

Objective Four : On the Cordial Disciplines of the Time

Discussed on Two Chapters

Chapter 1: Times of Salat

Know that the people of knowledge and of observance pay attention to, and take care of, the times for the *Salats* according to the depth of their knowledge of the Sacred State of the Lord, and according to their longing for supplication with the Creator, Honored be His Name, as these times are for supplication and meeting Allah.

Those who are attracted by the Beauty of the Beautiful, and are fond of the beauty of eternity, and are drunk with the cup of affection, and are in a state of ecstasy by (drinking) a goblet from *alastu*

(*Am I not...?*)¹,

Are delivered from both worlds, closing their eyes against the regions of existence and joining the Majesty of the Sanctity of Allah's Beauty. To them the Presence is continual, and they do not forget, even for a single moment, remembrance, contemplation, perception and observance.

The people of knowledge, virtues and honorable learned souls, and of good disposition, would prefer nothing to supplication to Allah. They demand supplication and privacy with Allah. They take glory, honor, virtue and knowledge to be in supplication and remembering Allah. Should they look at the universe and the world, their look would be gnostic. In the world they are in quest of Allah and want Him.

To them, all beings are the manifestations of Allah and the charms of the Beautiful: "I love the whole world as the whole world is from Him."² They watch for the times of the *Salats* with all their hearts, and eagerly wait for the time of supplication to Allah, preparing themselves to be present at a fixed time to meet Him. Their hearts are present, and from the Presence [*mahdar*] they demand the Present, as they

respect the Presence [*mahdar*] for the sake of the Present. They believe that servitude is association and sociability with the Absolute Perfect and their eagerness for worship is due to this fact.

And those who believe in the invisible and the other world, and are fascinated by the generosity of Allah, the Exalted, and who would not change the eternal heavenly blessings and the everlasting pleasures and the permanent cheerfulness for mundane perishing chances and the temporal, incomplete and suspected delights, at the times of worship which is the seed of the blessings relating to the other world they prepare their hearts and perform it whole-heartedly and anxiously.

They wait for the times of the *Salats* which are the times for getting the results and winning the treasures and take nothing for the eternal blessings. As their hearts are aware of the invisible world and they cordially believe in the eternal blessings and the continual pleasures of the Hereafter world, they fully utilize their time and do not waste it. Those are the owners of Paradise and the lords of grace in which they will remain forever.

Those groups that have been mentioned, and the others which have not been mentioned, obtain pleasure from worshipping itself, in proportion to their ranks and their knowledge. They never feel the heaviness of the obligations, but it is we, the helpless, who are in the chains of hopes and desires, and in the fetters of whims and wishes, drowned in the overflowing dark sea of the world of nature, where neither a smell of affection and love has reached the sense of smell of our spirit, nor has our heart's sense of taste tasted any delicacies of knowledge and virtue.

We are neither of the people of Gnosticism and vision, nor of the people of faith and tranquility. We take the divine worship to be a heavy obligation, and regard supplication unto Allah a burden. We trust nothing but this world, which is a manger for animals, and are attached to nothing except to this house of nature, which is the seclusion place of the unjust. The eye of our heart's insight is blind to the Beauty of the Beautiful, and the taste of our spirit is void of the taste of Gnosticism.

The master of the circle of the people of knowledge, and the gist of the people of affection and truth says: "I spend the night with my Lord Who feeds me and gives me drink."³ O Lord! What a night which Muhammad (s) spent in the House of Private Intimacy with You! What food and drink were those, which You, with Your own hand, fed that honorable being and freed him from all worlds! It is proper for that master to say: "I have with Allah a time which is not within the capacity of any favorable angel and prophet."⁴

Was that time of the times of this world and the other world? Or was it the time of the Privacy of *qibba qawsayn* (the distance of two bows' length) and discarding the two worlds? Moses, the interlocutor with Allah, fasted for forty days and could attain a meeting with Allah, and Allah said:

"So, the appointed time of his Lord was complete forty nights."⁵

Yet, he could not attain a meeting like Muhammad's, and it cannot be compared with that of him. In the meeting place Moses was told:

“Take off your shoes,”⁶

Which is interpreted to mean “affection to family,” while the Seal of the Prophets was told to love 'Alī. In my heart, of this secret, there is a firebrand, of which I would not talk. You yourself, from this brief, read its detailed talk.

Chapter 2: On Watching Over The Time

Dear, you too, are to seize this opportunity for supplication, as available and according to the possible measure, and apply its cordial disciplines, informing your heart that the origin [*māyah*] of the eternal Hereafter life, the source of the spiritual virtues and the capital of the unlimited generosities are in the Proximity to, and Intimacy with, Allah, the Exalted, and in supplication to Him, especially in the *Salat* which is a spiritual mixture [*ma'jūn*] prepared by the hand of Allah's Beauty and Majesty.

It is the most comprehensive and perfect worship among all types of servitude. So, take care, at your best, to keep its times, and select its virtuous times, for in them is a sort of luminosity not found in other times. In those times you are to lessen, or even sever, your heart's engagements, and this can be achieved by arranging your times and assigning special times for the *Salat*, which guarantees the eternal Hereafter life for you, such that in those assigned times you would have nothing else to do, and the heart could have no other attachments that might rival the *Salat*, and the heart can be prepared and made present with ease.

Now I am going to relate some of the *Hadiths* about the conditions of the infallibles [the Imāms] ('a), as needs be, so that contemplating their conditions may lead to being awake, and perhaps the importance of the situation and seriousness of the state can be recognized by the heart and it can be awakened from its sleep of negligence.

Some wives of the Messenger of Allah (s) were quoted to have said: “The Messenger of Allah (s) used to talk to us and we used to talk to him. But when the time for the *Salat* arrived he appeared as if he did not know us and we did not know him, as his attention was completely directed to Allah.”⁷

It is said that Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ('a), when it was time for the *Salat*, used to writhe and tremble. Asked once about his uncommon state, he said: “The time has come for the trust which Allah, the Exalted, offered to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it.”⁸

Sayyid Ibn Tawīl (may his soul be sanctified) says in *Falāh as-Sā'il*, that when Imām Husayn ('a) used to perform the *Wudu'*, he changed colors and his joints trembled. Asked about the reason, the Imām said: “When one is going to stand before the Owner of the 'Arsh, his color is ought to turn pale and his joints to tremble.”⁹

Imām Hasan had a similar condition.¹⁰ It is narrated that Imām as-Sajjād (the fourth Imām) ('a) used to

get pale at the arrival of the time of the *Wudu'*. He was once asked: "What is this state which happens to you whenever you want to perform the *Wudu'*?" He said: "Do you not know before whose presence I am to stand?"^{[11](#)}

If we, too, think a little and tell our veiled and discarded heart that the times of the *Salats* are the times of being present at the Holy Threshold of the Owner of Majesty, the times in which Allah, the Exalted, the Master of the Kings and the Absolute Great, invites His helpless and worthless servant to supplication, admitting him to His House of Generosity, so that he may win the eternal happiness and permanent pleasures and cheerfulness, we will have pleasure and cheerfulness, according to our level of knowledge when the time of the *Salat* arrives.

If the heart understands the greatness and the importance of the situation, there will be fear and dread in proportion to the extent of its understanding of the greatness. But as the hearts of the holy men [*awliyā'*] and their conditions are different, according to the gracious and the overpowering manifestations and feeling the greatness and mercy, sometimes their longing for the meeting, and their feeling the mercy and beauty excite them to display pleasure and cheerfulness, and they hail: "Relieve us, O Bilāl!"^{[12](#)} And sometimes (divine) manifestations of Greatness, Power and Sovereignty, drive them to ecstasy, trembling and shivering.

In short, O you helpless! The cordial disciplines of the times are in preparing yourself for entering into the Presence of the Master of this world and the Hereafter, for conversing with Allah, the Almighty and Most High. So, cast a glance at your weakness, helplessness, humility and indigence, and at the Greatness, Glory and Majesty of the Sanctified Essence, Glorified be His Majesty, in Whose Court of Greatness the prophetic Messengers and the favorite angels go into rapture, and confess their incapability, humility and wretchedness.

Having so looked, and taught your heart, it would feel afraid and you regard yourself and your worship trivial and worthless. Then, contemplate the extent of the mercy, complete kindness and all-embracing affection of His Sacred Essence, to realize that such a helpless servant, with all his impurities and wretchedness, is invited to His Sacred Court, received by the ceremonies of sending down of angels, heavenly Books and Prophets and Messengers ('a), who call him to the meeting of intimacy, without this helpless possible servant having any previous aptitude, or there being imaginable, in this invitation to His Presence, any benefit for Him we take refuge in Allah or for the angels of Allah and the Prophets ('a).

It is natural, however, that the heart is pleased with this contemplation, and it is filled with hope and expectancy. Therefore, with steps of fear and hope, desire and dread, prepare yourself for the Presence and have ready the required provisions for the Attendance, the most important of which is to attend the Meeting [*mahdar*] with a shy and fearing heart, feeling broken, humiliated, weak and helpless, and believing yourself unworthy to worship and servitude and to be admitted into the Presence, and regarding that giving you permission to enter into worship and servitude was only because of the general mercy and the all-inclusive kindness of the One, the Almighty and Glorified.

If you put your humility before your eyes, and humbly and heartily submitted to the Sacred Essence of Allah, and if you considered yourself and your worship worthless and trivial, Allah, the Exalted, would be kind to you, raise you and bestow His graces upon you.

1. This is a reference to the ﴿yah: “And made them bear witness against their own souls: “Am I not your Lord?” They said: “Yes, we bear witness.” (S̄arah al-Araaf, 7:172).

2. “By the world I am pleased, since the world is pleasant by Him, I love the whole world, as the whole world is from Him.” Sa'dib

3. Was̄il ash-Sh̄'ah, vol. 7, p. 388, with a slight difference; Sah̄h al-Bukh̄r̄i, vol. 4, “Book of Wishes,” p. 251.

Mawlawī, in a couplet says: “As 'I spend the night with my Lord' became knowledge, 'He feeds and give drinks' afterwards became porridge.”

4. 'Aw̄liyy ul-La'bi, vol. 4, had̄ith 7, p. 7; Bih̄r al-Anw̄r, vol. 18, “Book of the Prophet's History,” ch. on “Proving the Mi'r̄ij,” p. 360.

5. S̄arah al-A'r̄af 7:142.

6. “I am your Lord; take off your shoes,” S̄arah T̄-H̄ 20:12.

7. Mustadarak al-Was̄il, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of the Salat,” ch. 2, had̄ith 17.

8. Ibid., had̄iths 5 and 14.

9. Sayyid Ibn T̄w̄s (may his soul be sanctified) has stated this point in his Fal̄h as-S̄'il, quoting al-Lu'luiyyāt, concerning the conditions of Im̄am Hasan ibn 'Alī ('a).

10. Bih̄r al-Anw̄r, vol. 77, “Book of Purification,” sec. on ”Wud̄ū,” ch. 34, had̄ith 34, p. 346, quoting Fal̄h as-S̄'il.

11. Mustadarak al-Was̄il, “Book of as-Salat,” sec. on “The Acts of the Salat,” ch. 2, had̄ith 35.

12. Al-Mahajjat al-Bayd̄ fī Tahdh̄ib al-Ahyā, vol. 1, p. 377. Bilāl was the Prophet's mu'adhdhin, or the caller for the Salat. Mawlawī, in a couplet, says:

“The soul is perfect and perfect is its call,

The Chosen One said: “Relieve us, O Bilāl!”

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