. But the reality is that because they go to sleep while performing *tasbīḥ*, their sleep is not sleep; it is, in fact, a form of *tasbīḥ*. They appear to be sleeping, but in reality they are not asleep. Their sides keep away from their beds; and they are busy in the remembrance of God.

5. **THE FIFTH METHOD** is that at the time of going to sleep resolve firmly that one will certainly get up for *Tahajjud*. God Almighty has placed this ability in man that when he gives his self some command forcefully, it obeys him. And this is one of those things that all wise people have been accepting. So at the time of going to sleep make a resolve firmly that you will definitely get up for *Tahajjud*. By doing this, although you will have gone to sleep, your soul will stay awake, for it has been given a command to awaken at such and such a time and exactly at that time you will awaken on your own.

6. **THE SIXTH METHOD** is something I only permit to be employed by a person who sees that his faith is really strong and it is that instead of performing *Vitr* [three *rak'āt* prescribed as essential] after *'Ishā'*, leave *Vitr* for *Tahajjud* time. In general, people are strict in performing the obligatory worship, but show slackness in the voluntary.* Thus, when a *Wājib* [essential] is combined with the *Nawāfil*, the soul of the person will

* *Vitr* are *Wājib*—an essential act of worship, not *Fard* but more important than the voluntary. [Publisher]

not rest until it has been observed. Its result will be that the self will not show indolence. However, if the *Vitr* have already been offered, and even if one awakens for *Tahajjud*, one's self says that well, I have offered the *Vitr* already and if the *Nawāfil* remain unfulfilled, let them remain so. Nevertheless, when the mindset will be that the *Vitr* must also be offered, he will definitely get up, and when he wakes up, then he will offer the *Nafil* as well, but as I have said before, the condition for this is that the person's faith be very strong. When faith is strong, he will certainly get up to offer the *Vitr*; otherwise, the person will deprive himself from the offering of *Vitr* as well.

7. **THE SEVENTH METHOD** is also only for those who are far advanced in spirituality, and that is, they should start offering *Nawāfil* after 'Ishā' Prayer and continue doing so for so long that they begin to fall asleep in the Prayer itself and sleep overpowers them so much that it becomes unbearable. That is when they should go to sleep. Even though this will take a lot more time, they will get up in the morning. This is a spiritual exercise.
8. **THE EIGHTH METHOD** is the one that has been practiced by many of our sufis. I have not felt the need for it, but it is beneficial. This method is that in the days when one is overpowered by sleep and one does not awaken on time, then soft bedding should be removed.
9. **THE NINTH METHOD** involves taking dinner several hours before going to bed. In other words, eat before *Maghrib* Prayer

[evening Prayer, immediately after sunset] or immediately after it. It happens sometimes that while the spirit is willing and alert, the body makes it lazy. The body acts like a yoke that is clinging to the spirit and when the yoke becomes heavy, it suppresses the spirit. For this reason the stomach should not be full at the time of going to sleep, because it affects the heart greatly and it makes a person lazy.

10. **THE TENTH METHOD** is that when a man goes to sleep at night, he should not be in the post-sex state of uncleanness or have some filth attached to him. The fact is that the angels have a strong affinity with cleanliness and they do not come close to a man who is unclean; instead, they distance themselves from him. This is why when something with a strong odour was brought to the Holy Prophet^{sas} to eat, he told his companions that they could eat it, but he would not. The Companions said that they, too, would not eat it. He explained to them that they could eat it but the angels come to converse with him, which was why he would not eat it since they have a strong dislike for such things.

In short, the angels abhor filth. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I^{ra} used to narrate that once he went to bed without washing his hands after eating. He saw in a vision that his older brother came and wanted to give him the Holy Quran, but when he was about to touch it, his brother forbade him from doing so as his hands were not clean. So cleanliness of the body has a great effect upon the heart. One who goes to sleep clean, will have the angels come to wake him up, but should there be

any shortcoming in the state of cleanliness, they do not come close. This method has to do with the cleanliness of the body.

11. **THE ELEVENTH METHOD** is that the bedding should be clean. Many people do not take the proper care regarding this matter, but it must be remembered that the purity of the bedding has a very special relationship with spirituality—so special care must be exercised in this regard.

12. **THE TWELFTH METHOD** is such that if ordinary people act on it they may suffer harm from it. Yes, it is not harmful for special people and it is that husband and wife should not sleep in the same bed. The Holy Prophet^{sas} used to do so, but his excellence is lofty and paramount. This could have no effect upon him, but other people need to exercise caution. The fact is that the degree to which one is overcome by carnal passions, is the very degree to which spirituality is shut down. This is the very reason why the Islamic Shariah says to eat and drink but not to exceed the limits. Why not exceed the limits? Because when carnal passions grow excessively they harm spirituality. Thus, for those people who maintain their selves under control, should they sleep together there would be no harm, but ordinary people should refrain from doing this. And those people who do not have full and complete control over their thoughts should not sleep together. If they do, they will continue to have their carnal passions aroused and sometimes it even happens that they begin to have sex or engage in love-making as they sleep. That has a bad effect on spirituality and causes laziness in waking up.

13. **THE THIRTEENTH METHOD** has such excellence that not only does it greatly assist and help in getting up for *Tahajjud*, but by acting upon it, man is also saved from many sins and evils. And that is, before going to sleep, we should observe whether there is any malice or rancour in our hearts against anyone. And if there is, we should banish it from our heart.

The result of this will be that the purification of the soul achieved in this way will grant you the ability to get up for *Tahajjud*. Even though these kinds of thoughts may again overpower the person, they must be expelled from the heart before going to sleep at night and the heart must be cleared completely. What harm is there in doing this? If one considers that there is some worldly benefit in these thoughts, then he should tell his heart to remember them again during the day. There is no fighting to do while sleeping at night for which they should be kept in the heart.

Firstly, what will happen is that once a thought is uprooted from the heart, it will not even come again. Secondly, one is safeguarded from the damage that a person could suffer from harbouring such thoughts. It is a proven fact that the longer something stays with another, the greater is the effect that it leaves. For example, if you wipe something with a wet sponge quickly, it will become moistened just a little, but if you leave the wet sponge upon it for quite some time, it will become fully soaked. Similarly, the thoughts that linger with a person for a long time will become deeply absorbed in his heart, and the thoughts that one keeps in his heart while sleeping, his spirit will continue to repeat them throughout the night.

Such thoughts cannot do as much harm during the day as

they can at night because the mind is absorbed in other activities and one forgets, but during the night they visit again and again. Thus, if there is any bad thought at the time of going to sleep, it should be expelled so that it does not become embedded in the heart; for, if it becomes embedded, then it will be very difficult for it to go away. And then, what if one were to pass away during the night? One would lose the opportunity to seek repentance for that evil thought. So one should make one's self fearful in this way. And once the thought is expelled, one is granted deliverance from it. In short, at the time of going to sleep, evil thoughts must not be permitted to stay in one's self. When one goes to sleep with a heart purified and cleansed, then he will certainly be granted the ability to wake up at the time of *Tahajjud*.

TWENTY-TWO METHODS OF CONCENTRATION IN PRAYERS



I will now describe how to maintain concentration in *Ṣalāt*—a lot of people always ask about this and today I shall relate its methods. Some of them will be such that you do employ, but don't really make use of them, and those who do make use of them must surely be benefiting from them.

The fact of the matter is that the Shariah has already established some rules in *Ṣalāt* itself in order to maintain concentration, but due to unawareness, most people derive no benefit from them. Apart from these, I will also describe such ways that people are generally not aware of and are not practicing them, although by making use of them, their attention can be maintained in *Ṣalāt*.

Before I start to mention the first type of techniques, I wish to state this much that God Almighty has placed in man a capacity that when he is making use of something, and simultaneously he continues to imagine its benefits and believes in it, then he achieves much greater benefit.

[Eugen] Sandow was a champion bodybuilder in Europe. He writes that you should exercise for health and vigour but at the same time as you do it, you should also be thinking that your arms are becoming stronger and muscles are becoming hardened. It is indeed true that the arms get stronger with exercise, but when this is done thinking it to be an exercise and what effect it is having on the body, then the body becomes even more ready to accept this impact upon it. And if this is not kept in mind, then much of the impact is lost and the benefit is relatively reduced to a great extent.

The Islamic Shariah has also established some rules for maintaining concentration:

1. **THE FIRST METHOD** is the performance of *wuḍū* [ablution for Prayer] which everyone who is to offer *Ṣalāt* must carry out. The wisdom in this is that Allah the Exalted has created certain means for communicating thoughts and feelings to others. One of them is the nervous system. Through them the thoughts and feelings of man effect other things and the nervous system serves as a path. This is indeed why the Holy Prophet^{sas} used to recite the *Āyatul-Kursī* and then blow upon his body. Was this just a frivolous act? Certainly not!

On the contrary, the truth is that the effect of thoughts is transferred using the nerves, the voice, and the breath. Thus, the Holy Prophet^{sas} would combine all three of these ways. He would recite *Āyatul-Kursī*, then blow upon his hands, and then pass his hands all over his body. In short, the voice, the nerves, the sight, and the breath etc. are all ways for the thoughts to disperse; that is why the practice of دم کرنا — insufflation [blowing on someone after reciting some words of prayer etc.] by

righteous Muslims is proven and, in fact, it is reported from the Holy Prophet^{sas} as well. Thus, since thoughts emanate through the nerves and scatter, in order to keep them under control, the Holy Prophet^{sas} has instructed us to perform ablution. And because the main points of their emanating are the arms, feet, and mouth; and it has been experienced that when water is poured over them, the stream of thoughts—which had hitherto been emanating from them—comes to a halt and thoughts cease to emerge. This is a proven phenomenon, and this is also one of the objectives for the doing of ablution.

There are many other points of wisdom in performing ablution, but this is also one of them that in this way the stream of thoughts comes to a halt and when this stream stops, a tranquillity is attained and when tranquillity is achieved, then attention can remain established. Thus, ablution is a high-ranking means for maintaining concentration. When you begin to do ablution you should also be thinking that you are doing this to stop scattered thoughts. When you do this, then you will achieve tranquillity in your *Ṣalāt* and thoughts will not be able to dissipate your attention.

2. **THE SECOND METHOD** of achieving concentration is the one that the Islamic Shariah has prescribed—that *Ṣalāt* be offered at the mosque. It is a human characteristic that when one sees something, he conceives a thought about something else. For example, a person meets person X and also asks him about his son, person Y. Even though person Y is not in front of him, upon seeing person X, he remembers person Y as well. Thus, the design of the human brain is such that when something

comes before it, then it also recalls those other things that are associated with it. Thus, if a man offers his *Ṣalāt* at a place which has no special connection with *Ṣalāt*, then he will not recall anything in particular. However, when he offers his *Ṣalāt* at such a place where *Ṣalāt* is offered morning and evening, he will certainly think that he is standing in the house of that God for whose worship that place had been built and it was incumbent upon him that he should follow and obey Him with full sincerity of heart.

This is indeed the reason why the Holy Prophet^ṣ has instructed that Muslims should reserve a specific place for Prayer in their homes and they should not do anything else there except offering Prayers so that while they are praying there, they should think that that is the place for the worship of God Almighty (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābīh*, Kitābus-Ṣalāt, Bābul-Masājid wa Mawad'iṣ-Ṣalāt; Hadith 717).¹⁹

It is possible that some of you may have never had this thought pass through your mind even when you went to the mosque, but now that the wisdom behind going to offer Prayers in the mosque has become known to you and with this thought when you go to the mosque to offer your Prayers, your thoughts will immediately stop and you will attain tranquillity.

3. **THE THIRD METHOD** is the instruction to face towards the *Qiblah* [direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah] also helps in maintaining concentration. The holy city of Makkah holds many distinctions. By the command of God, a man had abandoned his wife and child in this place with no provisions, no population, and no protection. And because he had done this for

the sake of God, God Almighty caused his progeny to grow so much that it is innumerable like the stars in the sky. Thereafter, many a Prophet were born in his progeny and finally, that man who came as a Prophet to the whole of mankind was from his progeny as well.

Thus, when someone stands up to pray turning his face towards Makkah, and he understands the wisdom behind the injunction to face in this direction to offer the *Ṣalāt*, the incident regarding Ḥaḍrat Ishmael^{as} immediately impacts him. There develops in his mind attention to the fact that God, for whose worship he is now standing, is the Lord of Great Honour and Immense Power. As this realization dawns, his scattered thoughts are removed and go down under the effect of the grandeur and glory of God Almighty.

4. **THE FOURTH METHOD** the Holy Prophet^{sas} has enjoined the calling of the *Adhān* [Call to Prayer]. When it is proclaimed loudly, *Allāho Akbar, Allāho Akbar* [‘Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest’], then although *Ṣalāt* does not start immediately at that time, those who are to offer *Ṣalāt* are informed thereby that they should come to the mosque to offer the *Ṣalāt*, thoroughly reflecting and realizing that they are presenting themselves before the Glorious God of Great Honour. Thus, when anyone hears the *Adhān*, the grandeur and eminence of God Almighty will have a special effect upon him and, as a result of this, his attention will remain focused upon his *Ṣalāt*. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said that the *Adhān* is called to put Satan to flight. It is narrated in a hadith that when the *Adhān* is called, Satan runs far away.

Thus, when someone keeps in view that the purpose of the theme related in the *Adhān* is to draw the attention of everyone to the grandeur and glory of Allah the Exalted, he will come to remember its underlying wisdom as well. The people who have heard this wisdom today will recall this aspect when they hear the *Adhān*, and when remembered, it will have its effect as well. This is the rule that when one thought arises, then other thoughts are removed. Thus, when thoughts of the greatness and glory of God Almighty develop, other thoughts will vanish and concentration will be achieved.

5. **THE FIFTH METHOD** is *Iqāmat* [an abridged version of the *Adhān* called out just before beginning the congregational *Ṣalāt*]. This also draws attention to the greatness and majesty of God and the wisdom mentioned concerning *Adhān* is indeed found in it as well. The Holy Prophet^{ṣas} has also said about the *Iqāmat* that Satan runs away at its sound (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb Faḍlil-Adhān wa Harab-ish-Shaiṭān ‘inda Samā’ihī; Hadith 388).²⁰

The meaning of this is indeed that evil whisperings are removed by it and attention towards God Almighty develops.

6. **THE SIXTH METHOD** is the formation of lines [in congregational Prayer]. Order in physical formation fosters order in thoughts as well, and safeguards them against scattering. And when the rows are physically formed, the inner zeal is also threaded into a string. And what an awe-inspiring spectacle it

is when all the people are silently and quietly standing before the King of kings! The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said, ‘Straighten your rows; otherwise, your hearts will become crooked’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb Taswiyatiṣ-Ṣufūfi wa Iqāmatihā wa Faḍlil-Awwali fal-Awwali minhā wal-Izdiḥāmi ‘Alaṣ-Ṣaffil-Awwali wal-Musābaqati ilaihā wat-Taqdīmi Aulal-Faḍli wa Taqrībihim min-al-Imām; Hadith 432).²¹

What is the impact of a straight row? The same—that since the seen has an impact upon the unseen; for that reason, if there is no order externally, then internal regularity is also affected.

7. **THE SEVENTH METHOD** is the *Niyyat* [Declaration of Intention for Prayer], because when man tells his soul that he is about to stand up for a task, then his attention focuses upon it. And *Niyyat* does not mean that you say that behind that Imam, so many *rak‘āt* of *Ṣalāt*, facing the Holy Ka‘bah, etc., but rather one should make the intention in his own mind that he is going to offer the *Ṣalāt*.

It is said about a certain man that he had developed an insane passion for offering the *Niyyat*. And if he was standing in a row other than the one immediately behind the imam and would say his *Niyyat* that, ‘Behind this imam’, the thought would come to him that he was not standing behind the imam and that there was some other person in front of him. He would, therefore, move forward and say, ‘Behind this imam’. But he would again entertain the doubt that even then he was not behind the imam, so he would go and stand right behind the imam and, touching the imam, he would say, ‘Behind this

imam.’ The people who suffer from such irrational doubts also commit a mistake and its result is very destructive, turning the *Niyyat* into an affliction.

The *Niyyat* is actually related to the heart, but as they stand up, some people do not have the slightest idea as to what they are about to do. Thus, when you are about to offer *Ṣalāt*, bring *Ṣalāt* to mind also and conceptualize what you are about to do. When you will come to understand this, you will begin to develop reverence from that very moment within you, and when reverence comes into being, then concentration can also be maintained.

8. **THE EIGHTH METHOD** is congregational *Ṣalāt* because when offering *Ṣalāt* in this way, the words drawing your attention to the grandeur of God Almighty are made to fall upon your ears from the imam. And the person who may be heedless and falls into other thoughts is nudged. For example, when *Allāho Akbar* is called out, he is, as if, being alerted that—‘Beware! Stand with full attention, for the One in whose presence you are about to stand is Immensely Great.’

Then, when some time has been spent in the standing posture, and all manner of thoughts begin to arise within one’s heart, the imam again says in a loud voice, *Allāho Akbar*, that ‘Allah is indeed the Greatest.’ Again, after a while, when heedlessness rears its head, the sound of *سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ* [*Sami-‘Allāho li-man Hamidah*—‘God listens to him who praises Him’]—is made to fall upon the ears reminding the person that Allah the Exalted hears and accepts the sayings of the person who praises Him. And in this way his attention is drawn that if he

wants to gain some benefit, then he should engage in the praising of Allah the Exalted; otherwise, he will simply be wasting time.

In short, the imam continuously goes on reminding and alerting those offering their *Ṣalāt* behind him. This is indeed the reason why the imam has a rank above that of the followers because he goes on drawing their attention again and again that they are standing in the presence of the Greatest of all Kings—keep standing alert.

9. **THE NINTH METHOD** of maintaining attention is that Islam has not adopted a single posture for *Ṣalāt*, but has kept it in different configurations. If someone becomes neglectful or gets absorbed in other thoughts while offering his *Ṣalāt*, his going into *rukūʿ* [bowing] and *sajdah* [prostration] draws his attention towards the *Ṣalāt* even if someone moves to these postures out of habit. However, movement is such a thing that it alerts a neglectful person. Worship in other religions does not have this characteristic; this excellence is possessed by Islam alone.

10. **THE TENTH METHOD**—Performance of the *Sunnah* before and after obligatory Prayers is the tenth method.

It is a law of nature that when something is about to happen, some of its effect manifests beforehand, and some after it appears. For example, when the sun is about to rise—albeit not yet risen—the light still begins to diffuse. Similarly, even after it sets, the light lingers on for some time. An activity that is in accord with one's wishes, from which pleasure is derived,

or not doing which may lead to loss, dominates [the mind over] another task that has less impact in comparison.

For example, if someone is engaged in a task in which he does not see any significant benefit, and he has something to do afterwards from which he is hopeful of substantial benefits, or there is a danger of some harm if it is not carried out, or that task is in accordance with his desires, then, thoughts about the other task will be dominating the matter he is engaged in and his attention will remain occupied with it. Take, for example, a worker in an office. If he has to carry out a personal task after office hours, he will start thinking about it an hour or two before he leaves his office. And if an important task in the office business has triggered to attract his attention, then—even after finishing official duty—his attention will remain focused on it during the way [home] and for some time even at home. Only after some time will he attend to the matters he is busy with currently.

It is due to this very wisdom that the Holy Prophet^{sas} has prescribed *Sunnahs* before and after the *Fard* [Obligatory] Prayers so that if the mind is occupied in any thoughts before starting the *Ṣalāt* they should not impact the *Fard* negatively and make them defective. Instead, burying them in the offering of *Sunnah*, a man should set his mind to rest content and be able to pay full attention to the *Fards*. Similarly, the *Sunnah* have also been appointed after the *Fard* Prayers, so that if there are other important chores to be done after the *Ṣalāt*, its thoughts should not find their way into the heart of the person and spoil his *Ṣalāt* before he completes the offering of the *Fard*. Thus, the person can attend to his *Ṣalāt* peacefully,

because—as I have already stated—stray thoughts generally arise and disturb one when the task at hand is about to be completed and he is intending to start another. When a person thinks that he is not yet done—that the *Sunnahs* are yet to be offered—his thoughts will remain suppressed. And this is one great point of wisdom from among the many, that underlie the enjoining of the *Sunnahs*.

So, the Holy Prophet^{sas} has designated the *Sunnah* in accordance with the different timings. Since the time of *Zuhr* Prayer [early afternoon] is a time of great involvement in other tasks, he has therefore appointed four or two *Sunnah* before, and two or four *Sunnah* after. It is as if he has appointed two sentries to safeguard the *Farḍ*, so that they stop the thoughts that may infiltrate them.

There are no *Sunnah* before *ʿAṣr* [late afternoon Prayer] but there are *Nawāfil*—one may observe them or skip them—the reason is that at the time of *ʿAṣr*, one is, in a way, done with other activities. Secondly, because this is the time to finish doing all things, the Prayer for this time is therefore very brief, but there is *dhikr* after *ʿAṣr* till *Maghrib*.

As I have stated before, there are no *Sunnah* before *Maghrib* Prayer because the time is very short, but there are two *Sunnah* after *Maghrib*. Generally, people eat after *Maghrib* and engage in other such activities, so these two *Sunnah* protect the *Farāʾid* [pl. *Farḍ*, obligatory part of the *Ṣalāt*] from such thoughts.

There are no *Sunnah* before *ʿIshāʾ* Prayer [night Prayer before going to bed] because the chores a person usually does before this Prayer are not the kind that their effect will stay after. However, there are *Nawāfil*; if one wishes and feels the

need, he can offer them. But after *'Ishā'*, since it is the time to go to sleep and temperament is inclined towards rest after a whole day's work, two *Sunnah* and three *Vitr* [three *rak'āt* prescribed as essential] are appointed afterwards from which the *Vitr* may also be performed at a later time.

There are two *Sunnah* appointed before *Fajr* [morning Prayer] so that there should not be any negligence in the *Ṣalāt* due to just having woken up from sleep. Those *Sunnahs* stop the carelessness and the thoughts resulting from sleep. There are no *Sunnah* afterwards because generally no particular work may be done thereafter until the time of sunrise. However, *dhikr* has been prescribed.

These are the ones that have been attached with the *Ṣalāt* by the Shariah to maintain concentration in the *Ṣalāt*, but benefit can be drawn from them only when man makes an effort to understand them as well. This is verily why I have mentioned them so that you may become acquainted with them and benefit from them, and—God willing—those people who act upon them, keeping in mind the underlying wisdom, will certainly derive benefit.

It should, however, be remembered well that just as the human body has joints, in the same way the words that are recited during standing, bowing, prostrating, etc. are the joints of *Ṣalāt*. Special attention must be paid to the words that are recited at these joints. If this is done, then the *Ṣalāt* will become very strong; otherwise, it will fall.

Now I will explain those methods for maintaining attention in *Ṣalāt* which are not included in the conditions of *Ṣalāt*, nor has

the Shariah prescribed them as components of *Ṣalāt*, but if one follows these techniques, then concentration can be maintained during *Ṣalāt*.

II. THE ELEVENTH METHOD—If you are unable to maintain attention while offering *Ṣalāt*, recite the words slower and slower. The structure of the human brain is designed in such a way that it instantly brings to the forefront the idea that is repeatedly introduced to it. And the one that comes before it occasionally, it can bring it forth only with difficulty. For example, if person X is seen daily, then, while thinking of him, his image will come to mind immediately, but if seen seldom, his image will appear only after a little while when his name is heard or spoken and even that will not be completely clear.

Then, look at the language that is learnt in childhood. If man speaks or hears any passage in that language, the meanings come to his mind along with its words. For example, if the word for *water* comes to mind, then—without any pause—the reality of water will also come to his mind. Or if the word for *bread* is heard from anyone, then—without any delay—the meaning of bread will show up in his mind.

However, this is not the case with a foreign language over which one has not acquired full mastery. Instead, the meaning comes to mind a long time after hearing the words. For example, children learning English: until they become fully proficient in English, when they read the word *cat* in a book, the reality of the word will come to their mind only after quite some time, but after uttering *billī* [the word for *cat* in Urdu], the image of that animal will come to their minds immediately.

This is indeed the reason why—apart from the people who speak Arabic—Muslims who are generally not familiar with Arabic cannot maintain their attention in *Ṣalāt*, because attention can be maintained only when the meanings of the words being said are also present in one’s mind. But due to the lack of familiarity with Arabic, when they are reciting the Arabic passages, the meanings of those words do not come along in their mind; instead, the meanings and the words get jumbled up. For example, when a person says **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** [*Iyyāka na‘budu*—You alone do we worship], not the meaning of this sentence, but the meaning of **الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ** [*Ar-Raḥmān-ir-Raḥīm*—the Gracious, the Merciful], or maybe of **مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ** [*Māliku-Yaumid-Dīn*—Master of the Day of Judgment] are transpiring in his brain. So for that reason, full attention cannot be maintained nor can the benefit of *Ṣalāt* be attained fully.

Accordingly, the people who are not well versed in Arabic and do not possess much command over it, so that—like the mother tongue—its words and their meanings occur simultaneously in the mind; they should not move forward when offering *Ṣalāt*, until the meaning of the sentence they are reciting appears in their mind. For example, when they recite **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ** [*Bismillāh-ir-Raḥmān-ir-Raḥīm*—‘In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful’], then, until its meaning comes to their minds very clear, they should not say *Alḥamdulillāhi Rabb-il-Ālamīn* [‘All Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds’], and until the meanings of this verse do not come to mind, they should not proceed to *Ar-Raḥmān-ir-Raḥīm* [‘the Gracious, the Merciful’], and they should do likewise with all the verses; because, if they do not do this, the

words that they will be reciting with their tongue will be different from the meaning appearing in their minds, the consequence being that thoughts become dispersed. And when dispersion ensues, concentration cannot take hold. The people who know Arabic, even if they recite rapidly; though the meaning would come to their minds immediately, they [the meanings] will not get a chance to be absorbed into the heart. For this reason, they should also recite the *Qurān* slowly and move forward with frequent pauses.

This is not important just for the *Qurān*. Rather, the same should be done during counselling and advising. Once Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah^{ra}, was narrating a hadith quickly and forcefully. Ḥaḍrat 'Aishah^{ra} asked who he was and what he was doing. He told her his name and said that he was narrating a saying of the Holy Prophet^{sas}. She asked, 'Is this the manner in which the Holy Prophet^{sas} used to speak?'

Upon hearing this he became silent.

In short, this is a *sunnah* [practice] of the Holy Prophet^{sas} that not only in the recitation of the Holy *Qurān* but also in general counselling or advising he would speak slowly. Thus, in order to maintain attention you should also act upon this command and *sunnah*. In this way, concentration will be excellently maintained because there will be no confusion where the tongue has one thing upon it while the mind perceives something different within it.

12. **THE TWELFTH METHOD** is the one that has been enjoined by the Holy Prophet^{sas}, but many people are negligent towards it. This method is that the Holy Prophet^{sas} has said that when

one stands up to offer the *Ṣalāt*, he should fix his sight toward the place of prostration. There are many people who shut their eyes after standing up and think that in that way their attention will take hold, whereas attention can be maintained by keeping the eyes open. This is indeed the reason why the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} has advised us that upon standing up for *Ṣalāt*, we should fix our gaze upon the place of prostration.

In his book *Awārif-il-Ma'ārif*, Ḥaḍrat Shihāb-ud-Deen Suhrawardi^{ṛta} writes that during *rukū'* [bowing posture in Prayer], the eyes should be focused between the two feet and in my view this is correct (*Awārifil-Ma'ārif*, al-Bāb as-Sābi' wath-Thalāthūn fī Wasfī Ṣalāti Ahlil-Qurb. vol. 2, p. 340, published by Maktabat ath-Thaqāfah ad-Dīniyyah, Cairo 2006).²² This is also beneficial for the eyes and causes greater reverence to develop as well.

There is a very great wisdom in limiting the scope of view and it is that God Almighty has placed this feature in the creation of man that when one of his senses is functioning, the other senses become senseless. For example, when the eyes concentrate perfectly, the ears become disengaged. Thus, when the eyes are busy looking at something with full power, if someone hollers, it will not be heard. And, when the ears are so totally occupied in listening to something, the nose's ability to smell is suspended. And when the nose is fully occupied in smelling something with all its ability, the ears and eyes suspend the execution of their tasks. Thus, when one sense is engaged in operation and reaches its optimal performance, the other senses do not function, but when all the senses are

idle and none of them is engaged in doing its work, the defect develops that various and sundry thoughts become excited.

The reason for this is that when one sense is functioning, then the thoughts related to the other senses do not arise. This is indeed the reason why that sense stops other thoughts from transpiring. Thus, when the eyes are occupied in performing their task during *Ṣalāt* and are involved in seeing, then various and sundry thoughts will not arise in the mind. This fact has come to light these days through an actual physical experiment, but look, keeping this natural wisdom in mind, 1,300 years beforehand the Holy Prophet^{sas} had given the instructions to keep the eyes open during *Ṣalāt*. Moreover, he realized that when that particular sense is engaged in operation, the individual will escape assorted thoughts.

Had the sense of smell been employed, it would have been necessary first to arrange for scents, but then the sensing ability of the nose cannot be delimited. If different people who would be present together offering the *Ṣalāt* or passing by, were users of different scents, then, the attention, instead of being focused, would be wandering from one side to the other. Just like the sense of the nose, the sense that the ear possesses also cannot be delimited. It is not in the power of man that he should only hear what he wishes to hear and refuse to hear what he does not wish to hear. Whatever number of sounds that arise at any given time, man is forced to hear them all. Rather, if many sounds ascend at once, a man can hear nothing at all. Thus, if ears are allowed to work, they will either hear all the sounds or nothing at all.

However, in contrast to these senses, eyes are under man's

control. He can keep them at one place and keep them away from what he doesn't want to see without any fuss. He can focus his eyes on the thing that he wants to see without difficulty. Thus, under the commandment of God Almighty, the Holy Prophet^{sas} selected this sense for achieving concentration in *Ṣalāt* and directed that we keep our eyes focused toward the place of prostration during the *Ṣalāt*.

Nevertheless, he simultaneously directed there should be no beautiful thing at the place of prostration, but rather there should be a uniformity of view; meaning, of the same kind. When a Muslim focuses his sight upon the place of prostration, then, first, the thought of prostration prevailing over his mind will keep him occupied in the thought of worship. Second, in this way his other senses, which as a rule must either be left totally free or be totally shut down, will shut down. The third benefit will be that since thoughts are in fact prompted by external influences—which, in turn, are perceived through the senses—but because the eyes have been put to work, the other senses become non-operational to an extent, and because there will be nothing before the eyes that could raise any thoughts other than *Ṣalāt*, the person engaged in *Ṣalāt* will have his attention remain focused on *Ṣalāt* alone.

It is proven from the Holy Prophet^{sas} that once, a decorated sheet was placed in front of the place where the Holy Prophet^{sas} offered his Prayer. He instructed it to be removed, pointing out that due to it, attention cannot be maintained in the *Ṣalāt* (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bābu in Ṣalla fī Thaubin Muṣallibin au Taṣāwīr hal Tafṣudu Ṣalātuhū wa mā

Yunhā min Dhālik; Hadith 374).²³ He gave this instruction for the benefit of his Ummah.

13. **THE THIRTEENTH METHOD**—As I have already mentioned, when someone stands to offer *Ṣalāt*, he should do so having made the *Niyyat* and *Qaṣad* [Declaration of Resolve]. Similarly, he should also make the determination that he will not let any thought enter *Ṣalāt*. Of course, everybody knows that he should not permit thoughts to come, but old matters become forgotten. So for this reason when one stands up to offer *Ṣalāt* he should remind himself at that time that he will not permit any other thought to come to mind during the *Ṣalāt*.

14. **THE FOURTEENTH METHOD**—When a believer stands behind the imam to offer the *Ṣalāt*, the recitation of the imam keeps him awake and alert. It is as if the imam is safeguarding him. (From this, one can learn how essential it is to offer the *Ṣalāt* behind the imam.) But when offering Prayer alone, one should follow this excellent method employed by the Holy Prophet^{sa}, his companions^{ra}, and many great sufis, and that is to repeatedly recite those special verses of the Holy Quran that inculcate the fear of Allah. For instance, when reciting *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, repeat the following verse often:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ*

* You alone do we worship and You alone do we implore for help (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:5). [Publisher]

So much so that if one's soul is involved in scattered thoughts it should feel remorse and think that with his mouth he is claiming to be a slave and servant of Allah the Exalted, but practically he is running here and there.

15. **THE FIFTEENTH METHOD**—I tell this method for those people who cannot hold their resolve for very long. Just like an infant needs to be nursed at short intervals because he cannot bear hunger for very long and cannot digest all food together, similarly some people are in need of being provided support every so often. They should follow this method that when they stand up in *qiyām* they should resolve to not let any thoughts come until the *rukū'* and when they go into the *rukū'* they should say that they will not let thoughts intervene till they stand up. In this way, at each stage they should make a new resolve. This will give them such a power by which their scattered thoughts will go away.

16. **THE SIXTEENTH METHOD**—If a man falls prey to scattered thoughts, they will not stop chasing him, but if he confronts them and resolves not to let them in at all, they will stop. Therefore, they should be fought well, and whenever any thought encroaches, it should be stopped immediately. For example, if the thought begins to take hold that one's child is lying ill—'What will become of him?'—one should immediately stop this thought by saying that the child is not going to get any better by him raising this thought in his mind nor is he going to get any worse if he does not raise this thought. So, he doesn't bring up the thought at all. Continue this practice

about every matter until you achieve a command over such thoughts.

17. **THE SEVENTEENTH METHOD**—When you offer *Nawāfil* at home, recite loud enough so that the voice continues reaching the ears. Its benefit is that since the ears are not plugged with anything, they continue to be functional to some degree. When remembrance of Allah is done with the voice as well, then attention gets a better hold, because the ears also begin to pay attention to the *dhikr*. This method should mostly be practiced during the Prayer at night. If you put the ears to use during the day, instead of benefiting, there is a danger of attention being divided by all kinds of noise prevalent in the surroundings during those times.

18. **THE EIGHTEENTH METHOD**—This method is under the wisdom that a new thought always develops due to a new movement. The movements that are made during the Prayer—this very thought develops in them that worship be done; so, there is no harm in them, but the result of other movements is that the attention goes to the other direction. That is why the Holy Prophet^{sas} has instructed that apart from the necessary movements no other movements should be made in the state of offering *Ṣalāt*. Certainly, thoughts scatter because of making unnecessary movements.

For example, someone touches his coat for no reason. While touching it, a thought arose in his mind that this coat is really old and he should have a new one made. Upon this, the thought arises that where will the money for the coat come

from—the salary is so meagre. Then, that it has been a long time since the salary was paid. Again, if the delay in the salary had been due to the fault of the officer, then he will curse out the officer. Then he will get lost in the thoughts that he will do such and such with him. While doing that, the voice will be heard, *Assalāmu ‘alaikum wa raḥmatullāh* and he will also finish his Prayer.

Thus, because a new movement produces a new thought, the Holy Prophet^{sas} has commanded that no new movements should be made during the Prayer. He has gone so far as to declare that even if there are pebbles at the place of prostration, they should not be removed and if they cause too much pain they may be removed once. Therefore, while praying, such movements should be avoided altogether.

19. **THE NINETEENTH METHOD**—Perform *qiyām*, *rukū* [bowing], and *sajdah* [prostration] energetically. That is to say, when standing for *qiyām*, do so with vigour and alertness and not in the manner of putting all of the weight on one leg, leaving the other leg hanging loose, because when you are slack, the enemy overpowers you. Then, outer alertness affects the inner alertness. This is why the Holy Prophet^{sas} has commanded that all movements must be performed with alertness.

20. **THE TWENTIETH METHOD**—Some sufis have used excess in it. Though I do not like excess, a believer can benefit from it.

[Ḥaḍrat] Junaid^{rtā} of Baghdad was a great saintly man. One of his followers was Shibli^{rtā}, who possessed great sincerity and fear of Allah. He was the governor of a province. Once, when

he was present in the court of the king, he witnessed a major chief being bestowed a royal mantle as a reward for some very great service that he had performed. This chief was suffering from a cold; his nose was running. The chief had forgotten to bring a handkerchief. When he thought the king was not looking, the chief wiped his nose with the same royal mantle. The king noticed it and said very angrily, 'Is this the value of our royal mantle in your sight!'

As Shibli^{ra} had the fear of Allah in his heart, he was so overwhelmed by this incident that he fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he said, 'I wish to resign from the governorship.'

When the king asked him for the reason, Shibli^{ra} told the king, 'You gave this chief a royal mantle which he did not value appropriately, and you became so furious with him, whereas I have been granted innumerable bounties by God. How great will be His punishment if I do not value them properly and do not render thanks for them?'

After this he went to Junaid^{ra} and asked to be accepted as his pupil. He said, 'I cannot accept you as a student; you have been a governor and in that capacity you must have committed many types of excesses against the creatures of God.'

He asked, 'Is there any cure for this?'

Junaid^{ra} told him that he should go to every house in the area that he had been the governor of, and say that if he had committed any excess against anyone, they should take revenge for it. Accordingly, he did exactly that.

It is written about him that when he offered the *Nawāfil* and would find any kind of slackness in his body or if any

thoughts would come into his mind which would try to distract his attention towards any other direction, he would take a stick and start hitting his body with it until the stick would break and then he would recommence offering (his *Nawāfil*). In the beginning he used to keep a bundle of sticks with him. What he did was excessive and in my view Islam does not look favourably upon it. However, since the matter is related entirely to his personal self, I do not level any criticism upon him.

There is, however, a way of disciplining the self in my view. If in any *rak'āt* a distracting thought develops, you should identify the portion which you were reciting when this happened. When you determine this, you should again start offering the Prayer from that very point. By doing this when the self will see that this man is actually inclining to God Almighty and is not listening to me, it will cease creating dispersion [of thoughts] and calm will be attained.

21. **THE TWENTY-FIRST METHOD**—This is, in a way, a very great and very highly useful method. And that is:

Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23:4—عَنِ النَّوْمِ مُعْرِضُونَ

Believers do not do anything vain. Those people who are used to vain thoughts are the very people in whose hearts the other thoughts arise during Prayer, but if they act to prevent such thoughts from arising on the very first day, the condition of dispersion will not arise. Nonetheless, most people remain engrossed in vain thoughts like [the proverbial] Shaikh Chillī,

even though there is no benefit from them. The mind should never be permitted to indulge in thoughts that are only speculative and conjectural. Yes, there is no harm in thinking of useful and beneficial things. Particularly, it is the height of ignorance to be bothered by thinking about the incidents that have already occurred and it could be of no use to think about them now.

It is an obvious matter that in whatever direction human capabilities and powers are employed, they become attentive to those very things. Thus, when someone turns his mind towards unreasonable thoughts, he loses the ability to attend to reasonable things. Accordingly, preventing one's mind from engaging in vain thoughts, one should employ it to work on lofty and beneficial ideas. When this effort is made, you will always become disposed towards deliberating on beneficial matters. And to think of other things while being involved with one task is vain and not beneficial, except what God wills. Thus, the mind of a person who has trained it to focus on beneficial matters will not wander here and there at the time of offering Prayer.

22. **THE TWENTY-SECOND METHOD**—This is also a method of great magnificence and takes one to the pinnacle of spirituality. The Holy Prophet^{sas} was asked, ‘What is *iḥsān* [goodness]?’ He responded, ‘أَنْ تُعْبَدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ’ [‘To worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, but as a minimum be aware that He is seeing you’] (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Īmān, Bāb Su’ālī Jibrīl an-Nabiyya ‘anil-Īmān wal-Islām wal-Iḥsān wa ‘Ilmis-Sā’ah; Hadith 50).

Thus, when you stand for Prayer, fix this scene before your eyes that you are as if standing in the presence of God Almighty and He is visible right in front of you—not in any physical form but in His glory and majesty. In this way, the grandeur and omnipotence of God Almighty is impressed upon the heart, and the soul comes to understand that at such time it should not perpetrate any frivolous act.

If you cannot visualize God, believe with certainty, as a minimum, that God is watching you and that He is reading all thoughts that are passing through your mind. One should see that if, while he is uttering *Alḥamdulillāh* [‘All praise belongs to Allah’] with his tongue, whether his heart is also saying *Alḥamdulillāh* or is it occupied with some other thought? And if the heart is otherwise engaged, he should censure it and make it join his tongue.

The Holy Prophet^{ṣāḥ} says that that servant of God who offers even two *rak‘āt* in such a way that he does not communicate with his self, shall have all his sins forgiven. Now, ponder concerning that man who avails this condition always—how much of excellence would he be able to attain! Therefore, maintaining attention fixed towards God Almighty in the *Ṣalāt* is no ordinary matter. So these methods which I have informed you about, purely by the grace and beneficence of God Almighty, should not be considered to be ordinary, but they should be put to full use, and remember that if you will put them to use you will receive immense blessings.

The saying of *Assalāmu ‘alaikum wa raḥmatullāh* at the conclusion of the Prayer, also contains a wondrous indication. In it, man’s attention has been drawn to the need to maintain his

attention. You see, you say *Assalāmu ‘alaikum* when you come from somewhere. When a believer says *Assalāmu ‘alaikum wa raḥmatullāh* at the conclusion of his *Ṣalāt*, he is stating as if he had gone to express his servitude in the presence of God Almighty and has now returned from there and he has brought us peace and mercy; but since he was always physically present there, the only meaning that could be drawn from this is that it was his spirit that had been prostrating at the threshold of Allah the Exalted—and he was so engrossed in worship that it was as if he was absent from this world.

Thus, saying *Assalāmu ‘alaikum* at the conclusion of Prayer testifies to the fact that it is essential for a believer to be alert in safeguarding his *Ṣalāt*, because he is, at that time, present in the Court of God Almighty. This is indeed why God Almighty has also said:

Sūrah al-An‘ām, 6:93—وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ

It is the great quality of believers that they keep a watch over their Prayers very well; that is, Satan wants to spoil their Prayers but they safeguard it from his attacks very well. Therefore, everyone should guard his *Ṣalāt* and when he stands up to offer his *Ṣalāt* he should understand that he has gone into the presence of God and when he concludes his *Ṣalāt* he should convey the good news to the people on his right and on his left that he has brought back peace for you. However, if some person does not go into the presence of God, and remains engrossed in his own thoughts, he should consider how egregious a lie he utters when he says *Assalāmu ‘alaikum wa raḥmatullāh*. He wishes to

tell the people that he is returning from the presence of God, whereas he had never gone there.

Therefore, you should all strive to fully safeguard your *Ṣalāt* and continue battling with Satan fiercely who tries to move you away from the presence of God. And remember that even if you keep battling with him during the entire *Ṣalāt* and do not fall before him, God Almighty will indeed consider you to have been present in His Court, but if you fall, then He too will leave your hand. So for this reason you have to keep battling. If you do this, then in the end, indeed, you will be successful.

DHIKR IN GATHERINGS



Up to this time, I have mentioned three types of *dhikr*: firstly, *Ṣalāt*; secondly, the Holy Quran; and thirdly, those remembrances of Allah that are done in addition to *Ṣalāt*, but done privately. Now, one type of *dhikr* remains and that is the *dhikr* which is done in gatherings. There are two ways of performing this *dhikr* as well.

1. **THE FIRST METHOD** is that whenever we get a chance to meet our co-religionists, instead of vain and vulgar talk, we should talk about the powers of Allah the Exalted, His glory, His favours, and mention His Signs. In this way the heart is purified and a most holy influence is exerted upon the soul.

It is narrated from the Holy Prophet^{ṣas} that once he came out of his home and saw that some people were engaged in Prayer in the mosque while some others were sitting in a circle discussing matters of faith. The Holy Prophet^{ṣas} went and sat

with the group that was sitting in the circle and said that that was better than what the other people were doing. From this it is learnt that sometimes proclaiming the remembrance of Allah is better than His remembrance in private. I said *sometimes* because that form of remembrance too is essential at its own time, but yes, when people are gathered together, at that time, proclamation of Allah's remembrance is beneficial because through it, by listening to the experiences of other people and by communicating one's own experiences to them, much opportunity is availed to profit oneself and to be of benefit to others. And at such times to engage in *dhikr* by oneself may become the cause at times for sanctimony. Exposition of the meanings of the Holy Quran is also included in these types of *dhikr*. Similarly, to give sermons and addresses to one's co-religionists about the Faith is also included in this.

2. **THE SECOND TYPE** of this *dhikr* is the one that is done in the gatherings of the opponents. All religions other than Islam are guilty by way of adding somewhat to, or subtracting somewhat from, the attributes of Allah the Exalted. Thus, to manifest before them the true eminence and majesty of Allah the Exalted, is also a form of *dhikr*. Allah the Exalted says in *Sūrah al-Muddaththir*:

* *Surah al-Muddaththir*, 74:2-4 — يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۝ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ۝ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ۝

* O you who has wrapped *yourself with your mantle!* Arise and warn. And your Lord do extol. [Publisher]

Apart from warning the people about Divine chastisement, the command has been given to convey the greatness of Allah the Exalted to them and *takbīr* [reciting *Allahū Akbar*—‘Allah is the Greatest’] is a part of *dhikr*.

So, expressing the attributes of Allah the Exalted before the people belonging to other faiths and presenting arguments in their support is also included in the remembrance of Allah. In *Sūrah al-A‘lā*, a reference to this very *dhikr* is also indicated, and in very clear words:

* *Sūrah al-A‘lā*, 87:10—**فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ**

Dhikr is the name clearly given to it.

* So go on reminding; surely, reminding is profitable. [Publisher]

BENEFITS OF DHIKR



I will now mention some benefits of engaging in *dhikr*.

1. **THE GREATEST BENEFIT** that one attains by engaging in *dhikr* is that the pleasure of Allah the Exalted is achieved. This does not mean that this is a virtuous act and so, like other deeds, God can be pleased by its performance, but rather by doing this, God is especially pleased, and the greater the value of the deed, the greater the value of the reward.

God Almighty says about *dhikr* at one place in the Holy Quran:

Sūrah al-'Ankabūt, 29:46— وَلِكِنَّرَأَللَّهُ اَلْأَكْبَرُ

Meaning that the remembrance of Allah is the greatest.

At another place He says:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكِنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
 فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ۖ وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ* — *Sūrah at-Taubah, 9:72*

That the greatest reward is the pleasure of Allah; for, the reward of the greatest can only be the greatest, not the smallest. Thus, both these ‘greatest’ have informed us in exchange of what the pleasure of Allah can be had.

In this verse, God Almighty, by mentioning other things that are a reward of the remembrance of Allah: **وَرِضْوَانٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ** has told us that the **رِضْوَانٍ** [‘pleasure of Allah’] is another new thing and is the greatest of all. And, in reality, for the servant of God, the greatest of rewards is that Allah be pleased with him. To achieve this great reward God Almighty says that if one engages in the remembrance of Allah, then this other *akbar* [greatest], which is the pleasure of Allah, will be granted to you.

2. **THE SECOND BENEFIT** is that through it, one attains comfort of the heart. Thus, Allah the Exalted says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ وَلَمْ يَقْرَأُوا عَلَيْهِ يَنْزِيلًا يَدْعُونَ أَنِ ارْتُدْ ۖ قُلْ أَبِئْتَابِكُمْ وَأَنزِيلِ رَبِّكُمْ أَتُوبُونَ
 — *Sūrah ar-Ra‘d, 13:29*

- * Allah has promised to believers, men and women, Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide, and delightful dwelling-places in Gardens of Eternity. And the pleasure of Allah is greatest of all. That is the supreme triumph. [Publisher]
- ** Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort. [Publisher]

Hearts find comfort in *dhikr*. Why? This is so because anxiety develops when man thinks that he is about to be destroyed by some calamity and if he believes with certainty that there is a remedy for every calamity and ailment, then he will not become anxious. Thus, when someone remembers Allah and understands that Allah possesses unlimited powers and can remove all types of ailments, his heart tells him that when he has such a God, then what is the need for him to become anxious about any difficulty? He will Himself remove it. In this way he finds comfort.

3. **THE THIRD BENEFIT** is that Allah becomes the Friend of His servant who remembers Him, and He remembers him in His Court even while he remains yet in this world:

Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:153—**فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرُكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ**

O My servants! You should remember Me; I will remember you. And remembering by God Almighty is simply that He grants one an audience in His presence. Just as for a worldly king's remembering someone means exactly this—that such a one is called into the king's court—so does God Almighty do the same.

4. **THE FOURTH BENEFIT** is that the remembrance of Allah saves man from evils. Thus, God Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ
اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ — *Sūrah al-Ankabūt, 29:46*

God Almighty says to the Holy Prophet^{sas} that the Book that God has given to him, he should recite it unto the people and establish *Ṣalāt*. *Ṣalāt* saves one from indecency and manifest evil. And to engage in the remembrance of Allah is [a] very great [virtue] and Allah is well aware of what one does.

As I have stated earlier, *Ṣalāt* is also a form of remembrance of Allah. Hence, from this it becomes established that the remembrance of Allah guards against indecency and evils. Why? For the reason that the remembrance of Allah is a weighty weapon and when struck upon the head of Satan, he dies and cannot incite one towards evil.

5. **THE FIFTH BENEFIT** of the remembrance of Allah is that through it the heart is strengthened, and the power to battle evil develops. Man does not lose, he rather stands firmly in combat, as Allah the Exalted says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقَيْتُمْ فُجَاءَةً فَابْتِئُوا وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ —
Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:46

O Muslims, when you go to contest a power and it is mighty, what you should do is commence engagement in the remembrance of Allah in abundance. The result of this will be that your enemy will be uprooted and you will prevail over him.

6. **THE SIXTH [BENEFIT]** is that the person who remembers Allah attains success in all of his undertakings, provided that he remembers Allah with sincerity of heart. The proof for this is also found from this very verse which I have cited in connection with the fifth benefit where Allah the Exalted says:

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ*

7. **THE SEVENTH BENEFIT** is that the Holy Prophet^{sas} says that on the Day of Judgement, seven people will be under the shade of Allah and among them will be the one who remembers Allah (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitābuz-Zuhd, Bāb mā jā' fil-Ḥubbi fillāh; Hadith 2391).²⁴ The Holy Prophet^{sas} says that it will be such a dangerous day that all Prophets will be fearful and God Almighty will, on that Day, be Wrathful as never before because all the mischief-makers will be presented before Him. The sun will draw very close. So given this situation, it can only be imagined how fortunate would be the one who is provided the shade of Allah on that Day!
8. **THE EIGHTH BENEFIT** is that the prayer of one who remembers Allah is accepted. The prayers that are mentioned in the Holy Quran are preceded with *dhikr*, viz. *tasbīḥ* [glorifying Allah] and *taḥmīd* [praising Allah]. The first prayer is indeed *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*. It starts with:

* *Sūrah al-Anfāl*, 8:46 [Publisher]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ○ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ مُلِكِ يَوْمِ
الْذِّكْرِ ○ *

Then comes the part in the middle, which is half for God Almighty and half for man:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ — **

then is said:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ○ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
الضَّالِّينَ ○ ***

This is a prayer. So, Allah the Exalted put *dhikr* first and then prayer. We observe in this world as well that when a needy person comes to anyone, he first praises that person and then submits his request.

Thus, when a man goes into the presence of Allah he should first acknowledge the power and authority of God Almighty

* In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. All Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, The Gracious, the Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgement (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:1-4). [Publisher]

** You alone do we worship and You alone do we implore for help (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:5). [Publisher]

*** Guide us in the right path—The path of those on whom You have bestowed *Your* blessings, those who not have incurred *Your* displeasure, and those who have not gone astray (*Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, 1:6-7). [Publisher]

and admit his own humility. The Prophet Ḥaḍrat Jonah, peace be upon him, also prayed to God for himself in the same way:

* *Sūrah al-Anbiyā'*, 21:88—لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

He first expressed the glory of God, and then he laid out his own condition.

Then, the Holy Prophet^{sas} says: مَنْ شَغَلَهُ ذِكْرِي عَنْ مَسْأَلَتِي أُعْطِيَتْهُ أَفْضَلَ ; مَا أُعْطِيَ السَّائِلِينَ. 'He who remains busy in My remembrance, receives more from Me than the one who keeps asking.' [*Ash-Shu'abul-Īmān*, Bāb 10 fī Maḥabbatillāh, Faṣl fī Idāmati Dhikrillāh, vol. 1. p. 413, Hadith 572, edition 2000 Beirut]

This hadith does not mean that we should not pray, because *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*—which is the Mother of the Book—contains prayer along with *dhikr*. And prayers have been taught in abundance in the Holy Quran and the Hadith. The meaning, rather, is only that—compared to the person who does not engage in the remembrance of Allah and only prays—that individual receives more, who also engages in the remembrance of Allah apart from praying, and saves time from the time he devotes to prayer and spends it in the remembrance of Allah.

9. **THE NINTH BENEFIT** is that sins are forgiven. The Holy Prophet^{sas} has said that the sins of the person who performs

* There is no God but You, Holy are You. I have indeed been of the wrongdoers. [Publisher]

takbīr [reciting *Allahū Akbar*—‘Allah is the Greatest’], *taḥmīd* [praising Allah by reciting *Alḥamdulillāh*—‘All praise belongs to Allah’], and *tasbīḥ* are forgiven even if these sins are innumerable like the foam in the sea (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Kitābud-Da‘wāt, Bāb mā jā’ fid-Du‘ā’ idhā awā ilā firāshih; Hadith 3397).²⁵

10. **THE TENTH BENEFIT** of *dhikr* is that it sharpens the intellect. One who remembers Allah discovers such verities and points of wisdom that leave the person himself amazed. Allah the Exalted says:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاختلافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝ الَّذِينَ
يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقَعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا
خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝
Sūrah Āl-e-‘Imrān, 3:191–192—

Meaning that there are many Signs in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day, but only for those people who possess intelligence. Then, it is stated that the people who possess intelligence are those who remain engaged in the remembrance of Allah and in pondering on the works of God.

11. **THE ELEVENTH BENEFIT** is that righteousness emanates from it. We find in the hadith: فَإِنْ ذَكَرْتَنِي فِي نَفْسِي وَإِنْ ذَكَرْتَنِي فِي مَلَأٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ بِشِبْرٍ تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا وَإِنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ ذِرَاعًا تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعًا. The Holy Prophet^{sas} says that God Almighty says, ‘When a servant of Mine remembers Me in his heart, I too remember him in My heart.’ For example,

when man says *Subhānallāh*, meaning, ‘Holy are You, O Allah!’ then God Almighty also says concerning that servant of His that may he also be bestowed with purity. And when God Almighty utters it, then that person certainly attains it.

Then He says, ‘When My servant remembers Me among the people, I remember him among those people who are better than those among whom he mentioned Me’; meaning, among those who are righteous and virtuous, and the world acknowledges that he is righteous (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābut-Tauhīd, Bāb Qaulillāh Ta’ālā wa Yuhadh-dhirukum-Allāh Nafsah; Hadith 7405).

12. **THE TWELFTH BENEFIT** is that love grows because it is a rule for man that the object that he constantly remains in touch with, he cultivates a love for it, so much so that he even begins to espouse a love for the village or town that he lives in. Thus, when a servant of Allah remembers Allah morning and evening, and in fact, at all times, and mentions His name, then gradually, the love of Allah the Exalted goes on growing in his heart.

These, then, are the benefits of the remembrance of Allah that I have mentioned briefly and I pray that may God Almighty make me and all of you benefit from them. *Āmīn*.

ENDNOTES



- I عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً يَطُوفُونَ فِي الطَّرِيقِ يَلْتَمِسُونَ أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ فَإِذَا وَجَدُوا قَوْمًا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ تَنَادَوْا هَلُمُّوا إِلَيَّ حَاجَتِكُمْ قَالَ فَيُحْفَوْنَهُمْ بِأَجْنِحَتِهِمْ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا قَالَ فَيَسْأَلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ مِنْهُمْ مَا يَقُولُ عِبَادِي؟ قَالُوا يَقُولُونَ يُسَبِّحُونَكَ وَيُكَبِّرُونَكَ وَيُحَمِّدُونَكَ وَيُسَبِّحُونَكَ قَالَ فَيَقُولُ هَلْ رَأَوْنِي؟ قَالَ فَيَقُولُونَ لَا وَاللَّهِ مَا رَأَوْكَ؟ قَالَ فَيَقُولُ وَكَيْفَ لَوْ رَأَوْنِي؟ قَالَ فَيَقُولُونَ لَوْ رَأَوْكَ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ لَكَ عِبَادَةً وَأَشَدَّ لَكَ تَمَجُّدًا وَأَكْثَرَ لَكَ تَسْبِيحًا. قَالَ يَقُولُ فَمَا يَسْأَلُونِي؟ قَالَ يَسْأَلُونَكَ الْجَنَّةَ قَالَ يَقُولُ وَهَلْ رَأَوْهَا؟ قَالَ يَقُولُونَ لَا وَاللَّهِ يَا رَبِّ مَا رَأَوْهَا قَالَ يَقُولُ فَكَيْفَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَأَوْهَا؟ قَالَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَأَوْهَا كَانُوا أَشَدَّ عَلَيْهَا حِرْصًا وَأَشَدَّ لَهَا طَلَبًا وَأَعْظَمَ فِيهَا رَغْبَةً قَالَ فَمِمَّ يَتَعَوَّدُونَ؟ قَالَ يَقُولُونَ مِنَ النَّارِ قَالَ يَقُولُ وَهَلْ رَأَوْهَا؟ قَالَ يَقُولُونَ لَا وَاللَّهِ مَا رَأَوْهَا قَالَ يَقُولُ فَكَيْفَ لَوْ رَأَوْهَا؟ قَالَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ رَأَوْهَا كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهَا فِرَازًا وَأَشَدَّ لَهَا مَخَافَةً قَالَ فَيَقُولُ فَأَشْهَدُكُمْ أَنِّي قَدْ عَمَرْتُ لَهُمْ قَالَ يَقُولُ مَلَكٌ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ فِيهِمْ فَلَانَّ لَيْسَ مِنْهُمْ إِنَّمَا جَاءَ لِحَاجَةٍ قَالَ هُمْ الْجُلَسَاءُ لَا يَشْقَى بِهِمْ جَلِيسُهُمْ.

Abu Hurairah narrates the Messenger of Allah^{sas} said: Allah has some angels who look for those who celebrate the praises of Allah on the roads and paths. And when they find a people celebrating the praises of Allah, they

call each other, saying, ‘Come to the object of your pursuit.’ He added, ‘Then the angels encircle them with their wings up to the sky of the world.’ He added, ‘[After those people have celebrated the praises of Allah, and the angels return], their Lord, asks them [the angels] though He knows better than them, “What do My servants say?” The angels reply, “They extol Your Holiness, they proclaim Your greatness, they praise You, and they glorify You.” Allah then says, “Have they seen Me?” The angels reply, “No! By Allah, they have not seen You.” Allah says, “How would it have been if they had seen Me?” The angels reply, “If they had seen You, they would have worshipped You more, glorified You more, and praised You more often.”

Allah says [to the angels], “What do they ask Me for?” The angels reply, “They ask You for Paradise.” Allah says [to the angels], “Have they seen it?” The angels say, “No! By Allah, O Lord! They have not seen it.” Allah says, “How would it have been if they had seen it?” The angels say, “If they had seen it, they would have desired it more, sought it with greater zeal and developed a greater yearning for it.”

Allah says, “From what do they seek refuge?” The angels reply, “They seek refuge from the Fire.” Allah says, “Have they seen it?” The angels say, “No, By Allah, O Lord! They have not seen it.” Allah says, “How would it have been if they had seen it?” The angels say, “If they had seen it, they would have fled from it hastily and would have had extreme fear of it.” Then Allah says, “I make you witnesses of how I have forgiven them.”

The Holy Prophet^{sas} said, ‘One of the angels would

say, “There was so-and-so amongst them, and he was not one of them, but he had just come for some need.” Allah would say, “These are those whose companions even will not be left deprived” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb ad-Da‘wāt, Bāb Faḍli Dhikrillāhi ‘Azza wa Jall; Hadith 6408).

- 2 قَالَ أَبُو دَرَّ لَوْ وَصَعْتُمْ الصَّنَمَاءَةَ عَلَى هَذِهِ وَأَشَارَ إِلَى قَفَاهُ ثُمَّ ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي أَنْفَعُ كَلِمَةً سَمِعْتُهَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُجِيزُوا عَلَيَّ لِأَنْفَعْتُهَا.
Abu Dharr narrates: ‘If you were to place a sharp steel sword on this (and he pointed to the nape of his neck) then I felt that I was carrying out a word (command) which I heard from the Holy Prophet^{sas}, I would do it before you proceeded (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul ‘Ilm, Bābun al-‘Ilmu Qabl al-Qauli wal-‘Amal).
- 3 And especially the *Al-Fazl* newspaper because the Friday sermons etc. of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masiḥ II^{ra} are published in this regularly, in sequence, after they are prepared with great effort and diligence.
- 4 عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَثَلُ الَّذِي لَا يَذْكُرُ رَبَّهُ وَالَّذِي لَا يَذْكُرُ مَثَلُ الْحَيِّ وَالْمَيِّتِ - *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb ad-Da‘wāt, Bāb Faḍli Dhikrillāhi ‘Azza wa Jall; Hadith 6407; (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb ad-Da‘wāt, Bāb Faḍlil-Ijtima‘ ‘Alā Tilāwatil-Qurān wa ‘Aladh-dhikr; Hadith 2700).
- 5 عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ دَخَلَ الْمَسْجِدَ فَدَخَلَ رَجُلٌ فَصَلَّى فَسَلَّمَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَرَدَّ وَقَالَ إِزْجِعْ فَصَلَّ فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ فَرَجَعَ

يُصَلِّي كَمَا صَلَّى ثُمَّ جَاءَ فَسَلَّمَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ ارْجِعْ فَصَلِّ فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ ثَلَاثًا فَقَالَ وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ بِالْحَقِّ مَا أَحْسَنُ غَيْرَهُ فَعَلَّمَنِي فَقَالَ إِذَا قُمْتَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَكَبِّرْ ثُمَّ اقْرَأْ مَا تَيَسَّرَ مَعَكَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ ثُمَّ ارْكَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ رَاكِعًا ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَعْتَدِلَ قَائِمًا ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ سَاجِدًا ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ جَالِسًا وَافْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ كُلِّهَا.

Abu Hurairah^{ra} narrates: The Prophet^{sas} entered the mosque and then a man came in, offered the Prayer and greeted the Prophet^{sas}. The Prophet^{sas} returned his greeting and said to him, ‘Go back and pray again for you have not prayed.’ The man offered the Prayer again in the same way as before, came back and greeted the Prophet^{sas}. He said to him thrice, ‘Go back and pray again for you have not prayed.’ The man said, ‘By Him Who has sent you with the truth! I do not know a better way of praying. Teach me how to pray.’ He said, ‘When you stand for the prayer, say *takbīr* and then recite from the Quran what you know and then bow till you feel at ease, then rise from bowing till you stand straight. Afterwards prostrate till you feel at ease and then raise (your head) and sit till you feel at ease and do the same in the whole of your Prayer’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābul-Azān, Bāb Wujūbul-Qir’ati Lil-Imāmi wal-Ma’mūmi fiṣ-Ṣalawāti Kullihā fil-Ḥaḍari was-Safari wa mā Yujharu fihā wa mā Yukhāfatu; Hadith 757).

- 6 أتى نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على امرأة تبكي على صبي لها فقال لها اتقي الله واصبري فقالت وما تبالي أنت بمصيبتي. The Prophet^{sas} came to a woman who was weeping for her (deceased) child. He said to her: ‘Fear Allah and have patience.’ She said:

‘You have not been afflicted as I have been’ (*Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, Kitābul-Janā’iz, Bāb aṣ-Ṣabru ‘Indal-Muṣībah; Hadith 3124).

- 7 قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.
The Holy Prophet^{sas} said that: The most beloved deeds to Allah are those which are done constantly, even if they were few (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābih*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb al-Qaṣdu fil ‘Amal; Hadith 1242).
- 8 Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II^{ra} had stated things to this point when someone had raised the question of what the appearance was of the angels that he had seen. Concerning this Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II^{ra} said that angels have different appearances and he had seen them in various colours and some of them were of such colours that do not exist in the world. The truth is that angels cannot be seen in their true form by human beings. Thus, they appear sometimes in the form of human beings and at other times in some other forms.
- 9 عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.
A‘ishah^{ra} narrates that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said: The most beloved deeds to Allah are those which are done constantly, even if they are few (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābih*, Kitāb-uṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb-ul-Qaṣdu fil ‘Amal; Hadith 1242).
- 10 حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا قَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ أَلَمْ أُخْبِرْ أَنَّكَ تَصُومُ التَّهَارَ وَتَقُومُ اللَّيْلَ؟ فَقُلْتُ بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ

اللَّهُ قَالَ فَلَا تَفْعَلْ صُمْ وَأُفْطِرْ وَقُمْ وَنَمْ فَإِنَّ لِحَسْبِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَإِنَّ لِعَيْنِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَإِنَّ لِرِزْوَاجِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَإِنَّ لِرِزْوَاكِ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا وَإِنَّ بِحَسْبِكَ أَنْ تَصُومَ كُلَّ شَهْرٍ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فَإِنَّ لَكَ بِكُلِّ حَسَنَةٍ عَشْرَ أَمْثَالِهَا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ صِيَامُ الدَّهْرِ كُلِّهِ فَشَدَّدْتُ فَشَدَّدَ عَلَيَّ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَجِدُ قُوَّةَ قَالَ فَصُمْ صِيَامَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَلَا تَزِدْ عَلَيْهِ قُلْتُ وَمَا كَانَ صِيَامَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ؟ قَالَ نِصْفَ الدَّهْرِ فَكَانَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ بَعْدَ مَا كَبِرَ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَبْلْتُ رُحْصَةَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr bin Al-Asra narrates: The Messenger of Allah^{sas} said to me, ‘O ‘Abdullah! Have I not been informed that you fast during the day and offer prayers during the night?’ Abdullah replied, ‘Yes, O Messenger of Allah!’ The Prophet^{sas} said, ‘Do not do that; fast and give it up (fast for a few days and then give it up for few days), offer prayers and also sleep at night, as your body has a right on you, and your eye has a right on you, and your wife has a right on you, and your guest has a right on you. And it is sufficient for you to fast three days in a month, as the reward of a good deed is multiplied ten times, so it will be like fasting throughout the year.’ I insisted (on fasting) and so I was given a hard instruction. I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! I have the strength.’ The Prophet^{sas} said, ‘Then fast how David, the Prophet of Allah, would fast, and do not fast more than that.’ I said, ‘How did David, the Prophet of Allah, fast?’ He said, ‘Half of the year,’ [every alternate day]. Afterwards, when ‘Abdullah became old, he used to say, ‘It would have been better for me if I had accepted the permission of the Prophet^{sas} (i.e. to fast only three days a month)’ (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣaum, Bāb Ḥaqqil-Jismi fiṣ-Ṣaum; Hadith 1975).

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَمْ يَقْفَهُ مِنْ قَرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ فِي فِي
 . أَقْلُ مِنْ ثَلَاثٍ. Abdullah bin Umar relates: The Prophet, peace
 and blessings of Allah be upon him, said: ‘He who recites
 the [entire] Quran in less than three days has not under-
 stood what he has read’ (*Sunan at-Tirmadhī*, Abwābul-
 Qirā’at, Bāb fi kam Aqra’ul-Qur’ān Hadith 2949).

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II^{ra} had spoken to this point
 when someone inquired whether the Quran should be
 recited on Fridays as well, and if it should be recited on
 Fridays, why is there no *dars* on Fridays (In Qadian there is
 no *dars* conducted on Fridays). Concerning this Ḥuḍūr^{ra}
 said, ‘The Holy Quran should be recited on Fridays as well,
 but there is no *dars* because it is also a form of education
 and since Friday is established as somewhat of a holiday
 for Muslims, educational activities are not performed on
 Friday. Secondly, another act of worship has been added
 for this day and that is the Friday sermon and that takes
 the place of the *dars*.’

- II عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مُعَقَّبَاتٌ لَا يَحْبِيبُ قَائِلُهُنَّ تُسَبِّحُ اللَّهَ فِي دُبُرِ
 . كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ وَتَحْمَدُهُ ثَلَاثًا وَثَلَاثِينَ وَتُكَبِّرُهُ أَرْبَعًا وَثَلَاثِينَ. The Holy
 Prophet^{sas} said: There are certain prayers right after every
 prescribed Prayer that will protect the reciter from disap-
 pointment: ‘Holy is Allah’ thirty-three times, ‘Praise be to
 Allah’ thirty-three times, and ‘Allah is most Great’ thirty-
 four times (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Abwābud-Da’wāt, Bāb
 mā jā’ fit-Tasbiḥi wat-Takbīri wat-Taḥmīdi ‘Indal-Manām;
 Hadith 3412).

- 12 Someone asked whether one should make use of a *tasbīḥ* [prayer beads used to keep count] in order to recite like this. Concerning this Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ II^{ra} said that this is an innovation.

- 13 عَنْ حَنْظَلَةَ الْأَسِيدِيِّ قَالَ وَكَانَ مِنْ كُتَّابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَقِينِي أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَقَالَ كَيْفَ أَنْتَ؟ يَا حَنْظَلَةُ؟ قَالَ قُلْتُ نَافَقَ حَنْظَلَةُ قَالَ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ مَا تَقُولُ؟ قَالَ قُلْتُ نَكُونُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَذْكُرُنَا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّجْوَى حَتَّى كَأَنَّا رَأَيْ عَيْنٍ فَإِذَا خَرَجْنَا مِنْ عِنْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَافَسْنَا الْأَرْوَاحَ وَالْأَوْلَادَ وَالصَّيَعَاتِ فَنَسِينَا كَثِيرًا قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ فَوَاللَّهِ إِنَّا لَنَلْقَى مِثْلَ هَذَا فَاِنطَلَقْتُ أَنَا وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ حَتَّى دَخَلْنَا عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قُلْتُ نَافَقَ حَنْظَلَةُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَمَا ذَاكَ؟ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ نَكُونُ عِنْدَكَ تُذَكِّرُنَا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّجْوَى حَتَّى كَأَنَّا رَأَيْ عَيْنٍ فَإِذَا خَرَجْنَا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ عَافَسْنَا الْأَرْوَاحَ وَالْأَوْلَادَ وَالصَّيَعَاتِ نَسِينَا كَثِيرًا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ إِنْ لَوْ تَدُونُونَ عَلَى مَا تَكُونُونَ عِنْدِي وَفِي الذِّكْرِ لَصَافَحْتَكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَى فُرُشِكُمْ وَفِي Hanzala Al-Usayyidi, who was amongst the scribes of the Holy Prophet^{sas}, said that: I met Abu Bakr. He said: 'How are you Hanzala?' He (Hanzala) said: 'Hanzala has become a hypocrite.' He (Abu Bakr) said: 'Holy is Allah, what are you saying?' Thereupon, he said: 'When we are in the company of the Holy Prophet^{sas} we ponder over the Hellfire and Paradise as if we are seeing them with our very eyes and when we are away from the Holy Prophet^{sas}, we attend to our wives, our children, our business; most of these things (pertaining to the afterlife) slip out of our minds.' Abu Bakr said: 'By Allah, I also experience the same.' So, Abu Bakr and I went to the Holy Prophet^{sas} and said to him: 'O Messenger of Allah! Hanzala has become a hypocrite.' Thereupon the

Holy Prophet^{sas} said: ‘What has happened to you?’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah, when we are in your company, we are reminded of the Hellfire and Paradise as if we are seeing them with our own eyes, but whenever we go away from you and attend to our wives, children, and business, much of these things slip out of our minds.’ Thereupon, the Holy Prophet^{sas} said: ‘By Him in whose hand is my life, if your state were to remain the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in the remembrance (of Allah), the angels would shake hands with you in your beds and in your paths but, Hanzala, time should be devoted (to worldly affairs) and time (should be devoted to prayer and meditation).’ He (the Holy Prophet) said this thrice (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitābut-Taubah, Bāb Fadli Dawāmidh-Dhikri wal-Fikri fil Umūril-Ākhirati wal-Murāqabati wa Jawāzi Tarki Dhālika fī Ba’dil-Auqāti wal-Ishtighāli bid-Dunyā; Hadith 2750).

- 14 فَقَصَصْتُهَا عَلَى حَفْصَةَ فَقَصَصْتُهَا حَفْصَةَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ نِعْمَ الرَّجُلُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ لَوْ كَانَ يُصَلِّي مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَكَانَ بَعْدَ لَا يَنَامُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا.
I narrated the dream to Hafsa who told it to the Holy Prophet^{sas}. The Prophet said, ‘Abdullah is the best of men, if only he could pray at night.’ After that Abdullah (i.e. Salim’s father) used to sleep but a little at night (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitābut-Tahajjud, Bābu Faḍli Qiyāmil-Lail; Hadith 1122).
- 15 عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ رَجِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلَّى وَأَيْقِظَ امْرَأَتَهُ فَصَلَّتْ فَإِنْ أَبَتْ نَضَحَ فِي وَجْهِهَا الْمَاءَ رَجِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأَةً

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ○ قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ○ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ○ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ○ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ○ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ○ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ○

- 19 عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت أمر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ببناء المسجد في
A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, narrates: The Messenger of Allah^{sas} ordered a mosque to
be built in the residential area, and for it to be cleaned and
perfumed (*Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, Kitābus-Ṣalāt, Bābul-
Masājid wa Mawad'iṣ-Ṣalāt; Hadith 717).
- 20 عن أبي سفيان عن جابر قال سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول إن الشيطان إذا سمع النداء بالصلاة ذهب حتى يكون مكان الزواجر.
Abu Sufyan nar-
rates that Jabir had heard the Messenger of Allah^{sas} say-
ing: When Satan hears the call to prayer, he runs away to
a distance like that of Rauha [a distance of thirty-six miles
from Madinah] (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb Faḍlil-
Adhān wa Harab-ish-Shaiṭān 'inda Samā'ihī; Hadith 388).
- 21 عن أبي مسعود قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يمسح مناكبنا في الصلاة ويقول استؤوا ولا تختلفوا فتختلف قلوبكم.
Abu Mas'ud narrates that:
The Messenger of Allah^{sas} used to place his hand upon
our shoulders in Prayer and say: Keep (the rows) straight,
do not be irregular, for it will cause dissension in your
hearts (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb-uṣ-Ṣalāt, Bāb Taswiyatiṣ-
Ṣufūfi wa Iqāmatihā wa Faḍlil-Awwali fal-Awwali minhā
wal-Izdihāmi 'Aḷaṣ-Ṣaffil-Awwali wal-Musābaqati ilaihā
wat-Taqdīmi Aulal-Faḍli wa Taqrībihim min-al-Imām;
Hadith 432).

22. **وَيَكُونُ فِي رُكُوعِهِ نَاطِلًا نَحْوَ قَدَمَيْهِ.** And while he is in his *rukūʿ*, he should be looking towards his feet (*Awārif-il-Maʿārif, al-Bāb as-Sābiʿ wath-Thalāthūn fī Wasfī Ṣalāti Ahlil-Qurb.* vol. 2 p.15; Published by Maktabat ath-Thaqāfah ad-Dīniyyah, Cairo 2006).
23. **عَنْ أَنَسٍ كَانَ قِرَامٌ لِعَائِشَةَ سَتَرَتْ بِهِ جَانِبَ بَيْتِهَا فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنْ أَمِينِطِي عَنَّا قِرَامِكِ هَذَا فَإِنَّهُ لَا تَرَأَى تَصَاوِيرَهُ تَعْرِضُ فِي صَلَاتِي.** Anas narrates that Aʿishah^{ra} had a *qirām* [a thin marked woollen curtain] with which she had screened one side of her home. The Holy Prophet^{sas} said: Take away this *qirām* of yours, as its pictures are displayed in front of me during my Prayer (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitābuṣ-Ṣalāt, Bābu in Ṣalla fī Thaubin Muṣallibin au Taṣāwīr hal Tafsudu Ṣalātuhū wa mā Yunhā min Dhālik; Hadith 374*).
24. **عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَوْ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمْ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ إِمَامٌ عَادِلٌ وَشَابٌّ نَشَأَ بِعِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ وَرَجُلٌ كَانَ قَلْبُهُ مَعْلَقًا بِالْمَسْجِدِ إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنْهُ حَتَّى يَعُودَ إِلَيْهِ وَرَجُلَانِ تَخَابَا فِي اللَّهِ فَاجْتَمَعَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ وَتَفَرَّقَا وَرَجُلٌ ذَكَرَ اللَّهَ خَالِيًا فَفَاضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ وَرَجُلٌ دَعَتْهُ (امْرَأَةٌ) ذَاتُ حَسَبٍ وَجَمَالٍ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَجُلٌ تَصَدَّقَ بِصَدَقَةٍ فَأَخْفَاهَا حَتَّى لَا تَعْلَمَ شِمَالَهُ مَا تُنْفِقُ يَمِينُهُ.** Abu Hurairah narrates or Abu Saʿeed narrated, the Messenger of Allah^{sas} said: Seven people will be shaded by Allah under His shade on the day when there will be no shade except His. They are: a just leader; a young man who has been brought up in the worship of Allah; a man whose heart is attached to the mosque from the moment he leaves the mosque until he returns to it; two persons who love each other only for Allah's sake and

meet and part in Allah's cause only; a person who remembers Allah in seclusion and his eyes are filled with tears; a man who refuses the call of a charming woman of noble birth and says, 'I fear Allah'; a person who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Abwābuz-Zuhd, Bāb mā jā' fil-Ḥubbi fillāh; Hadith 2391).

- 25 عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ قَالَ حِينَ يَأْوِي إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ (الْعَظِيمَ) الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ذُنُوبَهُ وَمِثْلَ زَبَدِ الْبَحْرِ. وَإِنْ كَانَتْ مِثْلَ زَبَدِ الْبَحْرِ. It is narrated that the Holy Prophet^{sas} said: One who goes to his bed and recites the following prayer three times, his sins will be forgiven even if they are like the foam of the sea: I seek forgiveness from Allah the Great who is One, the Living and All-Sustaining, and I turn to Him in repentance (*Sunan at-Tirmidhī*, Abwābud-Da'wāt, Bāb mā jā' fid-Du'ā' idhā awā ilā firāshih; Hadith 3397).

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Please note that within the text of the translation, words given in parentheses () are generally the words of the author or compiler. If any explanatory words or phrases are added by the translator for the purpose of clarification, they are put in square brackets []. Footnotes given by the publisher are marked ‘[Publisher]’.

References to the Holy Quran contain the name of the *sūrah* [i.e. chapter] followed by a chapter: verse citation, e.g. *Sūrah al-Jumu‘ah*, 62:4, and count *Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥīm* [‘In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful’] as the first verse in every chapter that begins with it.

The following abbreviations have been used:

ṣas *ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, meaning ‘peace and blessings of Allah be upon him’, is written after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{ṣas}.

as *‘alaihis-salām*, meaning ‘peace be upon him’, is written after the names of Prophets other than the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{as}.

ra *raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu/‘anhā/‘anhum*, meaning ‘may Allah be pleased with him/her/them’, is written after the names of the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{ra} or the companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

rtā *rahmatullāh ‘alaihi/‘alaihā/‘alaihim*, meaning ‘may Allah shower His mercy upon him/her/them’, is written after the names of those deceased pious Muslims who are not companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas} or companions of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

aba *ayyadahullāhu Ta‘āla binaṣrihil-‘Azīz*, meaning ‘may Allah the Almighty help him with His powerful support’, is written after the name of the present head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V.

Readers are urged to recite the full salutations when reading the book. In general, we have adopted the following system established by the Royal Asiatic Society for our transliteration.

- ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word *honour*.
- ث *th* – pronounced like *th* in the English word *thing*.
- ح *h* – a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*.
- خ *kh* – pronounced like the Scottish *ch* in *loch*.
- ذ *dh* – pronounced like the English *th* in *that*.
- ص *ṣ* – strongly articulated *s*.
- ض *ḍ* – similar to the English *th* in *this*.
- ط *ṭ* – strongly articulated palatal *t*.
- ظ *ẓ* – strongly articulated *z*.
- ع ‘ – a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.

- غ *gh* – a sound similar to the French *r* in *grasseye*, and to the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the ‘gargling’ position to pronounce it.
- ق *q* – a deep guttural *k* sound.
- ء ’ – a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by:

- a* for (like *u* in *bud*).
- i* for (like *i* in *bid*).
- u* for (like *oo* in *wood*).

Long vowels by:

- ā* for or ʾ (like *a* in *father*).
- ī* for ى or (like *ee* in *deep*).
- ū* for و (like *oo* in *root*).

Other vowels by:

- ai* for ى (like *i* in *site*).
- au* for و (resembling *ou* in *sound*).

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe. As noted above, the single quotation mark [‘] is used for transliterating ع which is distinct from the apostrophe [’] used for ء.

We have not transliterated some Arabic words which have become part of English language, e.g. Islam, Quran, Mahdi, jihad, Ramadan, and ummah. The Royal Asiatic Society’s rules of

transliteration for names of persons, places, and other terms, are not followed throughout the book as many of the names contain non-Arabic characters and carry a local transliteration and pronunciation style.

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We are grateful to the Research Cell for providing the full references for all quoted *ahādīth*. The relevant Arabic with references is added to the endnotes.

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GLOSSARY



For the benefit of readers, some important Islamic terms are explained below.

Adhān Call for formal Islamic Prayer.

Aḥādīth Plural of hadith. Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{as}.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Community of Muslims who have accepted the claims of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian as the Promised Messiah. The Community was established by the Promised Messiah^{as} in 1889, and is now under the leadership of his fifth *Khalīfah*, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (may Allah strengthen him). The Community is also known as Jamā'at

Ahmadiyya. A member of the Community is called an Ahmadi Muslim or an Ahmadi.

‘Alīm An attribute of Allah, which means the All-Knowing.

Allah Allah is the personal name of God in Islam. To show proper reverence for Him, the Muslims often add *Tā‘ālā*, the Exalted, when saying His Holy name.

Āmīn A term which literally means, ‘so let it be’ and is used at the end of a supplication to pray that God may accept it. It is similar in meaning to ‘amen’.

Annual Convention (Jalsa Salana)

A conference held annually and attended by Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims and other people throughout the world in large numbers. The annual conference was initiated by the Promised Messiah^{as} in 1891. It is known by its original Urdu name, *Jalsa Salana*.

Āyatul-Kursī The Throne Verse of the Holy Quran, Chapter 2, verse 256.

Dhikr and Dhikr-e-Ilāhī *Dhikr* is an Arabic word meaning remembrance. *Dhikr-e-Ilāhī* means the remembrance of Allah. See also **Prayer and Prayers**.

Fard Lit. compulsory or obligatory. Refers to the units of the five daily Prayers that must be performed, shortened while traveling. Contrast with *sunnah*, *nafl*, etc.

Hadith A saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sas}. The plural is *ahādith*.

Ḥadrat A term of respect used to show honour and reverence for a person of established righteousness and piety. The literal meaning is: His/Her Holiness, Worship, Eminence, etc. It is also used for God in the superlative sense.

Holy Prophet^{sas} A term used exclusively for Ḥadrat Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Holy Quran The Book sent by Allah for the guidance of all mankind. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet^{sas}, over a period of twenty-three years.

Ḥudūr Your Honour/Holiness, His Honour/Holiness.

‘Ishā’ Lit. evening. Refers to the night Prayer before going to bed (one of the five daily Prayers in Islam).

Jalsa Salana Annual Convention, Conference, or gathering. See **Annual Convention**.

Jamā‘at Jamā‘at means community. Although the word Jamā‘at itself may refer to any community, in this book, Jamā‘at specifically refers to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamā‘at.

Khabīr An attribute of Allah, which means the All-Aware.

Khalīfah Caliph is derived from the Arabic word *Khalīfah*, which means ‘successor’. (Pl. *Khulafā’*.) In many divine revelations someone commissioned by God Almighty is referred to as His Khalīfah.

In Islamic terminology, the title *'Khalīfa-e-Rāshid'* [righteous *Khalīfab*] is applied to each of the first four *Kbulafā'* who continued the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{as}. Ahmadi Muslims refer to each successor of the Promised Messiah^{as} as *Khalīfatul-Masīh*.

Khalīfatul-Masīh *see Khalīfab*.

Khāliq An attribute of Allah, which means the Creator.

Maghrib Refers to the evening Prayer, immediately after sunset (one of the five daily Prayers in Islam).

Makkah The ancient Arabian city, birthplace of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{as}, settled by Prophet Abraham^{as}, and home to the Ka'bah, the holiest site in Islam.

Maulawī A Muslim religious cleric.

Muhammad^{as} Founder of Islam. *see* Holy Prophet^{as}.

Muṣleḥ Mau'ūd A term, meaning Promised Reformer, applied to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīh II, Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra}. He is called Muṣleḥ Mau'ūd because he was born in accordance with a prophecy made by the Promised Messiah^{as} in 1886

about the birth of a righteous son who would be endowed with special abilities, attributes and powers. The life and works of Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Deen Mahmood Ahmad^{ra} are a testimony to the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Nafl/Nawāfil *See* Prayer and Prayers.

Pīr(s) Literally, 'old' (in Persian). Generally refers to a spiritual leader at whose hands students have taken an oath of allegiance. Title is commonly used for leaders of Sufi orders.

Prayer and Prayers Three Islamic terms, all sometimes translated as prayer, should be distinguished.

The first term is *Du'ā* prayers or supplications made to God Almighty. *Du'ā* can be made at any time and in any language. It does not require any formal prescribed posture. *Du'ā* is translated in the text as 'prayer' or 'supplications'.

Secondly, *Ṣalāt* refers to the five daily Prayer services prescribed for all Muslims. Unlike *Du'ā*, *Ṣalāt* has fixed timings and modes of performance. We have retained the term *Ṣalāt* in the translation or have used the term 'prescribed Prayer', or 'Prayer'. Each Prayer is divided into *Rak'ā*. Each *rak'āt* includes several postures—standing *Qiyām*, bowing *Rukū'*, sitting *Qa'dab*, and

prostration *Sajdah*. The prescribed Prayers have three components:

Fard, those enjoined by Allah; *Sunnah*, those offered regularly by the Holy Prophet^{sas} and enjoined by him; and *Nafl*, the voluntary components (discussed below).

Nafl means to do more than is required by duty or obligation i.e. voluntary. *Nawāfil* is the plural of *Nafl*. *Nawāfil*, which are similar in form to *Ṣalāt*, may be offered independently or in conjunction with a prescribed Prayer. Performance of *Nawāfil*, though not obligatory, is highly meritorious. One *Nafl* Prayer of great merit is *Tahajjud*, the late night Prayer. See also *Sunnah*.

Promised Messiah This term refers to the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian. He claimed that he had been sent by Allah in accordance with prophecies of the Holy Prophet^{sas} about the coming, in latter days of a *Mahdi* (the Guided One) and Messiah from among the Muslims.

Qādir An attribute of Allah, which means the All Powerful.

Qiblah Direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah, toward which Muslims face to offer formal Prayers.

The first Qiblah in Islam was Baitul-Muqaddas in Jerusalem.

Quddūs An attribute of Allah, which means the Holy.

Rukū' The bowing down position in the Prayer.

Ṣāhib A title of respect similar to diverse English terms like Mister, Honourable, and Reverend.

Sajdah The prostration position in the Prayer.

Shariah Religious law of Islam. The term is also used in the general sense for any revealed law.

Sunnah In the context of the formal Prayer, refers to those *rak'āt* that the Holy Prophet^{sas} offered but are not prescribed as obligatory and are dropped while travelling. *Sunnah rak'āt* are offered regularly by practicing Muslims.

Sūrah A chapter of the Holy Quran.

Tahmīd Praising Allah by reciting *Alḥamdulillāh* (All praise belongs to Allah).

Takbīr Proclaiming the Greatness of Allah by reciting, *Allāhu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest).

-
- Tirmidhī** A book which contains collections of *ahādīth*.
- Zakat** The fourth pillar in Islam known as obligatory almsgiving, which constitutes the social support system in Islam for the distribution of wealth. The poor and needy are provided for by the contributions of the rich and affluent. Literally means, 'increase' or 'purification.'
- Zūhr** Lit. midday, noon. Refers to the early afternoon Prayer (one of the five daily Prayers in Islam).

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