



# SUFI WISDOM

*A Source of Inspirational and Traditional Islamic Knowledge*

MARCH/APRIL 2008 • RABI'UL AWWAL 1429 • NO:10 • £2 UK • US\$5 • AU\$5

## REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH THE BEST OF ACTIONS

*"Remember me, I will remember you"*

(Baqarah, 2/152)

**OSMAN NURI EFENDI**  
**DHIKRULLAH AND DAWN**  
**IN THE UNIVERSE**

**AHMET TASGETIREN**  
**AWARENESS OF BEING**  
**WITH ALLAH**

**PROF. HASAN KAMIL YILMAZ**  
**TRAINING IN DHIKR**

**INTERVIEW**  
**LISA JANE DHAR**







*D*ear Readers,

"And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility, and remember without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are heedless."  
(Al-Araf, 7/205)

Dhikr is living with Allah Almighty. Dhikr is opening our heart through the glorification of Allah and His Majesty. Our Prophet said: "Do you want me to tell you about the best of deeds? It is truly beloved by your Lord. It raises your degrees toward Him. It is better for you than the spending of gold. It is better for you than going on jihad." They said: "O Prophet of Allah! What is this thing that is better?" The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Remembrance of Allah"

For this reason, we here at Sufi Wisdom have decided to dedicate this issue to the 'Remembrance of Allah.' In this issue, our teacher, Osman Nuri Efendi, discusses the topic of Dhikrullah (Remembrance of Allah) and dawn. He explains to us that the way to divine closeness for the servant is through not forgetting their Lord.

Mahmud Sami Efendi's article is concerned with the merits of 'La ilahe illallah' and Hasan Kamil Yilmaz explains the benefits of making dhikr and how making dhikr leads to the vitality of heart. Ahmet Tasgetiren writes about

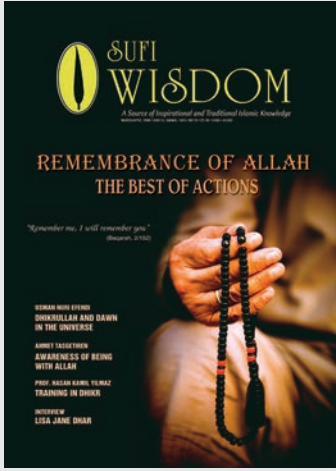
This issue also contains the third part of a four-part series entitled "The Weaknesses of Human Beings" which will discuss the four main areas of weakness and what Allah Almighty says to us about these subjects in the Qur'an. This series will also focus on the weaknesses of morals and manners.

Whatever we are doing, we should always remember and praise Allah. If we remember Allah in all our actions then we will be rewarded not only for the intention, but also for the act that is carried out.

May Allah enliven our souls with His Dhikr and grant us a high rank in His Paradise.

Amen!

*Elif Kapici*  
editor@sufiwisdom.net



- SUFI WISDOM Bimonthly Islamic Journal
- Copyright 2008
- No: 10 MARCH/APRIL 2008 - 1429
- Price: \$5 (USA), £2 (UK), AUS \$5 (AUS)
- SUFI WISDOM is published by ALTINOLUK Publishing Co.
- Chairman: **ABDULLAH SERT**
- Managing Editor: **M. LUTFI ARSLAN**
- Editor: **ELIF KAPICI**
- Editorial Board: **M. LUTFI ARSLAN**  
**SULEYMAN DERIN**  
**JACQUILINE V. FRANK**
- Design: **Altinolukgraphic / MUZAFFER CALISKAN**
- Subscription Rate For One Year: (Including Postage)  
\$30 (USA) - AUS \$ 30 (AUS) - £12 (UK)
- [www.sufiwisdom.net](http://www.sufiwisdom.net)
- **Distribution and Subscription Representatives:**
- AUSTRALIA - FATIH CIFTCI 1/8 YARALLA CRT MEADOW HEIGHTS 3048 VIC • e-mail: [melbourne@sufiwisdom.net](mailto:melbourne@sufiwisdom.net)
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- Phone: +90.212.671 07 00 (pbx) Fax: +90.212.671 07 17
- Printed by ERKAM Printing • Phone: +90.212.671 07 07
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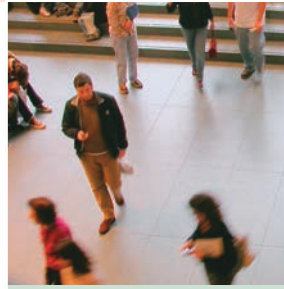
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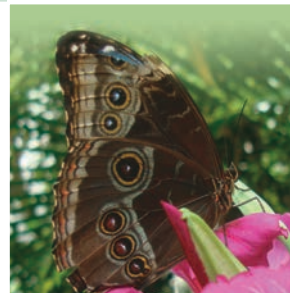
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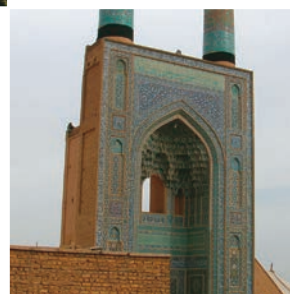
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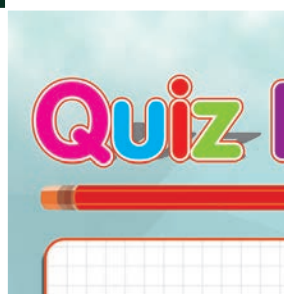
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# DHIKRULLAH

## AND DAWN IN THE UNIVERSE



The seven heavens and the earth, and whoever is therein, glorify Him. There is nothing that does not glorify Him with His praise. Lo! you cannot comprehend their glorification. Surely He is All-Clement, All-Forgiving. (Isra, 17/44)



Our Lord has granted life to all creation through the manifestation of His name "al-Hayy". In truth, there is not one creation in the universe that can be called "inanimate". Being alive is generally seen as something that is unique to humans, animals and plants, although this is not the case when one looks, through eyes of divine love, at what goes on inside a single atom. Something that is considered to be inanimate leaves us in awe and amazement at the magnificent life that it carries within. This awe manifests itself, accelerating from micro beings to macro beings.

The Lord Almighty has made Himself known to all His living and inanimate creation and has obliged them with constant dhikr. For this reason, all creation is aware of Him and makes dhikr in their own way, in accordance with their nature.

Inanimate objects, plants and animals also know the beloved Prophet (pbuh) and all other prophets. This can be seen in prophetic miracles. When necessary, with the grace of Allah Almighty,



the prophets can give life to a stone, to a staff or to similar inanimate objects. For this reason, as a miracle of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the pebbles in Abu Jahil's hands spoke, acknowledging the Prophet's truthfulness and making dhikr of Allah. The staff of Prophet Moses turned into a serpent with the grace of Allah Almighty and terrified the Pharaoh. Another time, surrendering to its Lord, the Red Sea gave way to Prophet Moses and his Companions, but when it was the Pharaoh's turn, the sea swallowed him and his soldiers. The date log in the masjid of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) wailed with longing and yearning for the prophet. Animals cried out against the injustices committed against our dearest Prophet (pbuh) by their owners.

Mawlana Jalaladdin Rumi beautifully voices the submission of the inanimate objects to the divine will in the following verses.

"Do you not see? The clouds, the moon and the stars, all rotate in order. Each of these countless stars rises at its due time; they do not fall behind or come forward.

The submission of the pebbles to our dear Prophet and the staff to Prophet Moses inform us of the submission of the rest of the creation, which we consider to be inanimate, to the will of Allah.

They say: 'We know Allah and we submit to His will. We are all like the Red Sea. Although it was a sea, it differentiated between the Israelites and the Pharaoh whom it drowned.'

Wherever there was a stone or a tree it greeted Prophet Muhammad openly. So know that everything that you consider to be inanimate is truly alive!"

Not only humans and djinns, but all of creation, including animals and inanimate objects, which were

created for the sake of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), know the beloved Prophet through a divine secret. They obey him unconditionally with eternal love. But based on the secret nature of the test of this earthly life, the curtains of the gayb are pulled over mankind's eyes to prevent this truth from generally being realized. The following sayings of the Prophet, which awaken us from heedlessness, teach us very important lessons.

"All the creation, except the defiant ones of humans and djinns, know that I am the Messenger of Allah." (Ahmad bin Hanbal, Muthnad)

This shows that knowing and obeying Allah and His messenger is not unique to mankind. On the contrary, it can be said that the rest of creation, although involuntarily, are in a superior position.

In the following verse Allah Almighty describes the manifestation of this truth in another creation: And We subdued the mountains, as well as birds, to glorify Us along with David. It is We Who do all these things. (Anbiya, 21/79)

Our Lord awakens the heedless with His verses and states that all His creation knows Him and utters the Creator's name and attributes in a language that our intellects cannot comprehend. We can only hear this dhikr of creation by purifying the soul with worship, dhikr, tasbeeh and a sincere life of servitude. These acts will lift the curtains of heedlessness and thus a person will become aware of the world of truth. The conversation of Yunus Emre with the yellow flower is like this. The following parable of the great Sufi, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi, explains the obligation of vegetation to perform dhikr of Allah in a beautiful way.

**All His creation  
knows Him and  
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comprehend.**



How much we  
remember our Lord in  
this life on earth will  
determine the divine  
reunion we will attain in  
the other world.

One day Aziz Mahmud Hudayi's great teacher Uftade had gone to the fields for a lesson with his followers. He required all his followers to gather bouquets for him from the best parts of the field. But Qadi Mahmud Efendi only had a faded flower with a broken stem in his hand. While the rest of the students presented their bouquets to their teacher with delight, Qadi Mahmud humbly presented his sheikh with this broken and faded flower. Uftade Efendi questioned him while all the other followers stared on curiously:

"Mahmud, my son! Why did you bring a broken, faded flower when everyone else brought bouquets?"

Qadi Mahmud looked down with humility and said: "Sir! Whatever I present you with will be inadequate. But whenever I put my hand forth to a flower I found it reciting the Lord's name 'Allah'. My soul could not bring itself to hinder their dhikr. Inevitably, I had to bring this flower in my hands as it could not continue its dhikr."

In this matter Muhyiddin Arabi says: "All creation makes dhikr of Allah in its own unique way. But different beings are on different levels in this matter. Among creation, those who are the furthest away from heedlessness are the inanimate beings. This is because they do not need to eat, drink or breathe. After inanimate beings comes the vegetation; with these the needs begin. This is because they produce compositions of colourful flowers, leaves and fruit with divine guidance, taking nutrition from the earth, water and the sun. After these come the animals. Their vital functions are more developed than that of the vegetation. For this reason their needs have grown. The feeling of nafs, the self, has grown. But the needs of human beings are endless. Their ego, their fantasies and worldly ambitions drive them to constant heedlessness. O human! What is it that deludes you concerning your Lord, the All-Munificent?

He Who has created you, fashioned you, and proportioned you Having constituted you in whatever form He has willed. (Infitar, 82/6-8)



Verses from the Qur'an lay out magnificent scenery in front of us:

"To God prostrate all that are in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, as do their shadows in the mornings and the evenings." (Ra'd, 13/15)

"Do they not see the things that God has created, how their shadows bend to the right and to the left, making prostration before God, and that in the humblest manner?" (Nahl, 16/48)

In these scenes the prostrations are doubled with the joining of the shadows. This means that there are two concurrent prostrations, one belonging to the being itself and the other to its shadow. Every particle of the universe, believing or not, has prostrated for its Lord and given itself to fulfilling its duty in His presence. What a loss for the heart of the heedless, full of the negligence and confusion that are caused by denial and sin, that as the entire universe is in prostration, even when the very existence of those disbelievers and heedless ones are involuntarily submitting to Lord Almighty's will...

Those who take gods other than Allah do not know that the entire creation, including the shadows of those which they idolize, actually turn to Allah, whom they deny, and submit to the order their Lord has ordained for the entire universe. What a great deception and loss.

Again the verses describe a scene composed of shadows, objects, living beings and angels. All of them fulfil their duty with awe and with the entrancement of worship. The calamity of abstaining from worshipping Allah and opposing His will becomes a state of bewilderment and ignorance for mankind. The verses where the entire creation, even the shadows that are described, submits to their Lord throw such scenes in the faces of these ignorant people, as if to mock them.

If we truly observe our surroundings with a watchful eye, the prostration of the shadows that lie beyond the depth of the horizon and the spreading of the mountains are just a different form of sajdah (prostration). The shadows of the trees, the flowers, the grass, the humans and the

Dhikr will only cause intentions and deeds to reach a certain level if it finds a place in the heart, for the heart is the center of feelings.



animals which fall on the earth exhibit the excitement of the sajdah beautifully. It is as if the earth is a prayer rug for the sajdah of all creation. Rain is also like a celestial weeping and thunder is like the tears gushing from the bosom of the heavens.

The state of the creation in the heavens and earth is a magnificent guidance for the sensitive heart. From the invocations of the minute heart of a tiny insect to the roaring of the huge and majestic animals, all are manifestations of divine power.

"Do you ever consider that all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth prostrate themselves to God, and so do the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, and the beasts, and so do many among human beings? Whereas many others are deservedly condemned to punishment." (Haj, 22/18)

As can be seen, all of creation and even the inanimate objects are in a state of dhikr. Unfortunately, some human beings will face punishment because of their heedlessness in remembering Allah. Truly, everything in the universe, from the atom to the planets, knows their Creator. The birds know their own prayers and supplications, the mountains and the streams continue to remember Allah and make dhikr. While this is the situation, it is then a very bitter loss for a human being not to be able to reach for salvation, rather being deprived of the dhikr of the Creator without taking any heed of this spectacular scenery.

Surely, the way to divine closeness for the servant is to not forget their Lord. The insightful believers see the light of Allah's dhikr wherever they look and hear it whenever they listen. How much we remember our Lord in this life on

earth will determine the divine reunion we will attain in the other world.

The way to live with a clean conscience, to die with iman and to reach eternal peace and comfort is through remembering our Lord. The life of those who forget their Lord is wasted in a whirl of heedlessness. One awakens from that heedlessness only with death. But by that time all will have come to an end and one will have fallen into great loss.

In the verse it says:

"And do not be like those who are oblivious of God and so God has made them oblivious of their own selves. Those, they are the transgressors." (Hashr, 59/19)

One of the Companions of the Prophet said: "O, Messenger of Allah! The decrees of Islam have increased. Teach me something that will help me easily gain the favour of Allah and happiness in the hereafter, so I can do it."

The Messenger replied: "Make your tongue constantly moist with His dhikr."

Making dhikr of Allah does not only consist of repeating His name "Allah" as a word. Dhikr will only cause intentions and deeds to reach a certain level if it finds a place in the heart, for the heart is the center of feelings. Dhikr made with this quality shows the loyalty to the pledge of *bezm-i elest\**, which is "Yes! You are our Lord"; with that devotion these people never forget their Lord.

Lord Almighty has warned us many times of the great danger of being oblivious to making dhikr. He even warned His prophets Moses and Aaron when He sent them to the Pharaoh and said: "Go, thou and thy brother, with My Signs, and slacken not, either of you, in keeping Me in remembrance." (Taha, 20/42)

**The dawn prayer  
and dhikr almost  
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of a meeting and  
conversation with  
the noble beloved.**



Thus, He wanted this to be an example and a warning to us.

The means to reach the sensitivity at which Muslim souls can receive divine consent and escape the difficulty of ignorance is through constant dhikr. Spiritual vigilance is only possible through the consciousness of dhikr in every breath one takes, throughout one's life.

"Has not the time yet come for those who believe that their hearts should soften with humility and submit in the face of God's Remembrance (the Qur'an) and what has come down of the truth?" (Hadid, 57/16)

The above verse was revealed to warn some of the Companions who lived through sufferings and difficulties in Mecca, but who had lapsed into a state of carelessness following the emigration when they had attained plenty of provisions and blessings.

In this regard we should enter a season of endless divine love and should be in a state in which we thrive with spiritual fitness that cannot be shaken by worldly desires or passing interests.

Those who love carry the beloved in their hearts at all times and never forget them. A heart without love is like untended soil. The actual ability is to love. The reason for existence is love. Lord Almighty created this universe and wished to be known with love.

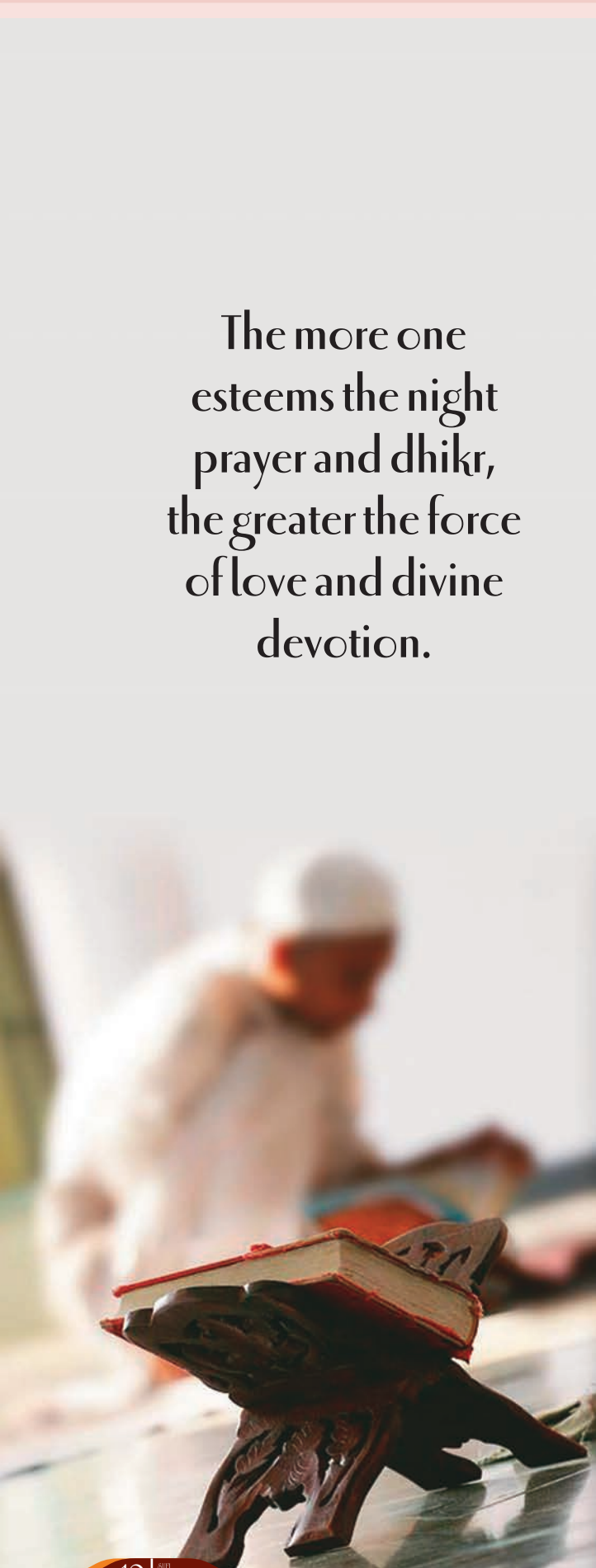

The greatness of love is in comparison to the sacrifice made for the Beloved. Waking up before dawn to take refuge in Allah Almighty is one of the clearest examples of this state.

And during part of the night prostrate to Him, and glorify Him a long part of the night. Those (sinful unbelievers) love and prefer that which is in advance, and neglect a grievous Day ahead of them. (Insan, 76/26-27)

Their sides forsake their beds at night, calling out to their Lord in fear and hope, and out of what We have provided for them they spend. (Sajdah, 32/16)

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The more one  
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Even though believers should constantly be in a consciousness of dhikr, the most blessed time for dhikr is just before dawn. Lord Almighty praises the dhikr made at this time of day more than those made at other times, as it is more difficult to engage in dhikr and worship just before dawn compared to during the rest of the day. For this reason, reviving oneself at dawn is a statement of pure love and respect felt by the servant for their Lord. The more one esteems the night prayer and dhikr, the greater the force of love and divine devotion. In this regard the dawn prayer and dhikr almost carry the nature of a meeting and conversation with the noble beloved.

The students of a sage asked about a matter in which they could not find wisdom:

"Sir, we see that dogs die naturally and are not killed for their meat, like some other animals; compared to other animals they have a large litter, but their numbers do not increase rapidly. However, humans sacrifice sheep with the intention of worship and eat from their meat; generally sheep give birth to one lamb at a time. Yet their numbers do not decrease, instead they increase. What could be the wisdom of this plenty in sheep?"

After listening to the question with a smile the man gave this answer. "What you have stated in animals is an indication of the blessings of the time before dawn; this is a time when mercy and abundance pour like rainfall. Dogs bark throughout the night and just before dawn they fall asleep. But sheep are awake at that time and so for this reason just before dawn they take what falls to them from the blessings."

As one can see, those who condemn their dawns to sleep are deprived from the blessings and abundance like the wasted April rains that fall onto a desert, a sea or steep rocks.

O Lord! Do not leave us servants unaware of You even for one breath! Enlighten our days and nights with the abundance of Your dhikr. Enliven our souls with the prosperity of the rains of dawn. Enable all of us to take a share of the magnificent truth of Your dhikr! Inspire those who are deprived of understanding Your Divine Magnificence!



# TRAINING IN DHIKR

*Dhikr is a kind of weapon that removes the barriers on spiritual paths. It also acts as water that extinguishes the flames on the road of the nafs.*

In the Qur'an, which tells us about the purpose behind the creation of humanity, it is stated: "I have only created djinns and men that they may serve (and worship) Me." (Zariyat,51/56). Worship (ibadah) refers to the behavior and actions that desire the consent of Allah, while serving (ubudiyah) refers to submission for the sake of Allah.

The concepts of ibadah and ubudiyyah are highly comprehensive. The vitality of the heart, which is called dhikr, means not forgetting Allah and this is included in the scope of ibadah. Both in the signs of the Qur'an and in the hadiths dhikr is mentioned as the most virtuous deed. In the Qur'an it is said that: "...Remembrance of God is the greatest (thing in life)" (Ankabut, 29/45).

One day, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Shall I not tell you the best of your deeds, those that give you the highest rank, those that are the purest with your King, those which are better for you than giving gold and silver, and which are better for you than meeting your enemy and striking their necks...? The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) asked: What is it? The messenger of Allah said: (It is the) remembrance of Allah ta'ala." (Ibn Majah, Adap, 53; Tirmidhi, Dawat, 6).

The aim of creation is servitude while the aim of servitude is the vigor of the connection in the heartfelt relation with Allah. Dhikr is the most useful form of worship when it is performed with peace of heart and continually. Dhikr with an unwary heart, which is merely uttered, is less useful. Worship only becomes valuable when there is peace in the heart.



*The aim of servitude  
is the vigor of  
the connection in the  
heartfelt relation  
with Allah.*

Dhikr is escaping from gaflet (unwariness) and nisyan (forgetting). Gaflet is voluntarily and consciously abandoning dhikr. Nisyan is involuntarily abandoning dhikr and forgetting about it. For this reason, although Allah Almighty says: "And be not thou of those who are unheedful (gaflet)! (Araf 7/205), He does not say: be not of those people who forget Allah, as there is no responsibility for forgetting (nisyan).

Although forgetting (nisyan) is not related to will, Allah helps human beings avoid becoming "crippled by forgetting" and says: "and be ye not like those who forgot God; and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors!" (Hashr 59/19).

Nisyan is a sign of apathy and apathy means a shortage of love. Thus dhikr creates love and inspires vitality in inclining to Allah. Dhikr firstly necessitates familiarity and then love. The person who starts to perform dhikr may have difficulty in concentrating on the dhikr due to apprehension. However, when a person successfully abolishes such apprehension with the help of the persistent continuation of dhikr in the heart, first familiarity and then love appears.

In fact, there are saints who state that they had difficulty in performing dhikr and reading the Qur'an in the beginning, but later they began to take pleasure from such acts. In the words of one Sufi: "I was tired of dealing with the Qur'an for twenty years, but in the end I have taken pleasure from this task," thus confirming the opinion that repetitive and persistent dhikr

produces love. Familiarity occurs after great exhaustion and trouble. Spiritual pleasure and delight result from love. Hence one should not be put off by initial difficulties. A person also has trouble when they eat something unfamiliar for the first time. After that, the food begins to be familiar to them and they attain pleasure from this. To quote a poem translated from the Arabic:

The nafs is such a thing, that the tasks which it performs in the beginning by force becomes natural over the course of time.

Allah Almighty, Who understands human nature to be one that is inclined to carelessness, requires that human beings should always make their hearts ready for dhikr. The following quote tells us what we should aspire for: "Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of God and the Truth which has been revealed (to them) and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors." (Hadid, 57/16).

When the Muslims who had been in straitened circumstances in Mecca attained wealth and welfare in Medina they became slack and indolent compared to their former attitudes. In order to warn people who are in such a situation, in this verse Allah Almighty orders that the hearts should bear "the sensitivity of dhikr", "the love of faith" and "enthusiasm for Islam".

At the same time in this verse, believers are encouraged so that their hearts can attain the maturity of dhikr. There are two main principles, that is, familiarity and love, in the foundation of faith. The people who have newly accepted faith have a greater propensity for love due to the first emotions that strike their hearts. However, these people cannot reach the highest virtues because they do not have mature hearts that possess knowledge and love. Over the course of time, emotions grow old and lose their enthusiasm. Idleness comes to desires and insensitivity comes to hearts.

In Islam, the principle of "the oneness of Allah" introduces an emotion of meeting the Beloved to the universe. The cessation of this emotion or the replacement of it with other enthusiasms is not something to be contemplated.

The first Muslims embraced the faith with this enthusiasm and love and they responded to the oppression of the disbelievers with dhikr. Over the course of time, when the changing social, economic and political conditions led to the relaxation in the attitude of some Muslims, Allah sent the following verse: "For believers are those who, when God is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts..." (Anfal, 8/2).

A length of time passes, one's life becomes longer and one forgets "death" while trying to satisfy incessant desires. Thus, one's heart becomes hardened. Dhikr has no influence on such people and they do not submit to Allah. Over the course of time, the emotions diminish and the hearts became completely hardened. This warning is for all Muslims who accept Islam until the end of the world; all people are under such a threat when they are left to their own incessant desires and wishes.

Contemporary people seem more unfortunate from this point of view because there are many stimulants that cause them to forget dhikr. However, there is no reminder or stimulant that enriches communication with Allah. For this reason, the way of reaching the vitality of dhikr is through dhikr again.

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*Each gathering for the sake of Allah is a matter which secures mercy, blessings and reliance, and is a factor that leads to the vitality of heart.*

The verse mentioned above draws our attention to the foundation of vitality, that is, humility. Humility is a voluntary act of the heart and humility and dhikr complement one another. Dhikr calls to humility and humility calls to perpetual dhikr. Thus dhikr is very important in training the self. It is indicated that frequent dhikr is a reason for salvation in the verse: "O ye who believe! When ye meet a force, be firm, and call God in remembrance much (and often); that ye may prosper." (Anfal, 8/45).

The heart is a place of perceiving Allah and for this reason, it is required that familial and material matters should not prevent the performance of dhikr. In fact: "O ye who believe! Let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of God. If any act thus, the loss is their own." (Munafiqun, 63/9). Although Allah warns those people who are reluctant to perform dhikr, He exalts those who have fresh hearts when performing dhikr: "...men who neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of God..." (Nur, 24/37).

Because of the human tendency towards negligence, Allah orders dhikr to be performed even after the prayer and calls people to the vitality of hearts. Performing the daily prayers is a kind of dhikr, and Allah says that "And establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise" (Taha, 20/14).

Allah considers that dhikr is a qualification of people who have common sense and says: "Men who celebrate the praises of God, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides..." (Al-i Imran 3/191).

Allah emphasizes that the people who forget Allah also forget themselves; however, the people who mention Allah are mentioned by Allah. Allah implies that He does not cause these people to forget Himself or themselves. Thus, Allah shows the two dimensions of dhikr (Baqara, 2/252). One dhikr is from the servant to Allah, the other is from Allah to the servant. However lively the dhikr of the servant to Allah is, the revelation from Allah to the servant will be the same.



A hadith narrated by Tirmidhi is very interesting. One of the Companions of the Prophet said: "O, Messenger of Allah! The decrees of Islam have increased. Teach me something that will help me easily gain the favour of Allah and happiness in the Hereafter, so I can do it." The Messenger replied: "Make your tongue constantly moist with His dhikr." (Tirmidhi, Dawat, 4).

As has been asserted in general, when someone has difficulties in worshipping, the performance of dhikr, which is the most intensive form of worship, makes other forms of worship easier. The above hadith shows us that dhikr acts as a form of education in the life of worship.

The masters of Sufism prescribed dhikr to open the door of sainthood. Dhikr is nutrition for the hearts. When a person is deprived of this nutrition, they become like a corpse lying in its grave. Dhikr is a kind of weapon that removes the barriers on spiritual paths. It also acts as water that extinguishes the flames on the road of the nafs. Dhikr is a cure for those illnesses that harden hearts.

So how should we perform dhikr? This is where the problem lies. On the one hand, the Qur'an discusses "absolute dhikr", which is not tied to any limitations or restrictions, while there is also dhikr that is limited by name. Absolute

dhikr strengthens the relationship with Allah and allows us to attain the vitality of the heart that never forgets Allah and which is satisfied with dhikr. This is only possible through having a program for the heart. However, the dhikr of the name means remembering the beautiful names and attributes of Allah and to continue to utter these. Of course, there are many methods and procedures for this. However, on the individual level, on all occasions the tongue and heart should deal simultaneously with Allah.

In the hadiths performing dhikr as a group and gathering for this purpose are also exalted actions. Mercy embraces the community that assembles for dhikr. Angels surround this group and Allah mentions them (Muslim, Dhikr, 39; Tirmidhi Dawat, 7). This means that each gathering for the sake of Allah and every dhikr is a matter which secures mercy, blessings and reliance, and is a factor that leads to the vitality of heart. If the gathering in the mosque, the committee for study, the conversation, a gathering of friends, or meetings is directed towards dhikr, then they also fall into the same category.

Are dhikr and conversation then alternatives to prayer? Of course not. Conversation and dhikr are not absolute conditions that negate the responsibility of the daily prayers; prayer has been ordered by Allah. At the most, they are forms of worship.

*Allah emphasizes that the people who forget Allah also forget themselves; however, the people who mention Allah are mentioned by Allah*

## AWARENESS OF

# BEING WITH ALLAH

**T**his verse is found in three different parts of the Qur'an:

"No just estimate have they made of Allah"

Here, the denials of non-believers of Allah's power are answered and it is expressed that His power is endless and absolute.

"It is Allah, who causeth the seed-grain and the date-stone to split and sprout. He causeth the living to issue from the dead and He is the One to cause the dead to issue from the living. That is Allah then how are ye deluded away from the truth."

"He it is that cleaveth the day-break (from the dark)..."

"It is He who maketh the stars (as beacons) for you, that ye may guide yourselves..."

"It is He who hath produced you from a single person."

"It is He who sendeth down rain from the skies..." (Anam 95-101)

"To Him is due the primal origin of the Heavens and the earth."

Similar verses can be found throughout the Qur'an. The Qur'an engraves the love and the faith of believing in one God into one's memory. When we look from the perspective of the Qur'an, we can clearly see that, from the smallest molecule to the largest planet, everything exists and subsists with the knowledge and the might of Allah... Whether it

**Allah wants two things from us:**

**First to perceive His existence and then to accept that there is no one comparable to Him. We are to keep this realization alive at all times.**



**A** person's relationship with religion is equal to their realization of Allah's power and the performance of their duties in serving Allah.



is a leaf dropping, the solar system spinning or an ant carrying a piece of wheat, all of these are reflections of the divine power of Allah. When we breathe, when we move our eyes, when we laugh or shed tears, when we think, when we remember or forget... All of this occurs with the power of Allah...

If we start counting the blessings Allah has given us we will never be able to finish. This is the power that determines our fingerprints, the color of our eyes, what we like or dislike... Which power should we count..?

However, are we aware of these blessings?

What would we do if we were deprived of our ability to swallow?

Or if a small part of our brain ceased to function?

What would happen if the small section of the brain that controls sleep were not to function... Or that which controls awakening..?

Allah wants two things from us:

First to perceive His existence and then to accept that there is no one comparable to Him. We are to keep this realization alive at all times.

A person's relationship with religion is equal to their realization of Allah's power and the performance of their duties in serving Allah. This means: "I understand your power, My Lord; You created me. There is no God but You; I am Your servant and ready to serve You."

This is where the examination is. The core of the religion is here too. The religion begins

with being able to understand the relationship between Allah and humans.

An unbeliever (kaffir) is one who denies reality, who covers it up; the unbeliever is one who is deprived of this perception. The unbeliever is struggling with the mission of existence.

Hypocrites (munafiq) are those who dare to play games with Allah.

So, what is the situation of believers?

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says the genuine servant is "the one who lives as if he sees Allah" and he adds "even if you don't see Him, you are seen; be aware of this."

In the Qur'an Allah says "we are nearer to him than his jugular vein." This implies unity with Allah. However, are we aware of this? The Qur'an says: "Only the scholars (alims) fear Allah among all his servants."

Awareness and knowledge come together. Fear, love, obedience, calls for help, praying, serving, worshipping... These are how humanity can reach Allah. Only with these actions can the human attain Allah. This is cognition. A believer must accept that there is nothing similar to Allah. A believer must not divide their heart into two.

How well can a believer do this?

Throughout the Qur'an we can see that the consciousness of human beings is directed towards cognizance. This is precisely the reason why the human being has been created - in order to shape their heart in this way.

It is an undeniable fact that there are moments in which humans can forget their Creator. The constant instructional function of the Qur'an mostly stems from the forgetfulness of humans. Forgetfulness is paramount to cutting the vein that goes through the brain. It is like tearing out the jugular vein for a moment. These are moments of death in human life.

What does it mean to forget Allah?

This is something that is very difficult to explain. Allah is everywhere, but humanity behaves as if He were "absent". We suppose that He does not see, hear or know what we are doing. We suppose that we are able to escape His attention, or that He might ignore us, or maybe He does not hear us, or perhaps He may not offer His help when we are in need of it, or even that He is not able to do so...

We may be assuming that everything comes from our strengths. We may deem that reason is god. We may be experiencing delusions and we might assume that there are powers greater than Allah.

Human beings can fall into this trap unintentionally. The intentional following of this road causes human beings to be disobedient and this is blasphemy. Here, we are talking about the forgetfulness of Muslims.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) prayed to our Creator "Oh my Lord, Do not leave me alone with my nafs (lower self), even for a moment"... Here the Prophet is trying to protect himself against momentary oblivion.

Momentary oblivion could be the collapse of a point at the center of cognizance in the heart. Even this is too much for the Messenger of Allah.

In the Qur'an, it is written: "(We take our color from Allah, and who is better than Allah at coloring)." (Baqara 2/138)

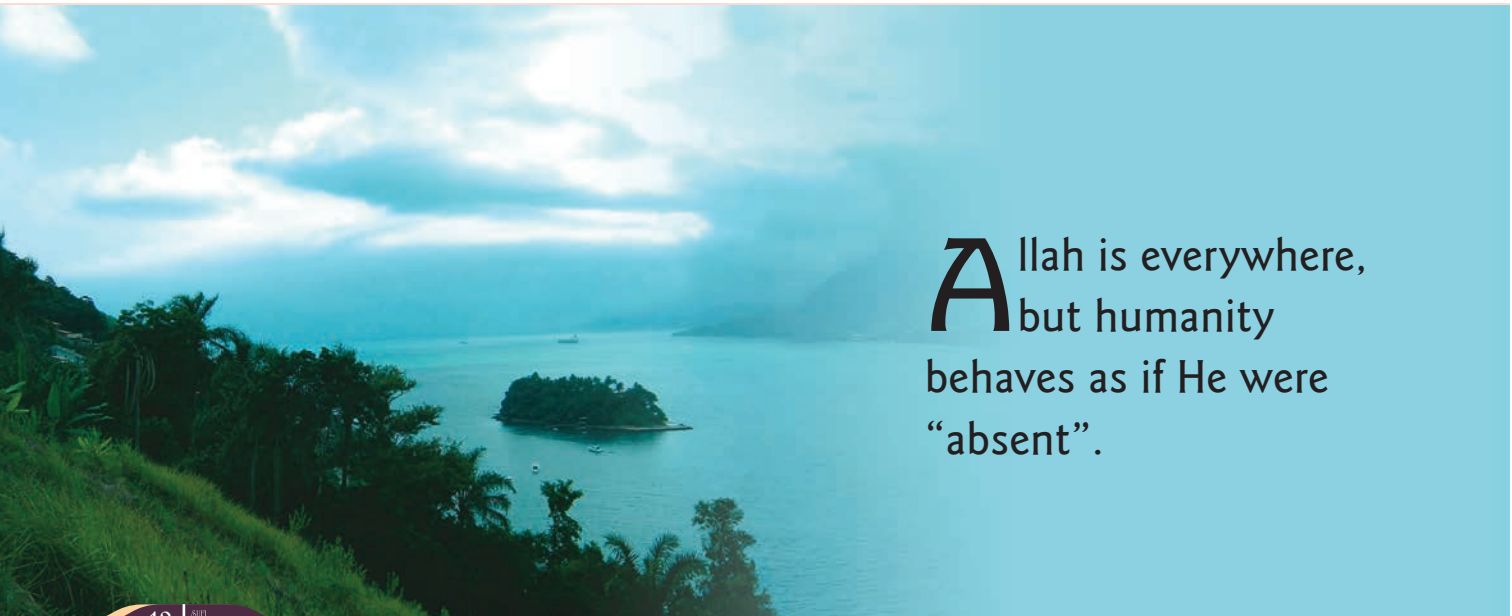
What does this mean?

Could this mean that we should discipline ourselves in divine form? This may mean comprehension of Allah in every part of our body. This is a pure beauty. It is the most important beauty. To see the beauty of Allah while we are looking, to hear the call of Allah while He is calling, and to feel the bond of Allah in every moment... This is feeling the consciousness of being with Allah in our veins.

"Am I pure enough to stand before Allah?"

We must live every moment with this question.

Human life goes back and forth between forgetfulness and cognizance.



Allah is everywhere,  
but humanity  
behaves as if He were  
"absent".

What humans should do is to decrease forgetfulness and negligence, and increase the state of consciousness. The state of consciousness consists of those moments when humans are alive... And forgetfulness is death in our lives.

Increasing the state of cognizance means enrobing ourselves with the decency of Allah... Allah is teaching us decency in the Qur'an...

He says; "Praise Me", "Remember Me", "Remember Me so I remember you", meaning that He wishes to grant His mercy upon humans. Call Me so that I come to you... Come to Me by walking, so that I come to you by running.

Allah has 99 beautiful names. Each one of them presents a door that opens for humans, allowing them to understand unity with Allah...

If human beings present themselves to the Lord's blessings, all His beautiful names can have a reflection on their lives. If they notice Him...

If they say "Al-Wadud (the Loving One)" when they long for love... Or if they call him "Al-Mughni (the Enricher)" with their whole heart...

If they say "Ar-Rahman (the All-Merciful)" when they are thirsty for mercy...

If they say "Al-Qahhar (the Subduer)", or "Al-Muntaqim (the Avenger)" when they are exposed to oppression...

There is a door for every hope... And these doors are never closed if the hearts are not closed...

For the one who is with Allah or who understands that there is no defeat, sadness, desperation, dismay or fear the doors are never closed...

It is all about filling the heart with servitude to Allah...

The heart can only be satisfied by a feeling of unity with Allah...



There is a door for every hope... And these doors are never closed if the hearts are not closed...



# THE WORD OF TAWHID

Mahmud Sami Efendi

The person's who remembers Allah appears to come to light with the enlightenment of praying and good deeds, and their inner self is enlivened with the enlightenment of divine knowledge.

As narrated by Abu Hurairah: Allah Almighty has a special team of angels whose duty it is to search the streets for dhikr. When they find a group of people who are gathered for dhikr, they call to one another. 'Come, what you are looking for is here!' and they come together, one by one, and surround the whole place with their wings, up to the sky. Although Allah Almighty knows better the prayers of dhikr, He asks the angels: "O Angels! What are my servants saying?"

They answer: "O Lord! These servants of yours are praising, thanking and glorify you."

Allah Almighty then asks the angels: "Have those servants of mine seen Me at all?"

They answer: "No, Our Lord! We swear that they haven't seen You." Allah Almighty then asks: "How would they react if they had seen Me?" The angels respond: "O Lord! If they had seen you, then they would pray much more intensely."

Allah Almighty asks again: "What do they want from me?" The angels answer: "They ask for heaven." Allah Almighty asks: "Have they ever seen heaven?" "No Our Lord, we swear that they haven't seen it." Allah Almighty asks: "What would they do if they had seen heaven?" "They would be much more passionate in their prayers and would ask for it much more ambitiously."

Allah Almighty asks: "What do my servants take refuge from?" The angels say: "They take refuge in You from hell." Allah Almighty asks: "Have they ever seen hell?" "No Lord! They have never seen it before." Allah Almighty asks: "What would My servants do if they had seen hell?"



The word of tawhid is the best of all dhikr for the reason that it demonstrates the reality of faith.



The angels answer: "They would take shelter in You much more intensely."

Allah Almighty commands: "O angels! Witness that I have forgiven the sins of those who are among that congregation of dhikr." One of the angels says: "O Lord! One of them was there for another reason." Allah Almighty says: "One who is within that congregation would not be rebellious."

As narrated by Abu Musa, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Comparing one who remembers his Lord with another who doesn't is like comparing the living with the dead." That is, the one who remembers Allah is alive, while the other one is not.

This hadith is an announcement of the glad tidings of dhikr.

Reciting the Qur'an and the hadith and learning the religion are all about remembering Allah. A person's appearance is illuminated by the enlightenment of life and their inner self is enlivened by the enlightenment of knowledge and comprehension.

The person's who remembers Allah appears to come to light with the enlightenment of praying and good deeds, and their inner self is enlivened with the enlightenment of divine knowledge.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) commanded his Companions: "Refresh your faith!"

They asked: "How shall we refresh it O messenger of Allah?" The Prophet commanded: "Continue to recite: 'La ilaha illallah. By continuing this, one fills one's heart with enlightenment and increases one's knowledge of Allah."

As a mercy for believers from Allah Almighty, the phrase of tawhid is written on the forehead of the angel of death. Thus one is reminded to say: "La ilaha illallah" when at the time of one's death. For this reason, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) commanded: "Suggest to the person who is on their death bed that they say the words of the tawhid. Allah Almighty commands: "The hearts of those who believe find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily! Hearts find rest in remembrance of Allah." (Ra'd,13/28)

Narrated by Ibn Abbas: When Allah created the earth as the best of all creation, the earth shook for twenty-four thousand years. Then Mighty Allah brought out twenty four letters. They formed the word "La ilaha illallah, Muhammad'un rasulullah"

Then the earth found tranquillity. This continued for twenty thousand years.

When Allah Almighty created the first human beings to recite the tawhid "La ilaha illallah Muhammad'un rasulullah" the earth started shaking once again.

Upon that Allah Almighty ordered the earth: "Be calm!" The earth said: "O Lord! I cannot be calm unless you forgive the person who says this phrase!" Allah Almighty said: "I swore two thousand years before I created you that I would forgive anyone into whose mouth I put this phrase.

The word of tawhid is the best of all dhikr for the reason that it demonstrates the reality of faith. It is also the best of all prayers for thanking Allah and increasing His blessings. There are also great benefits in reciting the word of tawhid during the month of Ramadan.

# DHIKRULLAH

## *The Remembrance Of Allah*

**P**raising Allah is an important measure of love and faith. Whoever loves someone remembers and praises the beloved all the time, day and night, indeed, at every moment. It is the same even with metaphorical love.

Allah Almighty says:

"Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith." (Baqarah, 2/152)

"Then celebrate the praises of thy Lord again and again, and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning." (Al-i Imran, 3/ 41)

### QUDSI (DIVINE) HADITHS

- O son of Adam, praise Me with your tongue so that I remember you with my consent

- Praise Me with your heart, so I remember you by giving you endless happiness (lika). Remember me by humbling yourself, so that I remember you by exalting you.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said:

- Whoever says "Lailaha illa Allah (there is no God but Allah)", their heart is illuminated (is opened up and seen clearly).

Allah, Who is Glorified and the Exalted, says:

- Whoever keeps himself busy by remembering Me (praising Me) but because of that cannot find time to ask Me for anything, I will give them more virtues than I give the others who ask things from Me.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says (reported by Abu'd Darda): "Oh my community and my Companions! Do you want me to advise you about what is better than your purest duties towards Allah, the highest of your degrees, and what is



Praising Allah gives  
light to the heart,  
peace to the soul,  
polishes the mind and  
measures the wit.



better than giving gold or silver to the poor, and better than fighting your enemies in the way of Allah?" The Companions said: "What is it, Prophet of Allah?" "To remember (praise) Allah constantly."

One day Abu Hurayra went to the market and said to the people: "I see you here, but the Prophet's legacy is being shared out at the masjid!" Thereupon, the people all left their work at the market and ran to the masjid. However, they could not see anything there and returned to Abu Hurayra: "We couldn't see anything being divided at the masjid." Abu Hurayra said to them: "What did you see?" They answered: "We saw a community praising and remembering Allah." Thereupon Abu Hurayra said: "That is the legacy of Muhammad." He added: "In the same way that the community of the Earth sees the stars shine, the community of the heavens sees the houses where people remember and praise Allah to be glowing like the stars."

Prophet David said: "Oh Allah! If you see me going towards Satan's community while passing by the community of people who remember (praises) you, break my legs before I go there. This would be a blessing for me."

In the Qur'an Allah Almighty says: "And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility, and remember without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are unheedingful." (Al-Araf, 7/205)

Prophet Muhammad (pubh) said: "The person among the unaware who praises Allah is like a hero fighting among cowards."

One of the great scholars asked Ali Ramitani: "Does the order that mentions the dhikr of Allah, "Praise Allah constantly" mean that we should praise Him with our tongue or with our heart?" Ali Ramitani answered: "Praising with the tongue is the beginning; praising with the heart is the end. The one who is at the beginning deals with trouble and strife (exertion) throughout their life; however, the one at the end, as they have praised Allah with all their heart, has reached the secrets of the sea and the secrets of praising much with all their cells and every part of their body."

Mawlana Sadeddin Kashgari says: "To keep oneself busy with Allah is easier than anything else in the world. However, when people want something among the creation, first they want it and then they find it. Opposed to this, they first find Allah and then they want Him. If they were not able to find Him, how could they want Him?"

Abu'l Mavaheb says: "Some people disagree about which is more virtuous: The dhikr that is made out loud or the dhikr which is done silently. If you ask me I would say that for someone who is just beginning dhikr, it is better for them to do it out loud, while for someone who is mature, it is better for them to do it silently."

Qadi Iyaz says: "Praising Allah consists of two parts; praising with the heart and with words. Praising with the heart also consists of two parts, and one of these is praising Glorious Allah by thinking of His Sublimity and Greatness, which is the greatest of praise."



**W**hoever continues Dhikrullah has a prosperous heart, good behavior and a moral and happy soul.

When the Day of Judgement arrives and Allah Almighty judges humanity, the recording angels will announce the deeds of the people. Allah Almighty will then ask: "Are there any good deeds of my servants that remain?" And then the angels will say: "Oh Lord, there is nothing left, we have counted everything we knew and written down." Then Allah Almighty will say: "There are good deeds of My servants that I am aware of and I will reward them for these good deeds. These deeds are their praise of Me which is not heard by the angels."

Alaaddin says: "The heedlessness never found a way in my soul, not even in sleep or when awake. Not even for a second, not even for the time in which it takes a sparrow to take a sip of water."

"Praise Allah so that you will never wish for Heaven or fear Hell in your weak soul. Praise Him so that you will not be able to distinguish between sleep and being awake and so that evil will find the doors to your heart shut."

Prophet Muhammad says: "A comparison between one who praises Allah and one who does not is like that between one who is dead and one who is alive." This saying shows us that human beings who praise Allah are deemed to be alive while those who do not praise Him are deemed to be dead.

Praising Allah is an important measure of love and faith. Whoever loves someone remembers and praises the beloved all the time, day and night, indeed, at every moment. It is the same even with metaphorical love.

Is it possible for any of us, as servants of Allah, the Greatest, the Most Glorious, Who grants us everything and Whose blessings we can never deny, not to remember and praise Him at every moment? Even our praises for Him can only be made by His grace and benevolence.

It is the duty of human beings to remember and praise Allah all the time. We should make use of our tongues and our hearts in order to remember Him.

Glorious Allah created human beings and glorified them. What was His purpose in doing so?

Was it because human beings can eat, drink or sleep like sheep? Absolutely not. It was because of their spirituality that He thus honored them, making them His caliphs in this world.

Responsible and right-minded people will always be grateful for the great blessings of Glorious Allah and they will thank and praise Him constantly. They will also serve Allah with great efforts and they will never forget to remember and praise Him.

Whoever remembers Allah is deemed to be someone who has all they can ever have or need. Whoever is deprived of remembering Allah is deemed to be someone who has lost everything.

Whoever is blessed by praising Allah is also reunited with Him. The actions of whoever cannot taste this great blessing are condemned to be impotent and futile.

Whoever can remember Allah Almighty heartily has the strongest faith. Such a person loves their Creator with the greatest love. As the state of remembrance continues, the moral roads are opened and the covers and curtains are lifted.

Praising Allah gives light to the heart, peace to the soul, polishes the mind and measures the wit. Whoever continues praising Allah has a prosperous heart, good behavior and a moral and happy soul.

When someone continuously remembers and praises Allah, then blessings are granted; if this praise is continued these blessings extend to the entire soul. More efforts in this respect disperse throughout the entire soul and body.

Nowadays there is no need to be secluded when praising Allah. Earthly struggles do not prevent us from praising Allah; we need only to connect our souls to Almighty Allah and put our efforts into increasing our devotion to His path.

In the Qur'an Allah says: "Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them)." (Hadid, 57/16)

Mahmud Sami- Kuddise Sirruh says: "Praising Allah is the first condition for softening the heart and making it sensitive; as Allah Almighty says: "Praise Me often."

Praising Allah a little is not sufficient to soften the hearts. The heart can be softened only by praising Allah often. Nothing should prevent us from doing this.

By constantly praising Allah humans become respectful and souls are cleansed by remembrance of Allah. The organs have their own ways of praising Allah.

Allah Almighty bids us to praise Him constantly in the Qur'an, because whoever forgets Allah also forgets themselves.

We must be occupied with praising Allah; we must spend our waking time and our working hours praising Allah. If we can do this properly, praising Allah will spread to our souls and bodies. To accomplish this we need to:

1. eat little, and sleep early,
2. be determined to get up at daybreak,
3. talk and sleep less, and be careful about what is permitted and forbidden,
4. be with those who have the true faith,
5. devote our soul to Allah in the daytime.

Praising Allah is necessary to soften and settle the heart. Because Allah Almighty says: "Praise me often, praise me very often." The more a human being praises Allah, the more he can improve himself.

**The heart can be softened only by praising Allah often. By constantly praising Allah humans become respectful and souls are cleansed by dhikr.**



# ASPECTS of SUFISM

The term Sufism refers to Muslim mysticism. One theory is that this term is derived from the Arabic word *suf*, meaning wool and has come into the English language as the noun *Sufi*. "*Labisa al-suf*" ("he was dressed in wool") designates the wool garment worn by the first Islamic mystics. Another opinion is that the word may come from the Arabic root *safâ*, which includes the concept of purity. Etymologically, the word used to mean Sufism is *tasawwuf*.

Some people think that the origin of mystical practice in Islam dates back to the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), when poor Muslims were known as the *Ahl al-suffa*, i.e. the people who lived in the courtyard of the Prophet's mosque in Medina; these were people who spent most of their time mentioning and talking about Allah.

In short, Sufism is the mystical guidance of Islam, its esoteric vision, its inner yearning.

In fact, Sufism has developed from the exemplary life of Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); he too was such a mystic and was himself initiated into the secrets of the invisible world, as evidenced by this story:

"After thirteen years of struggle guiding people, he was led to another cave. It was the Thawr cave on the Hijrah path. This cave was not for education but for drowning in the secrets of Allah and for perfecting the heart. (...) The Thawr cave served as the first place in the primary education of the heart; this carries a servant to Allah through the boundless sky of secrets. It was also the first station on this sacred journey."

**W**ith regular remembrance of Allah (*dhikrullah*), the Sufi finds peace in Allah and, gradually, their soul spiritually ascends via states or stations (*hâl*) .

(Osman Nuri Topbaş: Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy/ Erkam Publications 2001)

Thus, Sufi spirituality presents the opportunity for the human being to return to their principle nature (al-fitra) as stipulated in the following verse of the Qur'an:

"When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"- They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful"." (Araf, 7/172)

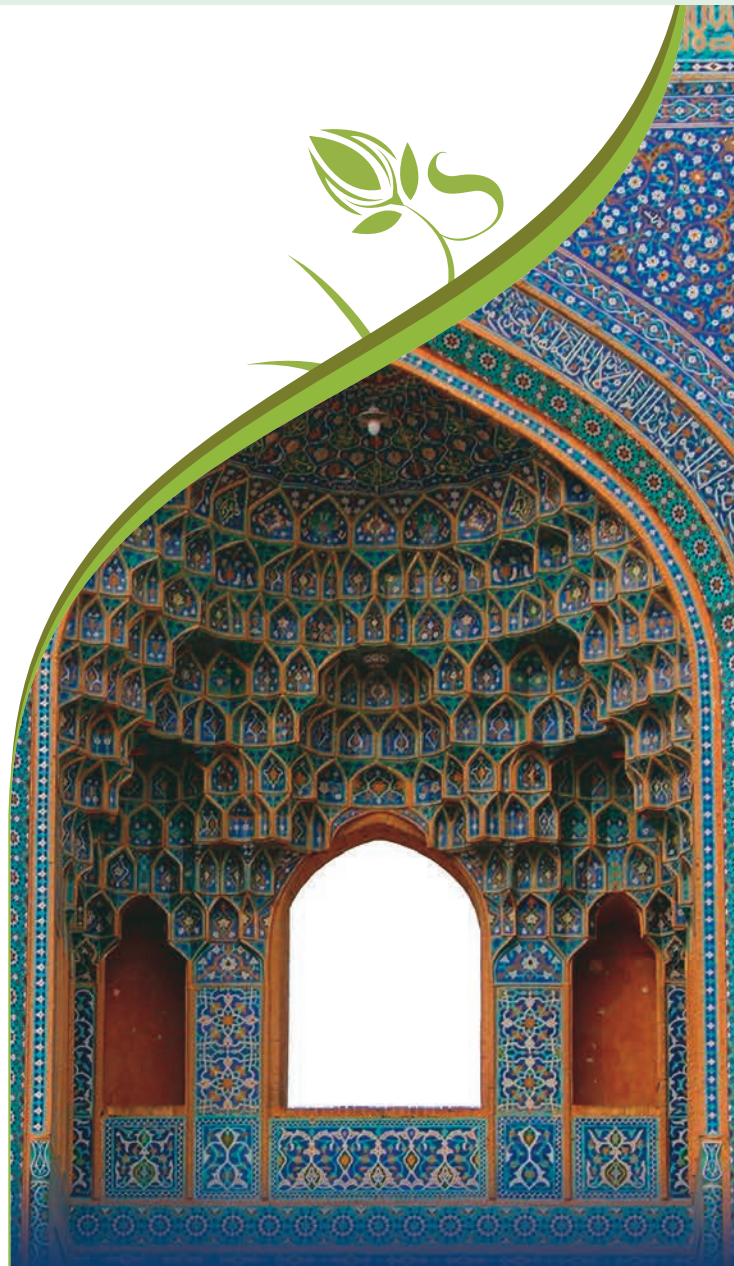
This Qur'anic verse refers to the covenant made between Allah and human beings at the time of their origin. It is a covenant of faith and allegiance which the children of Adam recognize and by which they acknowledge only the Lordship of Allah. Every human being is linked at birth to this pact. Thus, with regular remembrance of Allah (dhikrullah), the Sufi finds peace in Allah and, gradually, their soul spiritually ascends via states or stations (hâl) and then merges, or according to this beautiful expression, "is remade", in the Godhead (fanafillah).

This is the true definition of tasawwuf and its appropriate expression.

#### THE NAQSHBANDI WAY

One can trace the origin of the Naqshbandi Sufi way back to the first caliph in Islam, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, who was the close friend of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Abu Bakr was inside the famous cave of Thawr with the Prophet. It is specified in the Qur'an that he was "the second of the two" and at the height of distress, the Prophet told him: "Have no fear, for Allah is with us" (Araf, 9/40). Prophet Muhammad also said: "If I had to choose a close friend, I would choose Abu Bakr. He is for me my companion and my brother".

Abu Bakr was indeed the companion, the friend, the brother who shared the company of the Prophet (pbuh), as well as the joys and difficulties of life; moreover he was instructed in the heavenly truths, particularly during their stay in the famous cave of Thawr. This education was the beginning of a chain of wise men, among whom we find the



**T**he word Naqshband suggests two main ideas: naqsh which means "embroider" and suggests the engraving of the name of Allah on the heart; and band, which indicates the link between the individual and the Creator.



famous spiritual masters that have illuminated the horizon of the Naqshbandi way. These glittering stars are: Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, Salman al-Farisi, Jafar as-Saddiq, Bayazid al-Bistami, Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani, Yûsuf Hamadani and Muhammad Bahauddin Uweysi al Bukharî, known as Shah Naqshband.

The latter died in Bukhara in Uzbekistan in 1389. Although it was Yûsuf Hamadani who laid the foundations of the way, it was Shah Naqshband who formed the structure of the organization.

The word Naqshband suggests two main ideas: naqsh which means "engrave/embroider" and suggests the engraving of the name of Allah on the heart; and band, which indicates the link between the individual and the Creator.

The spiritual principles of the Naqshbandi Sufi order are oriented towards three essential elements; humility, death of the nafs (lower self) and the heart. We must also add the principle of khalwa dar anjuman, which means "loneliness in the middle of the crowd" or "constantly remembering Allah in the midst of everyday activities".

At the same time, this is also a reminder of Allah (dhikrullah) during the secrecy of the day and night, which, with spiritual practices, focuses the heart and its diverse manifestations so that one can live close to Allah.

## SUFISM AND PEACE

Nowadays, people have discovered (or rediscovered) the virtues of Sufism and have introduced some of them into their lives, thus being able to find more meaning. Indeed, Sufism is the heart of Islam and penetrates all dimensions and aspirations of human beings, creating an oasis of freshness, peace and serenity while one faces the challenges of life; it also brings joy and confidence in every circumstance.

Those who have approached the Naqshbandi Sufi way are able to recognize its simplicity and spiritual beauty, as it reflects the nature of human beings and their deepest inspiration. The essential truths that emerge from its teachings redefine the spiritual dimension of human beings and assign them their true vocations in the world; that is, as a being that has been created and is loved by Allah, with the promise to make the world a better place.

The practice of Sufism today, as it did yesterday, allows the human soul to be recognized in the spheres of intimacy with Allah, and gives to it unsuspected prospects that gradually lead to the heights of faith and spirituality.

"Open the eyes of your heart to see the soul of all things: you will see then what was invisible without a curtain. If you travel to the country of love, the horizons of this world will be like a rose garden for you." (Hâtef Isfahâni)

**Sufism is the heart of Islam and penetrates all dimensions and aspirations of human beings, creating an oasis of freshness, peace and serenity.**





Lisa Jane Dhar

Author of  
**Spiritual Reflections:  
 The Element Series**



*“I have been working on a series of gift books that promote spiritual contemplation in a fresh, exciting and stimulating way. In the element series each book is based upon one of the four elements.”*

*Could you introduce yourself to the readers of Sufi Wisdom?*

I reverted to Islam whilst in my final year at university. After I obtained my BSc in Psychology at Cardiff University in Wales, I was and still am, very blessed to have found a knowledgeable sheikh to study under. After having gained a solid foundation in Western psychology, I felt it important to also develop my understanding of Islam and psychology from an Islamic perspective. I also attended an intensive Arabic course in Wales, which I benefited immensely from.

Since becoming Muslim, I have had a desire to combine my talents with my faith. My beautiful mother always encouraged us towards the creative arts, and her love of the creative arts has definitely rubbed off on me.

For many years I have been busy researching and designing various products for the Muslim and non-Muslim market. In 2006 I entered and came first in an international children's story writing competition. The whole process has reaffirmed in my mind not only how important it is to study and gain knowledge, but also how important it is to disseminate it as well.

*Every human is  
born in a pure  
state that is subservient  
to God - all are born  
Muslim.*



By Lisa Jane Dhar

I have recently designed a children's and adult's greeting card range which, InshAllah, should be available at the end of the year.

### *Can you tell us about Spiritual Reflections?*

I have been working on a series of gift books that promote spiritual contemplation in a fresh, exciting and stimulating way. In the element series each book is based upon one of the four elements. The book comprises of selected ayats, hadiths and personal reflections which are accompanied by eye catching and visually appealing graphics and illustrations.

There are a total of 64 pages (32 comprised of illustrations and 32 with accompanying ayats, hadiths, or personal reflections, the latter being written by myself). Each spread is given a relevant subtitle which is in Arabic, and the English translation is provided.

I personally feel Muslim publishers have yet to modernise themselves or their printed works in keeping with the rest of the publishing world. There is so much talent in the Muslim world. I pray our Ummah will have more access to this talent in the future.

### *What are the benefits of being a Muslim in the UK?*

For me, the UK is my home. My mum was 'born and bred' as the saying goes, here and so was I. Everybody loves their home country and this is true for me too. I have millions of fond memories of growing up in the UK. The food is delicious, the people are lovely and it's hot in the summer and we often get snow in the winter.

Yes, it is true that Muslims are considered to be a minority group in the UK, but I personally do not feel like one. In some ways, living here really makes one think about one's faith more.

On a daily basis Muslims here are often confronted with endless questions about Islam; 'Why do women cover?' 'What happens in the mosque?' 'Are Muslim women oppressed?'

These questions provide a unique opportunity that not only motivates us to learn more about our faith but also provides a precious opportunity to deliver the true message about Islam. A message of true peace and harmony.

'There is no compulsion in religion'.

(Al Qur'an 2:157)

This is what Islam teaches. Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus and us Muslims getting along, side by side. I have practising Christian friends as well as Jewish, atheist and Hindu friends. We are, after all, brothers and sisters in humanity.

### *Can you tell us about the after effects of your conversion?*

I would say there were two main factors that made the transition from Christianity to Islam very easy for me.

The first one is the natural state of human beings. Islam is often referred to as the natural way of life. Each person is born with what is called a natural fitrah, or 'state'. That is, every human is born in a pure state that is subservient to God - all are born Muslim; this is the Islamic way, and it is our desires and societies that distort and corrupt this state, until we eventually leave it.

But those who have been less affected will find the Islamic way very natural, very comfortable and very easy as it is in keeping with their fitrah, and therefore, Islam is straightforward for them to accept.

The second factor was my previous belief. As Muslims, part of our creed is to believe in the Law which was given to Moses, the Psalms of David and the Gospel of Jesus.

However, these books have been changed by man and this is why we follow the Qur'an, which is perfect and unchanged. Thus, there are many similarities between Islam and Christianity.



### CHILDREN'S CARD RANGE







# THE Weaknesses Of MAN

*(Weakness of Morals and Manners)*

Humanity certainly needs to regain its sound heart, because it is in that heart that Allah makes the call to good.




*"Ye have indeed in the Apostle of Allah a beautiful pattern of (conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day and who engages much in the praise of Allah." "*



It is a weakness of the mind that it is unable to remain focused on Allah, the Creator of all of the worlds and all that is in them. The human mind continuously backslides from the goal of achieving a blessed and peaceful afterlife by becoming entangled in the desires of this world. It becomes entranced by the dazzling brilliance of the earthly delights and it falls prey to the bewitching taunts of Shaytan, whispered from behind dark veils. In this way, the mind unwittingly becomes a victim in the trap of the dunya (the world).

The body, as the workhorse for the mind, also falls into error in the same manner. When the body gives into comfort and ease, it becomes lazy and neglectful of its duties. The lazier the body becomes, the more difficult it is for the mind to find any good reason to work for the sake of Allah or the life that follows this life. Unlike even a simple creature, such as the ant that works diligently to store up what it will need in the future cold seasons, the body becomes satisfied when it lives



## Today, the entire world screams out for an example like the Prophet, and for good reason.

in relative comfort, never being aware of the discomfort of the cold and dark season of the grave.

### Weakness of Morals and Manners

As the discussion of the weaknesses from which human beings suffer continues, from the weak mind and body the topic naturally flows into the weakness of human morals and manners. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) once explained to his companions: "Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body that if it becomes good (reformed) then the whole body becomes good, but if it becomes spoiled the whole body becomes spoiled; it is the heart" (Bukhari). Since the heart is the central controller of both mind and body, it is easy to see that an uneducated mind and a lazy body are both merely symptoms of a greater illness – the illness that can be found in the heart.

In order to put this into perspective, it is necessary to define what is good and right conduct. The Qur'an describes a person who is of upright conduct and morals as follows: An upright person is one who worships none but Allah, who sets their face towards the religion in piety and never calls on anything or being other than Allah for help (*Yunus, 10/104-106*). They are good to their parents (*Yusuf, 12/99-100*), they establish regular prayers and give to charity (*Ibrahim, 14/31*). They avoid making scandals or backbiting and are not greedy (*Humazah, 104/1-2*). They are a person who avoids slandering others, who refrains from repeating evil words said about others, avoids indicting others only on a suspicion and avoids damaging the reputation

of another (*Nur, 24/15-24*). They are one who guards their modesty and chastity (*Nur, 24/30-33*), and who establishes justice, ignoring their own desires (*Sad, 38/26*). They avoid vanity (*Shura, 42/24*), hypocrisy and arrogance (*Munafiqun, 63/1-5*). The person of righteous conduct and good morals adorns themselves with righteousness (*Araf, 7/26*) and is courteous in receiving and giving a greeting (*Nisa, 4/86*).

In Surah Ahzab the Beloved of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was declared to be the best example for all of humanity in what is good and right conduct. In his personality can be found all the characteristics from the Qur'an that are mentioned above, and indeed many more. His morals and manners were certainly well known among his own people and were not even denied by his worst enemies. His was the conduct of one whose mind was strong and focused, and whose body was busy with worship and working ceaselessly for the pleasure of Allah; he was one whose heart was sound.

Indeed, if one were to compare mankind today to the Blessed Prophet (pbuh), then the difference between human morals today and the strength of the morals of the Prophet is as obvious as a black rabbit in a field of white snow. Today, the entire world screams out for an example like the Prophet, and for good reason. The focus of humankind has changed and society in general has lost its soundness of heart.

Certainly it is true that the Prophet (pbuh) never worried about his future sustenance in this worldly life or about the physical hardships

he faced. He found solace and contentment in being single-minded about his mission, and always made himself busy for the sake of Allah. The Prophet would often pray, "O Allah... I beg of Thee a sound heart and a truthful tongue..."

The above hadith shows that the Prophet (pbuh) understood that one of the most important treasures that a human being can acquire and maintain is a sound heart. The Qur'an also declares this to be true in the verse: "But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a sound heart;" (*Shu'ara*, 26/89).

One cannot lightly dismiss the connection made by Allah in this manner. The Qur'an says Prophet Abraham (pbuh) had a sound heart when coming to Allah (*Saffat*, 37/84) and was called the Friend of Allah. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) ceaselessly pleaded for a sound heart and was called the Beloved of Allah. Finally, Allah reminds all of his servants that none can succeed unless they return to Him with a sound heart.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud once narrated the following hadith from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said, "Allah the Highest has allotted you your characters just as He has allotted you your provisions. Allah the Highest gives worldly things to those whom He loves and those whom He does not love, but He gives religion only to those whom He loves, so he who has been given religion by

Allah has been loved by Him. By Him in Whose hand is my soul, a man is not a Muslim until his heart and tongue are submissive, and he is not a believer until his neighbor is safe from injurious behavior on his part." (*Tirmidhi*)

As pointed out in this hadith, one must first have a submissive heart in order to be counted amongst the ranks of the Muslims. The greatest reason for this is because Allah dwells in the heart of the servant and, if this heart is clean and polished, it reflects the glory and Nur (light) of Allah to the rest of creation. If the heart has become damaged by bad morals, bad life choices which are sinful or by bad manners toward Allah's creation, then this damaged mirror is no longer able to reflect the Nur of Allah. The speech of the owner of this heart becomes futile, their words are hollow, and their deeds are performed in vain.

As if to expound upon the necessity of understanding this concept, another hadith continues the same message. Abdullah ibn Amr reports: When Allah's Messenger was asked who was most excellent, he replied, "Everyone who is makhmum al-qalb (whose heart is clear of pollution) and whose tongue is truthful." On being told by his hearers that they understood what "whose tongue is truthful" meant, but not makhmum al-qalb he replied, "The one who is pure; the one who is pure, with no sin, iniquity, deceit, or envy." (*Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Bayhaqi*)

Allah dwells in the heart of the servant and, if this heart is clean and polished, it reflects the glory and Nur (light) of Allah to the rest of creation.





One way to clean a heart, to soften it, to make it sound and pure is through the continuous remembrance and mentioning of the very Creator of the heart.



Certainly one can see that character is connected to the heart, and all manners and morals pour forth from that very same heart. Just as water from a clean jar is clear, water from a dirty jar will be murky. If the heart is weak, then surely the thoughts of the mind and the deeds of the body will also be weak because they are all part of the same being.

Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (pbuh) once said: "When a believer sins there is a black spot on his heart, and if he repents and asks pardon his heart is polished; but if he performs more (sinful actions) it increases until it gains ascendancy over his heart. That is the rust mentioned by Allah the Highest: 'Nay, but what they were committing has spread like rust over their hearts'." (Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

Once the rust sets in, the heart starts to become hard. When this happens, selfishness, vanity and arrogance can move into the heart, replacing generosity, compassion and benevolence. Idols of all shapes and sizes fill the place where Allah, the owner of all Glory and Praise, should reside. At this point, it becomes necessary for the heart to be softened, to be made pure and sound. This is hard work for the mind and body, because, due to their own weakness, they prefer to avoid hardship. But it is a necessary step in order to regain one's spiritual health, and if it is not done, then Allah will ultimately turn His back on the owner of this heart, and let the rust seal it up until it becomes like stone... or worse... like something dead.

One way to clean a heart, to soften it, to make it sound and pure is through the continuous remembrance and mentioning of the very Creator of the heart. The Qur'an says that: "Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction. (Ra'd, 13/28).

This verse is explained by a hadith reported by Abdullah ibn Umar, who said: 'Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Do not speak much without mentioning Allah, for much talk without mention of Allah produces hardness of the heart, and the one who is farthest from Allah is he who has a hard heart." (Tirmidhi)

Once the heart is soft, clean and purified it becomes ready to reflect the attributes of Allah and bring the owner of that heart to righteousness. The heart begins to perceive knowledge that is useful to strengthen the mind; Hasan reported that the Prophet (pbuh) once said: "Knowledge is of two types. First is knowledge perceived by the heart, and that is useful knowledge..." (Tirmidhi) The heart becomes a useful compass again in guiding the mind and the body to good moral decisions and good manners.

To know for certain that one is on the right path of cleansing the heart is to be aware of the decisions one makes, as noted in the hadith reported by Wabisah ibn Ma'bad from Allah's Messenger (pbuh): "Have you come to ask about righteousness and sin, Wabisah?"

When he replied that he had, the Prophet joined his fingers and striking his breast with them said: "Ask yourself for a decision, ask your heart for a decision" (saying it three times). "Righteousness is that with which the soul is tranquil and the heart is tranquil, but sin is that which rouses suspicion in the soul and is perplexing in the breast, even if people give you a decision in its favor." (*Tirmidhi*)


One must never lose sight of the fact that Allah is always observing His creation, each and every individual, and He declares to all who are aware of Him through their pure and clean heart that: "Your Lord knoweth best what is in your hearts: if ye do deeds of righteousness verily He is Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again (in true penitence). (*Isra, 17/25*)

Humanity certainly needs to regain its sound heart, because it is in that heart that Allah makes the call to good, as we are reminded in this last story:

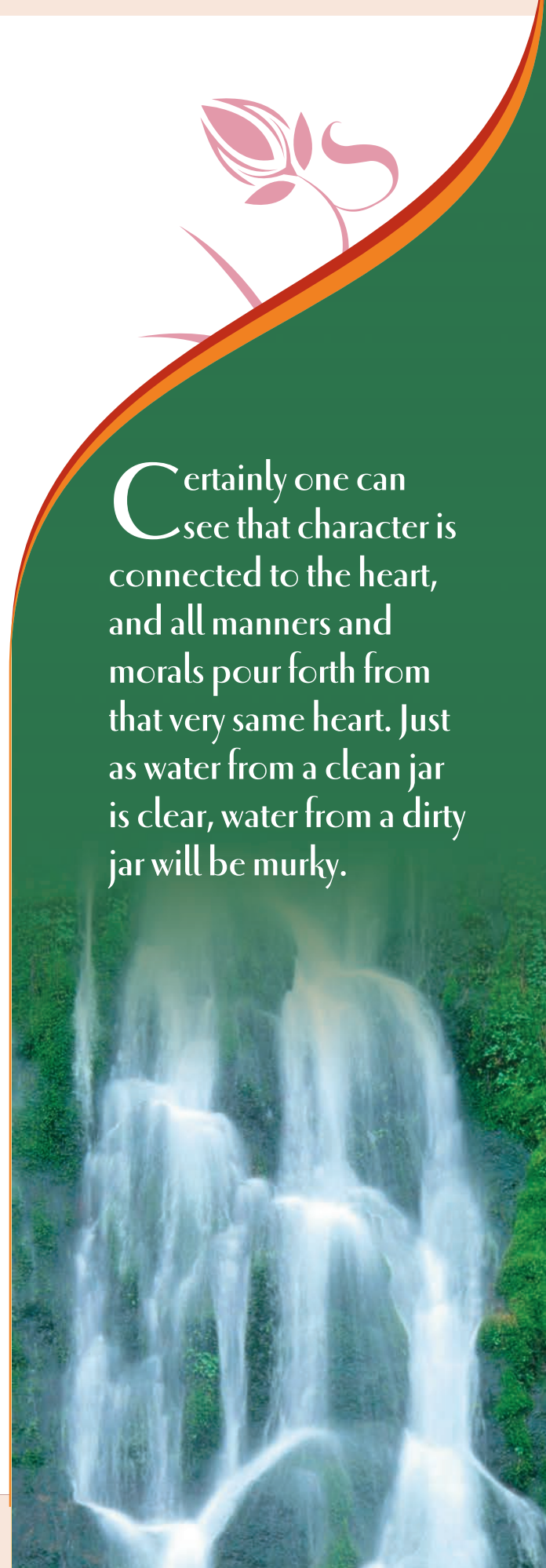
Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Allah's Messenger (pbuh) said: Allah has set forth a parable of a straight path. On both sides of the path there are two enclosures in which there are open doors, and hanging upon each door are curtains. At the end of the path there is an admonisher saying: Adhere to the path and do not go astray. Above this there is an announcer who announces when one intends to open the doors: "Woe be to thee! Do not open it, for if you open it you shall have to enter."

He then explained (this parable) and said: "Verily the path is -Islam, the open doors are the prohibitions made by Allah, the hanging curtains are the limits set by Allah, the admonisher at the end of the path is the Qur'an, and the announcer is Allah's Preacher who is in every heart." (*Tirmidhi*)

O Allah, we beg of Thee steadfastness in (righteous) affairs and firm determination of righteousness; I beg of Thee to make me grateful for Thy favors and the excellence of the worship of Thee; I beg of Thee a sound heart and a truthful tongue...



Certainly one can see that character is connected to the heart, and all manners and morals pour forth from that very same heart. Just as water from a clean jar is clear, water from a dirty jar will be murky.



# UMAR IBN ABD AL-AZIZ

## THE FIFTH RIGHTLY-GUIDED CALIPH

*"Rulers usually appoint people to watch over their subjects. I appoint you a watcher over me and my behaviour. If you find me at fault in word or action guide me and stop me from doing it."*

Umar ibn Abd Al Aziz

Umar ibn Abd Al Aziz is generally called the fifth rightly-guided Caliph because during his reign of three years he realized what we now consider the ideals of Islam, the Islamic state and the proper Islamic behavior of a ruler and a servant of Allah.

He was the son of Abd Al Aziz, the governor of Egypt and Umm Asim bint Asim; he was the brother of Abd Al Malik, one of the Ummayyad Caliphs. He was a descendent of the family of Umar ibn Al-khattab, which is why he was also known as Umar II. He was born around 682 and grew up in Medina, the city of which he later became governor during the time of Walid I in 706. Even when he was governor he distinguished himself as an enlightened ruler, initiating a consultative council according to Islamic traditions, making him the envy of the despot of Iraq, Al-Hajjaj, as the people of that province took refuge in Umar's province. He was removed from office and appointed caliph in 717; in three years he reformed the entire empire and provided us with an example of a just monarch.

Umar was a pious and respectful Muslim. His wife said of him that "Indeed he never used to pray or fast more than the rest of you, but I never saw a servant of God who feared Allah more than Umar. He devoted his body and his soul to the people. All day he would sit tending to their affairs, and when night came he would sit up as long as business remained. One evening when he had finished everything, he called for his lamp - the oil for which he used to buy with his own money



*His wife said of him  
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- and prayed two prostrations. Then he sat back on his legs, with his chin in his hands, and the tears ran down his cheeks; this didn't stop until dawn, when he rose for a day of fasting."

His piety was most apparent in his actions towards the poor and the needy. He took care of them from the day he became caliph.

It is said that on that night his son, Abd Al Malik, then aged 17, came to him asking why the new caliph wanted to sleep instead of assisting the oppressed. Umar replied that he had mourned the entire night before over the grave of the deceased caliph, Suleyman, but that he would attend his obligations after the noon prayer. His son asked him if he were sure that he would still be alive when the call for noon prayer would be read. At that moment Umar stood up, and went out to assist the needy.

Umar led a decent and simple life. As soon as he came to power, he handed his own horses over to the state treasury. He also ordered his wife to hand over all the precious things she had received from his father, Abd Al Malik. His wife, Fatima, understood this request and acted accordingly. He considered that justice must start with a just ruler, and a just ruler can never possess more than what he actually needs for sustenance. He relied on Allah and refused to live a luxurious life.

Umar was keen to change the method of governing. First of all, he liked to listen to the advice of others, since he knew that according to the saying of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Islam is a form of advice. He reconstituted the

consultative body that had existed during the reign of the first four Islamic rulers.

Umar reinstated the policies of the empire concerning the expansion of the borders, military command, taxes and also concerning some Muslim practices. Instead of wasting Muslim lives and money, he ordered the Ummayyad troops to retreat from the walls of Constantinople, a city besieged by the Muslims for the second time in early Muslim history, the first being that of Abu Ayyub Al Ansari, one of the greatest companions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

In the meantime, he was not passive; in what is now Azerbaijan he defended the empire against the Turks and he successfully faced a kharijite uprising. He acted as a good Muslim, preferring negotiations to armed conflict, but when necessary he would use military forces to secure the integrity of the Muslim lands.

As far as taxes were concerned, Umar said that "Allah sent Muhammad as a prophet not as a tax collector". The Ummayyad Empire had accumulated a huge wealth from taxes, with the previous caliphs even collecting jizya from converts to Islam, though this form of payment applied only to the non-Muslim residents. Such actions prevented many from choosing the path of Islam.

As Umar wanted equality and the peaceful spread of Islam among his subjects, he abolished this un-Islamic practice. He not only collected money in the right way, but he also spent it in the way of Allah.

He resumed paying a sum of money to the orphans of soldiers and gave the mawali, the non-Arab Muslim soldiers, their due wages. At the same time, he also tried to cement the brotherhood between Arabs and non-Arab Muslims. He feared bribery so much that he almost never accepted gifts. He ordered the strict punishment of all those who were unjust or harsh to his subjects or who did not leave enough money in the hands of ordinary people.

Umar wanted to restore the original purity of the religion of Islam. From an early age, he was interested in Islam; he followed the Shariat, and told people that they should never stray from it. This is the Islamic concept of ordering good and forbidding evil. For example, he ordered Muslims to pray in their mosques for the reunion of Muslim hearts and to never again condemn Ali ibn Abi Talib, which was an unfortunate practice during the Umayyad dynasty.

As a good Muslim Umar never harmed people who were members of other faiths. He reinstituted the churches and synagogues of the Christian and Jewish communities. Once he nearly demolished parts of the great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus because they had been taken from the Christians. But fortunately, the Christians preferred to be paid retribution instead.

Umar confiscated the estates seized by Umayyad officials and redistributed them to the people, while making it a personal goal to attend to the needs of every person in his empire. Fearful of being tempted into bribery, he rarely accepted gifts, and when he did he promptly deposited them in the public treasury.

Umar is a role model for all the emirs of this ummah whether they lead a small or large section of it. He never wanted to become a leader. He said: "How I wish that there was the distance between the East and the West between me and this office!"

These sincere hearts, those who prefer to decline offers to take power are the greatest leaders. Umar's philosophy as a ruler is best summarized in his following saying: "I realized that God the highest would ask me about all of my actions, and Muhammad would testify about them, and I feared that I should find no excuse when I was with God, and no defense before Muhammad."

Shah Waliullah says of this wonderful man who feared Allah and looked for intercession on the Day of Resurrection from our Prophet (pbuh) that "the Mujtahid (renewer of faith) of the first century was Imam Ahl us Sunnah, Umar bin Abdul Aziz."

*Umar never harmed people who were members of other faiths. He reinstituted the churches and synagogues of the Christian and Jewish communities.*



# DHIKR: Remembrance of ALLAH

It is the dhikr of the heart which cleanses and polishes the heart in order for the seeker of Allah to receive the best benefits from the Qur'an, prayer and other forms of dhikr.



"Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and reject not faith."  
(Al-Baqarah, 2/152)



With mercy and blessings, Allah, the Creator of every soul, has called to us to come close to Him. Allah wants human creation to find Him, to stand with Him and to return to Him. For this reason He has sent to us the Criteria (the Qur'an), the Messenger, and dhikr. For the Muslim, these represent the Truth, which helps the seeker find Allah, the law on which we stand, and the path which returns us to our Lord – spiritually now and corporally in the after life.

Dhikr in itself has many meanings and takes many forms. Just as there are many windows for sunlight to enter a house, Allah has given the heart many windows through which His Nur (light) can enter to illuminate the mind and soul of the human being. Dhikr implies remembering, glorifying, or mentioning; through various forms of the root word, it can also mean reminiscence or being a reminder. As there is no one exact translation of the word into English, these meanings tend to be too weak; Yusuf Ali added the following to his translation: "to praise by frequently mentioning, to rehearse, to celebrate or commemorate, to make much of, to cherish the memory of (as a precious possession)."



In form, dhikr can include reading or reciting the Qur'an, praying, learning or teaching Islamic knowledge, making supplications, invocation of Allah with the tongue according to one of the formulas taught by the Prophet, remembrance of Allah in the heart, or remembrance with both the heart and the tongue. Sa'id ibn Jubayr, the author of *Fiqh al-Sunnah* writes, "Anyone engaged in obeying Allah is in fact engaged in the remembrance of Allah."

Several forms of dhikr mentioned above effect the entire being of the Muslim, externally and internally, as they are dhikr of the mind and body. The dhikr of the heart, which is of the latter category, is usually the one that is most often neglected; however, this does not mean that such dhikr is the least important. In fact, just the opposite seems to be true in light of the following hadith, in which our Prophet (pbuh) explains the value of dhikr to his followers: "Shall I not tell you the best of your deeds, those that give you the highest rank, those that are the purest with your King, those which are better for you than giving gold and silver, and which are better for you than meeting your enemy and striking their necks...? (It is the) remembrance of Allah ta'ala." (Al-Muwatta).

The reason for this great value is because of the necessity of dhikr in making our deeds complete and pleasing to Allah. In order for our deeds to be acceptable they must be connected to remembrance of Allah. Indeed, any deed done without Allah in one's heart is of no value. This was best explained by Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi when he explained: "there is no good deed except with dhikr as a precondition for its validity, and whoever does not remember Allah in his heart at the time of his sadaqa or fasting, for example, then his deed is incomplete:

therefore dhikr is the best of deeds because of this." Thus, it can be understood that dhikr is the completion, in a sense, the perfection of all deeds.

Furthermore, according to the Qur'an, everything done with the remembrance of Allah becomes a source of satisfaction for the heart. "Those who believe, and their hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: By remembering Allah, truly satisfaction comes to the heart" (Ra'd, 13/28). Dhikr endows the

owner of the heart to gain humility, a characteristic which always serves to bring one closer to their Lord. Yusuf Ali writes, "Dhikr represents both a solemn ritual and a spiritual state of mind or heart, in which the devotee seeks to realize the presence of God. Thus, there is dhikr of mind and dhikr of the heart... one may lead to the other, but in many cases the two may be simultaneous."

Dhikr of the heart serves to soften the heart. In the same way that a continuous stream of water can wear away the roughness of stone, dhikr too can smooth out the roughness of arrogance and vanity from the heart. A soft, smooth heart is one that feels empathy and compassion toward Allah's creation and trembles at the mention of Allah's name.

It is the dhikr of the heart which cleanses and polishes the heart in order for the seeker of Allah to receive the best benefits from the Qur'an, prayer and other forms of dhikr. As mentioned in the beginning, it is the heart which constantly remembers Allah that is constantly remembered by Allah.

May Allah make us one of those whose heart remembers Him constantly so that we can be humbled, our deeds can be completed, and our final home can be in Jannah (heaven). Amen!

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# THE REALIZATION OF TRUTH

Sumayya Harris

As Muslims we believe every human soul will have the opportunity at some point in their life to learn the message of Islam. My question to you is 'What are you going to do about it?'

One could say my journey to Islam began when I was 16 years old, when I came to acknowledge the existence of a creator, God. And I must stress at this point I intrinsically came to the conclusion of the existence of only one creator. Born to a born again Christian Welsh mother and Hindu father my choices of understanding my creator and discovering how to worship God were limited.

Finally, I did what most people do and I blindly accepted Christianity to be the way forward for my faith. It wasn't until I began my bachelor's degree at Cardiff University that the concept of God became distorted for me. That is the Trinitarian concept of God became forced and embedded into my mind.

At my second year at Cardiff University, my flat mate, who was also Christian, pestered me to attend a debate which, I think, was organised by the Cardiff University Islamic society. I reluctantly agreed to go with her. The debate was called Islam vs. Christianity. I sat for over an hour listening to two men discuss different issues. I have to admit that I knew absolutely (nearly) nothing about Islam. I was only aware that they fasted and that they prayed but as to the where's, how's, or why's, I was clueless. I had many Muslim friends in college but not one of them was informed about their faith. I have to admit I feel quite embarrassed to tell you that I was absolutely clueless about Islam, seeing as it is the second largest religion in the world and the fastest growing religion today, with figures indicating that 1 in 5 (some indicate 1 in 4) people in the world are Muslim.

The Muslim speaker at the event spent more time arguing about the concept of Jesus' crucifixion; he failed to say much about Islam and therefore I was none the wiser about Islam. At the end of the event a nice Muslim brother was offering free English translations of the Qur'an, as well as other literature on Islam. With a typically British mentality 'It's free, why not', I took quite a few books and tapes away with me.

Months passed by, and I still hadn't even looked at any of the books. In particular the Qur'an; I can remember I had placed it on the top of my bookcase, but I never contemplated reading it. I think my flatmate must have told my pastor at church that I had been handed a Qur'an at the event. I remember his response so well. He told me in so many words that I had the light, implying that Islam was darkness and that the Qur'an was a book never to be read or opened. He told me that for all the names God uses to refer to himself in the Qur'an, not one of them is to do with love.

At that time I still had no knowledge or understanding of Islam and therefore could not interject or argue with him. Now I can. The Kind, The Merciful, The Forgiving, and in fact The Loving, (in Arabic Al Wadud) are all names by which God refers to himself in the Qur'an. And the Qur'an is not from the darkness, rather it is the true light of God, the only real and true guidance mankind has left in this world.

### *The Realization of Truth*

It was not until my third year at university that I actually picked up and starting reading the Qur'an and other books on Islam. I found reading the Qur'an, in all honesty, difficult, because for me it was just words. It lacked a context, a time,

a place and a reason behind those words. To really understand the Qur'an we really need to understand the issues too. After reading another book about Islam it became somewhat easier to understand the Qur'an. And by reading that book I realized that Islam was true. My understanding of God is that He is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Perfect, therefore, His word must also be perfect. However, I came to realize that there were inaccuracies, contradictions and omissions throughout the Bible.

Therefore, it was easy to conclude that the Bible could not be the pure word of God. If the Bible was not the word of God, what was? The Qur'an, as I came to understand, remains perfect, unchanged, unchallenged and unparalleled. It was at that moment that I became Muslim and I believed in the Qur'an and in Islam; I did what all must do, that is, I submitted. This was my return to my original monotheistic belief.

I managed to get in contact with a Muslim who introduced me to two Muslims sisters. And the following Saturday I declared my faith in front of several witnesses. I bore witness that there is no God worthy of worship except Allah and I bore witness that Muhammad is His final slave and messenger.

As Muslims we believe every human soul will have the opportunity at some point in their life to learn the message of Islam. My question to you is 'What are you going to do about it?'

No soul knows when the time of death will approach them; some die young, others may reach old age, but it is guaranteed that no one knows if it will be their turn today. My advice to you is don't waste this opportunity. This may be the only opportunity you will get before it's too late.

The Qur'an is the  
true light of God,  
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has left in this world.





# Pearls of Wisdom

*If you see something you do not like in your brother try to find from one to seventy excuses for him. If you can't find an excuse, say, 'There might be an excuse that I am not aware of.*

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

*Whoever remembers death often will find a small amount (of worldly things) sufficient for him and whoever includes his speech in his deeds will speak little.*

Al-Awza'i

*Remember Allah in good times and He will mention you in hard times. When you remember those who have passed away, consider yourself to be one of them.*

Abu Darda

*It is from a person's knowledge and understanding that he first sees to his needs in order to be able to pray with a heart free of distractions.*

Abu Darda

*There are three kinds of hearts: the heart like a mountain, which nothing can move; the heart like a palm-tree, its roots firm but its branches in motion; and the heart like a feather, which the wind blows from right to left.*

Arif Ar-Riwakri

*If Allah loves His servant He will grant three attributes as proof of His Love: generosity like the generosity of the ocean, favor like the favor of the Sun in giving light, and modesty like the modesty of the Earth.*

Bayazid Bistami

*No speech is good if it is not directed toward the pleasure of Allah. There is no benefit from money if it is not spent in the cause of Allah.*

Abu Bakr Siddiq

*Do not be deceived by one who recites the Qur'an. His recitation is but speech – rather look to those who act according to it.*

Umar bin Khattab

*Do not think about how small the sin is, but think about whom you have just disobeyed.*

Bilal b. Saïd

*The life of this world is made up of three days: yesterday has gone with all that was done, tomorrow you may never reach, but today is for you. So do what you should do today.*

Hasan Al-Basri

*Committing one sin after another causes the heart to become blind and die.*

Hasan Al-Basri

*Silence is the best state, except under three conditions: you must not keep silent when evil gossip attacks your heart; you must not keep silent when directing your heart to the remembrance of Allah; and you must not keep silent when the vision inside your heart orders you to speak."*

Alauddin al-Attar



# MUHAMMAD BABA SEMMASI

Semmasi was a man of moderate height with a beautiful face and dark skin. By looking at his glowing face, one could easily see that he had been granted "the light". He had a penetrating glance, a sharp mind and deep sensitivity.

After Ali Ramiteni, the famous "Azizan", the chain continued with Muhammed Baba Semmasi. Hodja Muhammad was from the Semmas village 15 km from Ramiten. He was born there, and he lived and died there (755/1354). His grave is also in Semmas.

Semmasi studied religious sciences for a while in Semmas. After acquiring a certain degree of depth about manifest knowledge, he turned his face to spiritual knowledge. He joined the dargah of the famous sheikh of the time, the contemporary ring of the golden chain, Ali Ramiteni. Semmasi stayed with his sheikh in Bukhara and Harezm. He was able to go on to be the murshid after his sheikh as he had gone further in mortification, controlling his bad temper, and in decency and expression. At the time of Sheikh Ali Ramiteni's death he said to his students: "Affiliate with him, obey his orders, and do not abandon him or his way while he is alive."

It was Muhammad Baba Semmasi's custom to find his own murids after he became murshid. He would go for walks among the people and would attract those who were capable of being murids and dervishes; in this way he found Emir Kulal, who would be his caliph, and he even found the next caliph, Bahauddin Naqshband. He found Emir Kulal when he was wrestling. He discovered that this man had a spiritual skill that was as strong as his physical skills. About Emir Kulal Semmasi said: "This brave man is the wrestler of the unseen that is not of the physical world. Many people will reach spiritual maturity with his help."





It was Semmasi's custom to find his own murids after he became murshid. He would go for walks among the people and would attract those who were capable of being murids and dervishes



He also discovered Shah Naqshband, who was known as "Pir"; after Emir Kulal, Naqshband was the bearer of the trust. The event that occurred when Semmasi was passing through the village of Kasr-i Hinduvan, where Shah Naqshband's family was living, supports this. When going through this village, at a time before Naqshband had been born, Semmasi said: "There is the scent of a brave man here. Soon, with this brave man, Kasr-i Hinduvan will become Kasr-i Arifan." After a while, when Muhammad Baba returned to that village, he said: "The scent has increased. This brave man must have been born." Indeed, Bahauddin had been born three days before. Shah Naqshband's grandfather brought him to Muhammad Baba, who was a guest at Emir Kulal's home. When Muhammad Baba saw Bahauddin, he said: "This is our son; we have adopted him as our son." Then, turning to his students, he said: "This is the brave man about whom we talked about before he was born. He will be the greatest imam and murshid of his time." After this, turning to Emir Kulal, he said: "This is my son. I entrust him to you. Do not neglect his education. If you neglect it in any way, I will not forgo my rights over you." Emir Kulal responded: "Your orders on this matter will be respected. I will carry out your orders. With this contract, the duty of educating Bahauddin was handed over to Emir Kulal.

Muhammed Baba Semmasi was a sheikh who experienced love and ecstasy. He owned a vineyard which, for the most part, he took care of himself. Sometimes, while caring for the vines, he would fall into a trance, lose conscious, and the knife would fall from his hand. It would take a few hours for him to recover. This state of his could have been caused by the sadness he felt when the vines he was pruning ceased to praise Allah, as they were now severed.

### *With Shah Naqshband*

Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshband tells us:

When I decided to marry, my grandfather sent me to his sheikh, Muhammad Semmasi, so that our home would be blessed by him and he would help us in this matter. That night, I felt the need to pray, supplicate and entreat in my heart. I went to the sheikh's masjid and started to pray. While I was praying, these words came from my mouth: "O Allah! Grant me the strength to bear the troubles and to withstand the difficulty of love." I went to Muhammad Semmasi in the morning. He said the following to me: "My son, now pray like this: 'O Allah! Allow this servant of yours to be at the point that is for Your sake.' If Allah desires trouble for one of his saints, due to His mercy, He will endow them with the patience to endure that trouble." After this conversation, breakfast was ready and we ate breakfast together. After leaving the table, he gave me some bread and ordered me to keep it with me. I thought: "We have just filled our stomachs. What do I need this bread for?" The sheikh must have understood my confusion, as he warned me: "The bread is necessary to save the heart from useless feelings and memories." We left to go to the village together. On the way, we stopped at a friend's home to refresh our ablutions. However, our friend seemed a bit distressed. When we asked the reason, he replied: "I am sad as I have some cream, but no bread." Muhammad Baba Semmasi turned me and said: "You were wondering when that bread would be used. This is where it was intended. Take it out so he may eat." These events increased my admiration and submission to him.

# Quiz For Children



1. What is the name of the fountain that was given to the Prophet (pbuh)?  
A) Kawthar                      B) Firdous  
C) Rayyan                        D) Burak
2. What was the name of the night on which the Qur'an was sent?  
A) Isra                            B) Miraj  
C) Qadrd.                        D) Salam
3. Which surah is also known as Surah at-Tawheed?  
A) Baqarah                      B) Kafirun  
C) Ikhlas                         D) Mumtehhine
4. How is the journey of the Prophet (pbuh) to Jerusalem known?  
A) Isra                            B) Taif  
C) Aqabah                        D) Haj
5. Who was a famous leader of the Muslim army?  
A) Hz. AbuWalid                B) Hz. Bilal  
C) Hz. Jabir                      D) Hz. Aisha
6. Who used to run races with the Prophet when she was young?  
A) Hz. Aisha                      B) Hz. Khadijah  
C) Hz. Aminah                   D) Hz. Meryem
7. Whose voice did the Prophet (pbuh) hear during the Miraj?  
A) Hz. Umar                      B) Hz. Fatima  
C) Hz. Jabir                      D) Hz. Abu Bakr
8. Who was martyred in Karbala?  
A) Hz. Zaid                        B) Abu Talib  
C) Hz. Ali                         D) Hz. Hussain
9. Who was the Ansar that fought in battle at the age of 80?  
A) Hz. Ayyub                      B) Hz. Abu Bakr  
C) Hz. Hussain                   D) Hz. Ali
10. Who was the first martyr of Islam?  
A) Hz. Summaye                B) Hz. Aminah  
C) Hz. Khadijah                D) Hz. Zeynep

.....

Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

The first 25 entries that have all of the questions correct will win. Circle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: Sufi Wisdoms - Quiz, 6773 So. 70th E. Ave. Tulsa, OK 74133 USA.

Name: ..... Age: .....

Address: .....

Parent's Name (for consent purposes only): .....

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