

Lesson 21: The Importance of Meditation and the Need for Preserving Factors which Ward off Negligence

Previous to this, discourse was had in regard to fear and dread and factors which make them appear in men. It has been said that amongst the factors which cause fear of Allah to appear in man is paying heed to the greatness of the Resurrection, the intensity of the tortures of hell and the value and expansiveness of the eternal Garden of bliss.

The relation of this section of the words of the Prophet (S) with the previous issues is for the reason that qualities of the soul and the inner conscience like fear, dread, yearning, hope, love and affection all come into appearance once man is heedful and his heart is awake and aware; but if he were heedless, and his attention were weak, the states either never at all come into appearance and/or appear in a weak and faint form.

Once man becomes afflicted by negligence and hardheartedness and he himself gets aware of this ethical vice, there are causes and factors which help man to emerge from that low condition. Some of the causes and factors are from the inner conscience of man and some of those factors are external.

Sometimes, in the external world an event occurs, words are heard and/or conditions are provided which result in man's admonition, wakefulness and emerging from heedlessness. Of course, this effect is in the category of divine graces and man ought to make the most of these opportunities and to be thankful, so that the graces and favors of Allah, the Exalted, may multiply. If these opportunities are not appreciated and not made use of, the negligence and hardheartedness of man increases. In this regard, the Noble Prophet (S) states:

“O Abu Dharr! Soften your voice [when you are] near corpses or at war with the enemies of religion and at the time of reciting the Qur'an.”

In this section, the Noble Prophet (S) hints at three ethical, instructional and security advices:

The Three Recommendations of the Prophet (S)

A) Speaking Softly At The Time Of Escorting A Funeral

It is very proper for man to speak softly and not loudly; this is a praiseworthy habit which Luqman, the Wise, recommended to his son:

وَأَغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ...

“... And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice; surely the most hateful of voices is braying of the asses.”¹

Even if in ordinary instances speaking softly is desirable, but still in some cases we ought to speak softer than the common and ordinary instances and/or adopt quietness; for instance when man wants to concentrate his thoughts and attention on an event which has taken place and stop themselves from other deeds. It is natural that one of the instances which ought to drive man into thought and reflection and from which he ought to take lesson is at the time of escorting and burying a corpse. Man has to attend to this fact that this death will one day come to him.

For this reason, he ought to abstain from talking about worldly affairs and his attention should be concentrated on his final destination; he ought to ponder deeper into this fact that his corpse will be carried on the shoulders of people someday and take lesson from it. It is a pity that we do not pay heed to this issue and even at the time of escorting and burying corpses too we do not follow the proper rules of conduct and do not seek to take lesson. We do this in spite of the fact that it has been recommended that at the time of escorting a corpse we ought to move in silence, tranquility, soberness and calm and our attention ought to only be directed at the corpse, that is why the Noble Prophet states:

“O Abu Dharr! When you are escorting a dead body, busy your intellect with meditation and humility, know that you too will go back to Him.”

One of the issues which are likely to drive negligence out of man is witnessing the corpse of a believer which has left the world after a lifetime of endeavor and deriving benefit from the favors of the world and pleasure-seeking and his dead body is being taken to the grave. Without the least doubt, witnessing that sad scene drives man out of heedlessness because paying heed to the world and its treasures and encumbrances gives rise to negligence and the thing which concentrates man's attention to the hereafter causes wakefulness and abstinence from negligence.

For this reason, the best cause of wakefulness and keeping heedlessness at bay is for man to look at objective entities; after a lifetime of struggle an individual's life comes to an end, and he gets led to the

last world. Even if man knows that death is certain and everyone dies, still witnessing a person who has passed away has more effects than merely knowing.

Opportunities like being present at the burial of believers ought to be made the most of in the direction of edification of the soul and getting rid of the carnal desires of the soul and abstaining from distracting our attention while only concentrating on one's end. Man ought to conceive that this is a way we all are destined to trudge, sooner or later. Therefore, is the transitory life of this world worth striving for without any anxiety? We ought to think whether we have endeavored for the hereafter or not.

Meditation and reflection about death, as has been emphasized in the *hadiths* and Qur'an, is one of the most effective factors which cause abstaining from the Devil and setting foot on the right path. Man ought to think that perhaps he may not remain alive an hour more because no man is certain about up to when he is going to remain alive.

Therefore, in contrast to long and protracted hopes which cause hardheartedness and heedlessness, paying attention to death results in abstaining from negligence and in man's awakening and all too often meditation and thought transform man's way of life and his destiny too.

It is natural that once man reflects about his destiny and perceives himself subdued in the face of the majesty of Allah, a state of brokenness, lowliness and humility appears in his heart whose effects also get manifested outwardly in the same way that once a believer stands to recite his prayers perceives himself in the presence of the greatness of Allah giving rise to humility and lowliness in him and of course this is something which has been emphasized and has been mentioned as the most delicate quality which causes a believer to attain his prosperity:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ * الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ

“Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers...”²

(In contrast, people who do not perceive the majesty of Allah and do not reflect upon the contents of prayer do not have humility and submissiveness.)

As we have already said humility takes place in the heart and its effects become manifested in the organs and members of the body such as eyes, but at times humility is attributed to certain parts of the body, as the Gracious Qur'an states:

وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ...

“...and the voices shall be low before the Beneficent God so that you shall hear ought but a soft sound.”³

Elsewhere, He states:

خَاشِعَةً أَبْصَارُهُمْ تَرْهُفُهُمْ ذِلَّةً وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَالِمُونَ

“Their looks cast down, abasement shall overtake them; and they were called upon to make obeisance; but they shall not be able.”⁴

According to what has been mentioned, being present at funerals and paying heed to the destiny of one who has passed away and also attention to the scene of the Resurrection and describing its conditions, to the extent that man is aware, causes humility, submissiveness and abstinence from negligence. But if man is at that moment indifferent, as if nothing has taken place, and only thinks about the world and talking to this person and that other person, transformation does not occur in him.

Once someone dies, some people get busy with thinking about the benefit and gain which they derive from his death; if he was a teacher, they pre-occupy themselves with taking his position, if he was a boss, they become happy at the prospect of occupying his position. Once a doctor passes away, others are happy that they will take his place.

This is very regrettable and shameful. An event which is supposed to increase man's attention to the hereafter and the destiny of life becomes a cause for man to get more submerged in the world. It is regrettable that in circumstances where lesson has to be taken and events which ought to be factors for man to become awake and to distance himself from illusions and fantasies, some people are afflicted by negligence and hardness of heart, become more entangled in delusions and fallacies and that frightening and awakening scene not only does not awaken them, but also increases the hardness of their hearts. It is for this reason that the Noble Prophet (S) advises Abu Dharr that one of the instances which causes fear, humility, lowliness and submissiveness in man is presence at funerals and burying rites; on the condition that one is attentive and heedful and abstains from being noisome and paying attention to this and that person. He only ought to think about himself and speak softly so as to follow up on his meditation and reflection; for the reason that speaking loudly and even merely speaking occupy the heart of man and prevent him from presence of heart:

One day a man in Tehran asked the late ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, may he reside in Allah’s eternal Garden of bliss, “What ought I to do in order to have presence of heart during prayer?” In response, ‘Allamah Tabataba’i said, “Speak less [during the course of your day].” We may perhaps be surprised about the role speaking has in preventing man from having presence of heart during prayer (coincidentally, that man was very talkative).

Without the least doubt, speaking and talking expend the energy [which is supposed to be preserved] for the mind, the soul and spirit of man, especially if talking is a custom, like admonishing, delivering speeches and teaching. When a group of people are listening to the words of a speaker, he takes care

not to make a single mistake; it is for this reason that he concentrates all his attention on his talking and refrains from attending to himself. For this reason, speaking less and also speaking softly results in man becoming more attentive to his inner self and keeping mental distraction at bay.

In regard to the Noble Prophet's (S) state at the time of escorting or burying a corpse, a *hadith* has been recorded stating:

“At the time of escorting and burying a corpse, intense sorrow used to overcome him and he used to attend more to himself and speak less.”^{[5](#)}

B) Speaking Softly At The Time Of War

Considering the circumstances of the forces and the privacy of military secrets during military operations and war, the Noble Prophet (S) recommends speaking softly during war. During war special conditions arise—especially during planning for military operations and gathering information about the war zone—which call for utmost precaution and care at keeping war secrets and not divulging the conditions of your forces to the enemies.

All too often, speaking and improper movements result in the enemy becoming aware of the strategy of your operations and in the end the lives of people and soldiers fall in danger and the design and strategy to become thwarted and frustrated.

This truth was very much felt by our soldiers during the entire eight years of war; at times circumstances were so sensitive and dangerous and their conduct was so fateful that they had to use ways where their footsteps had not to be heard; in truth, they used to make use of the principle of attacking while the enemy is unaware.

Another point which can be derived from this advice of the Noble Prophet (S) is that the sensitivity and importance of war and military operations demand that the forces use all their capacity and energy in the direction of advancing military goals. In view of this, with silence and tranquility and concentration of the senses, they ought to concentrate all their capacity and energy concealed in their inner selves and with perfect firmness, decisiveness and steadfastness combat their enemies and abstain from that which dissuades them from war and military operations. Bearing this important matter in mind, in his military recommendations to his son Muhammad ibn Hanafiyyah during the war of Jamal, Imam 'Ali ('a) states:

“Mountains may move from their position but you should not move from yours. Grit your teeth. Lend to Allah your head (in fighting for Allah, give yourself to Allah). Establish your feet firmly on the ground. Have your eye on the remotest foe and close your eyes (to their numerical majority). And keep sure that succor is but from Allah, the Glorified.”^{[6](#)}

C) Speaking Softly At The Time Of Reciting The Qur'an

If man finds the grace to be present in sessions of recitation of the Gracious Qur'an, whether his aim and motivation is to derive benefit from the Noble Qur'an or reasons other than that, like participating in sessions of wishing Allah's mercy for the dead and to expresses condolences to the remaining people, it is necessary to make the most of this invaluable chance, embark upon meditation about the *ayats* (signs) of Allah and paying heed to their meanings and purports.

Even when the celestial sound of the Gracious Qur'an is being aired on radio, we ought to delve into deep thought and meditation so as to derive benefit from the meanings of this eternal, inspiring and guiding miracle in the direction of edifying and purifying the inner soul and getting rid of inward ethical vices and establishing invaluable attributes like humility and lowliness, as the Qur'an states:

اللَّهُ نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِي تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ...

“Allah has revealed the best announcement, a book conformable in its various parts, repeating whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of Allah...”⁷

With regard to the wonderful effects of the Qur'an, if man does not pay attention to the purports of the verses at the time of recitation of the Gracious Qur'an and for him there is no difference between the sound of the Qur'an and the words of others, he gets afflicted by negligence and his hardheartedness increases.

Considering the importance and gravity of the need to protect the honor of the Gracious Qur'an and to grant it value, Allah states:

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

“And when the Qur'an is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you.”⁸

It is natural that in regard of the fact that Allah has placed the Qur'an as a means for man's guidance and his inner transformation and conversion and concentrating his attention on Allah, now if he does not pay attention to the sound of the Qur'an and not differentiate between that heavenly sound from the rest of the sounds and not embark upon deriving benefit from the divine admonitions and advices, he has done an ugly deed and has behaved with ingratitude. For this reason, in addition to this fact that he has lost an invaluable opportunity, his hardheartedness has also been increased and loses that relative and

limited readiness which he had for guidance.

In order to derive benefit from the Gracious Qur'an, it is necessary to concentrate our attention and listen to it as if the heavenly sounds of the Gracious Qur'an are being pronounced by the two lips of the Noble Prophet (S). In this case, the Qur'an produces fruit in us and we derive benefit from it in a praiseworthy way.

In sessions of reciting the Gracious Qur'an, like the mourning sessions during which the Qur'an is recited, listening to it and paying heed to it is a praiseworthy habit and a lot of recommendation has been made in regard to it. Unfortunately, we do not observe this good habit. We engage in conversation with one another during recitation of the Gracious Qur'an at mourning ceremonies and often times we talk loudly and without the least doubt a person whose thoughts and mind have been drawn to conversation and listening to the words of those around him lags behind at paying attention to the gracious Quran.

In this regard, the Sunnis have excelled more than us; they have set up special sessions for recitation of the Qur'an and pay praiseworthy attention to the sound and recitation of the Gracious Qur'an, but on the other hand some of them participate in those sessions in order to watch the skills which are being displayed by the reciters of the Qur'an and to encourage and cheer them by repeatedly saying 'Allah Allah'. Far from comparison, these sessions are like concerts where a singer sings and the rest of the people clap hands for him.

In reality, such people are paying attention to the words and sounds of the Gracious Qur'an and not to its purports and wonderful effects and taking lesson from it. Unfortunately, we seldom hold sessions of recitation and listening to the Gracious Qur'an. The general sessions of our recitation of the Qur'an are just those same sessions of recitation for the dead at mourning ceremonies. In these sessions the reciter recites the Qur'an, but the other people are busy with their own work and/or talk to one another!

Sometimes, they raise the voice of the loud speaker so high that it bothers the ears of every listener and for this reason divest them of the interest to listen to the Qur'an. This is in spite of the fact that all the aspects have to be observed and the sound of the loud speakers have to be adjusted to the extent that those present in the session derive benefit and it ought not to be the cause of their getting bothered and leaving the recitation session.

It has to be added that both these two methods and customs are incorrect and insufficient; both the method which we have adopted of not paying attention to and rarely holding recitation sessions is not right and both the method which the Sunnis have opted for merely holding recitation sessions for the sake of displaying their artistic capacities and not paying heed to the meanings and purports of the verses of the Qur'an is insufficient.

It is proper to hold general and expansive sessions for recitation of the Qur'an where the sound and recital is beautiful and also makes available the opportunity and occasion to explain the meanings and purports of the Qur'an and to take lesson from it. Verses of the Gracious Qur'an ought to be recited with

a beautiful and sorrowful sound which gives rise to humility and submissiveness in the listeners and also causes admonition and wakefulness and self-awareness in them:

...وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ

“And when they hear what has been revealed to the Apostle, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears...”⁹

The Consequences of Inattention to the Causes of Spiritual Wakefulness

“O Abu Dharr! Know that salt is the preserver [or medicine] of everything corruptible, but once salt itself becomes corrupt, there is no treatment [or preserver] for it.”

Perhaps, the connection between this sentence and the previous issues is that all our problems arise from negligence, hedonism and obsession with material things and they give rise to the corruption of the heart and soul. Now, there are means and ways of treating these pains and encumbrances which give rise to vigilance and man's paying heed to his destiny. One of those causes is presence in mourning ceremonies and burying rites and paying attention to death.

When man sees the corpse of a person who is heading to the last world being carried on people's shoulders, he visualizes his own death and delves deep into thought. This transformation of the inside results in shame and humility, a state of humility and lowliness vis-à-vis right is brought to life in him. At that time, he becomes afraid of the destiny which lies in expectation of him.

In regard to taking lesson from the death of other people, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) states to one of his companions by the name of Aba Salih:

“When you are carrying a corpse on your shoulders, imagine that you are being carried on other people's hands and you are requesting your Lord to return you to the world once again and He too grants your request and you are returned to the world. Then, take care and observe how you begin your second life once more.” Thereafter, he stated, “It is surprising that some people who are deprived of seeing either the previous and later generations and amongst whom the call of departure and emigration is continually made are likewise pre-occupied by amusement and play.”¹⁰

In consideration to what has been mentioned, once a factor like salt, which prevents the corruption of the heart and is medicine for spiritual pains, becomes corrupt, what thing would remedy it?

Being present at mourning and burying rites ought to plunge man deep into thought and remind him about his own death, if it becomes a cause of more reflection about the world and his future and/or at the

time of movement not only does he not take lesson, but with utmost lack of shame engages in gossiping and back-biting other people; he becomes corrupt like corrupt salt and after that man becomes afflicted by hardheartedness and coldness and awakening scenes do not bring about any transformation in him and no medicine can cure his inner pains. There is no doubt that recitation of the Gracious Qur'an is a remedy of man's inner spiritual pains, as states the Gracious Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“O men! There has come to you an admonition and a healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and a mercy for the believers.”¹¹

Now once the Gracious Qur'an, which is a cure and paying attention to its meanings places invaluable truths at the disposal of man, becomes a means for the world and acquisition of fame, not only is it not a cure but itself adds to our spiritual pains and becomes a cause of more obsession with the world and becoming distanced from Allah and the truth of the Gracious Qur'an.

Reproaching Laziness and Vain Laughing

Reproaching futile laughter and laziness, the Noble Prophet states:

“Know that there are two unacceptable traits among you: one is laughter out of surprise and wonder (laughter that has no cause) and the other is (deliberate) laziness and idleness which is not a result of forgetfulness and ignorance.”

The Noble Prophet (S) admonishes the believers that there are two unacceptable qualities in them which cause more negligence and the weakening of the state of fear and dread. It is proper for the believers to undertake curing and remedying these two indecent attributes, one of which is inopportune laughter. At times, man is encountered by surprising and laughable scenes in which case he naturally becomes overcome by laughter, despite that people whose attention is fixed on Allah only smile when they witness a laughable scene and do not raise their voices to a boisterous laugh.

When a funny tale was narrated to some great men, or when they were encountered by a laughable incident, they only used to smile but their attention was elsewhere and witnessing that incident did not leave the least effect in them.

Even if the dignity of a believer and his attention to the ultra-cosmos and to the presence of Allah do not grant him the opportunity to laugh, if a comical moment occurs, there is no fault with laughing but we ought to keep aloof from loud and inappropriate laughter because intense heedlessness has overcome the heart of a person who laughs inopportune and loudly on a small pretext.

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) states in a *hadith*:

“Inopportune laughter is a result of ignorance,” and thereafter His Holiness adds, “Do not laugh to the extent where your teeth become visible regardless of your indecent actions. And a person who has performed ugly deeds is not free from nightly afflictions.”^{[12](#)}

In this *hadith* Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) clearly states that the boisterous laughter of a person who as a result of ugly actions has a bleak future and a dangerous destiny, in such a way that it is likely for divine requital to befall him at any moment, is inappropriate; such laughter is admissible for a person who is certain about his future and is not worried about his destiny. This is in spite of the fact that we notice that even the Prophet (S) and saints [*awliya*] of Allah did not have such surety and only put their trust in the mercy and grace of Allah.

Concerning the effects of excessive laughter on the heart, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a):

“Excessive laughter kills the heart.” Then, he also stated, “Inordinate laughter dissolves religion in the same way that water dissolves salt.”^{[13](#)}

For this reason, we ought to keep aloof from inappropriate laughter which has no logical reason. Man ought not to lose his control over his mouth, tongue, eyes and ears. If he wants to laugh, he ought to see whether there is a reason for laughing and what the cause of laughter is, otherwise he ought not to laugh on every pretext imaginable.

It is necessary to mention that having a cheerful face and smiling at all times is desirable and valuable and one of the social manners of the believers is to smile in their gatherings and when they meet one another—no matter how full their hearts may be filled with sorrow, grief, fear and dread—so that their conduct may not be a cause of inconvenience and bother for others; as has been recorded in a *hadith*:

“Believers have cheerful and smiling appearances and their sorrow is hidden in their hearts.”^{[14](#)}

This cheerfulness and smiling is different from loud and boisterous laughter which is not befitting of a believer. A pious believer who is focused and has faith in the resurrection does not overlook his works and movements and does not act on the basis of the carnal souls and appetitive soul.

The second characteristic which the Noble Prophet (S) considers as indecent for the *ummah* (Islamic community) is laziness and indolence. Sometimes, man does not discharge a certain duty as a result of heedlessness, like forgetting to perform some worship; in this case he has not perpetrated sin. But sometimes he feels lazy to discharge a known duty consciously; this quality is not worthy of a believer.

It is not acceptable of believers to consciously evade responsibilities. It is not acceptable of a believer to feel lazy when prayer time is due and upon hearing the call to prayer [*adhan*] and as a result be absent at the congregational prayers. This kind of disregard is not expected of a believer, whether this laziness is in regard to discharging obligatory duties or recommended ones.

One of the scholars of Yazd by the name of the deceased Haj Shaykh Ghulam Rida Yazdi was a very

earnest man. One day he and I entered the mosque. When he saw a number of people sitting idly while waiting for the prayer leader [*imam*] and not performing the recommended optional prayers, he got angry and said, “Allah’s curse be on the Devil! Are you scared of being taken to paradise? Stand up and recite the recommended optional prayers!”

It is very proper that man engages in performing the recommended optional prayers once man enters the mosque before the congregational prayers and is not befitting of a believer to be heedless to this important issue. This matter is true in regard to the rest of the issues too; sometimes man lags behind in his studies as a result of illness, but sometimes laziness and seeking comfort prevent him from study and research. Basically, laziness and pleasure-seeking are great adversities which stand in the way of man’s growth and advancement and it is proper that we get rid of them in ourselves.

The Role of Meditation in Worship

In continuation of the *hadith*, the Noble Prophet (S) states:

“O Abu Dharr! Two *rak’ats* (cycles) of conscious and heedful prayer accompanied by meditation is better than one night of worship with a heedless heart.”

Taking into account the importance and prominent role of meditation and reflection, the Noble Prophet (S) states that two *rak’ats* (cycles) of prayer performed in a conscious and heedful manner—not that they ought to be necessarily long—but along with thought have more reward and effects in the perfection of man than waking up at night and spending it all in prayer until morning without the presence of heart. Of course, if man recites his prayers very fast and with a lot of haste, he cannot perceive his duties and pray in the correct way; as can be inferred from the *hadiths*, prayer with haste which is devoid of reflection, thought and heed is like a crow with its beak in the ground; that is to say, this prayer is not profitable and because it occurs without attention and is performed so fast that man does not find the opportunity to perceive the presence of Allah, and to reflect and meditate upon the context and purports of prayer. What is being asserted is that two *rak’ats* of prayer with consciousness and attention are better than long and repeated prayers without heed and presence of heart.

As has repeatedly been said, man’s spiritual journeying consists of both academic and spiritual journeying; man’s spiritual ascendancy depends on his intellect and the increase of his perception. In other words, man sets foot on the course of ascendancy towards Allah accompanied by knowledge. His gaining proximity to Allah does not imply changing places; there is no need for man to move from one place to another, but his becoming proximate to Allah is dependent on the increase of his intelligence and attentiveness, the rise and growth of his conception of the majesty of Allah and His Attributes; the more his awareness increases, the more he becomes close to Allah.

This kind of spiritual journey is called scientific [or academic] journeying towards Allah which is attained under the auspices of more knowledge and its first stage is awareness of the self which gives rise to

knowledge of Allah. In contrast, man lags behind in perfection and growth to the same extent that he is ignorant.

Prayer is a means of attaining perfection and is meant to make man feel more nearness to Allah. But if this prayer is devoid of attention and perception of the status of Allah, the person reciting the prayers is like a person busy performing exercise and stretches, because he has not derived any benefit from the context and purport of prayer.

Of course, prayer devoid of attention and presence of heart is better than sleeping all night long and not praying, or Allah forbid, being pre-occupied with perpetrating sin and evil doing. The very act of keeping vigil at night with the intention of prayer, even if that prayer does not procure complete reward because of being performed without the presence of heart, is a praiseworthy act but it is proper that prayer is accompanied by attentiveness and presence of the heart; in which case his movements become faster and he arrives at the destination faster, which is proximity [*qurb*] to Allah.

- [1.](#) Surat Luqman 31:19.
- [2.](#) Surat al-Mu'minun 23:1-2.
- [3.](#) Surat Ta Ha 20:108.
- [4.](#) Surat al-Qalam 68:43.
- [5.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 264, Beirut print.
- [6.](#) Nahj al-Balaghah, p. 62, short saying 11, trans. Fayd al-Islam.
- [7.](#) Surat al-Zumar 39:23.
- [8.](#) Surat al-A'raf 7:204.
- [9.](#) Surat al-Ma'idah 5:83.
- [10.](#) Usul al-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 258.
- [11.](#) Surat Yunus 10:57.
- [12.](#) Usul al-Kafi, vol. 4, p. 486, Kitab al-'Asharah.
- [13.](#) Ibid.
- [14.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 305.

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