

١٥٢ (فَأَذِّنْ كُرُونِي أَذِّنْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ)

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me (152).

Commentary

Allah first mentioned His favour on the Muslims that He sent to them a Prophet from among them – a favour that cannot be measured in any way. Then he pointed to another great favour in that He guided them to the straight path and led them to the highest perfection.

Then came the third favour of giving them a *qiblah* of their own – through that rule, their religion began its journey to perfection, their worship was unified and their religious and social virtues were enhanced.

Reminding them of these three-fold favours, He calls them to remember Him and to be thankful to Him. They should remember Him with their devotion and obedience, so that He remembers them with His favour. He will increase for them His bounty and grace, if they are thankful to Him, and if they are not ungrateful for His favours. He had already said to them:

and remember your Lord when you forget and say: 'May be my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this' (18:24);

If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more; and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe (14:7).

These two verses were revealed before the verse of the *qiblah* in this chapter. “*adh-Dhikr*” (الذِّكْرُ = remembrance) is sometimes used as opposite of “*al-ghaflah*” (الْغَفْلَةُ = inattention and heedlessness). Allah says:

and do not follow him whose heart We have made inattentive to Our remembrance (18:28).

Inattention is “not knowing that one knows – although the original knowledge is present in memory”.

“Remembrance”, as its opposite, means “knowing that one knows”.

The word “remembrance” at other times is used as opposite to “*an-nisyan*” (النِّسْيَانُ) = forgetfulness). Forgetfulness is “cessation of knowledge from mind”; and as its opposite, remembrance means “presence of knowledge in mind”. It is to this meaning that the words of Allah refer in the verse:

and remember your Lord when you forget... (18:24).

This remembrance, like its opposite “forgetfulness”, is a concept which has its own special effects and exclusive characteristics. Sometimes when those effects and characteristics are found, we say that one remembers, although there is no actual remembrance; or that one has forgotten, although there is no actual forgetfulness.

For example, if you do not come to the aid of your friend – when you know that he needs your help – then people say that: “You have forgotten him”, although in fact you remember him very well.

The word “remembrance” is also used in the same way. Apparently, the use of this word for “verbal remembrance” (e.g., reciting or repeating the names of Allah) comes in this category, because you cannot express something in words unless you remember it in mind. Allah says:

Say; “I will recite to you an account (a remembrance) of him” (18:83).

There are many other examples like it. But if verbal remembrance is counted as a real meaning of the word 'remembrance' then it will be one of its (lower) degrees.

However, remembrance is of many degrees. Allah says:

now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest (13:28);

And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing and in a voice not loud in the morning and the evening, and be not of the heedless ones (7:205);

then remember Allah as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense remembrance (2:200).

Now, it is the thought or feeling which becomes intense, not the words.

Also, we have quoted the above verse:

and remember your Lord when you forget and say: “May be my Lord will guide me to a nearer course to the right than this” (18:24).

The last sentence, beginning with ***Say: “May be...”***, tells the servant to hope for a rank higher than his present one. Its connotation will be as follows: If you slip down to a lower rank, that is, if you forget what you knew before, then remember your Lord and then you may hope for a higher rank that is nearer to

the right course than the present one.

It shows that the remembrance of the heart, *per se*, is of many degrees. It also proves the validity of the saying, "Remembrance is the presence of an idea in the mind"; because even "presence" has various degrees and ranks.

Remember Me: In this sentence, the object "Me" refers to Allah. As we explained above, remembrance is the knowledge of knowledge; and knowledge is defined as "attainment of the form and idea of a thing in the mind of the Knower". Knowledge confines the thing so known and encompasses it within the knower's mind.

Obviously, Allah cannot be known, or remembered (i.e., known to be known) in any way like this. He is beyond the description of describers. He Himself says:

Hollowed be Allah, from what they describe, except the servants of Allah, freed (from sins)
(37: 159–160);

they do not comprehend Him in knowledge (20: 110).

(We shall write later on, Allah willing, somethings related to these two verses.) In view of this established fact, if we were to say that the words, "Remember Me", have been used here in their real, and not metaphorical sense, then we will have to say that man has, or can have, a know-ledge whose definition would be quite different from the one known to us.

Traditions

Numerous traditions, on the virtue of remembrance of Allah, have been narrated by the Shi'ah and Sunni narrators. For example, it has been narrated through various chains of narrators that: "Remembrance of Allah is good in all conditions."

It has been narrated that the Messenger of Allah (S) came up to his companions, and said: "Feast you in the meadows of the Garden." They said: "O Messenger of Allah! And what are the meadows of the Garden?" He said: "The gatherings of remembrance; go there in the mornings and in the evenings and remember (Allah).

And whoever likes to know (what is) his position near Allah, he should see what is the position of Allah near him (i.e., in his heart); because surely Allah gives a servant the same position which the servant gives to Allah, *vis-à-vis*, his own self.

And know that your best deeds (near your King) and the purest and the highest of them in ranks, and the best of all that the sun shines on, is the remembrance of Allah, the High, because Allah, the High, has said concerning His Own Self:

'I am the companion of him who remembers Me'; and He, the High One, has said: **'Therefore remember Me; I will remember you** with My bounty; you remember Me with obedience and worship, I will remember you with bounties, and beneficence, and comfort, and (My) pleasure.' ” (*'Uddatu' d-da'i*)

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Surely Allah, the Blessed, the High, says: 'Whoever is too preoccupied with My remembrance to be able to ask Me (for his needs), I give him the best of what I give to him who asks Me.'” (*al-Mahasin; ad-Da'awat, ar-Rawandi*)

al-Husayn al-Bazzaz said: “Abu Abdillah (a.s.) told me: 'Should I not tell you the most difficult (thing) which Allah has made obligatory for His creatures?' I said: 'Yes, certainly.' He said: 'To do justice to the people (even) against yourself, and your beneficence to your brother, and remembrance of Allah in every place.

Why, (by remembrance) I do not mean (recitation of): “Glory be to Allah, and praise be to Allah, and there is no god except Allah, and Allah is Great” – although this is from that (i.e., it is one aspect of remembrance); but remembrance of Allah in every place (means that you should remember Him) when you rush to His obedience or to His disobedience.” (*Ma 'ani l-akhbar*)

The author says: This theme has been narrated through numerous chains from the Prophet and his *Ahlu l-bayt* (peace be on them all); and there is, in some of them, the following addition: “And it is the words of Allah:

Surely those who fear (Allah), ***when a visitation from the Satan afflicts them they become mindful*** (they remember), ***then lo! they see.***” (7:201)

The Prophet said: “Allah says: 'When I know that the pre-dominant trait of My servant is to be engrossed in Me, I transfer his desire to My invocation and My secret conversation. When My servant becomes like this (i.e., when he attains this position), then if he wants to (i.e., if he is about to) forget, I come between him and his forgetfulness (i.e., I protect him from it).

They are truly My friends; they are truly the heroes; it is they that when I want to destroy the people of the earth in chastisement, I remove it (the chastisement) from them because of those heroes.' ” (*'Uddatu' d-da'i*)

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Allah, the High, has said: 'O son of Adam! Remember Me in your mind, I will remember you in My Self; O Son of Adam! Remember Me in seclusion, I will remember you in seclusion; remember Me in a gathering, I will remember you in a gathering better than your gathering.' ”

And he said: “No servant remembers Allah in an assembly of the people but Allah remembers him in the assembly of the angels”. (*al-Mahasin*)

The author says: Both groups, that is, the Shi'ah and the Sunnis, have narrated this theme with numerous *asnad*.

As-Suyuti writes in *ad-Durru 'l-manthur*: “at-Tabarani, Ibn Marduwayh and al-Bayhaqi (in his *Shu'abu 'l-iman*) have narrated from Ibn Mas'ud that he said: 'The Messenger of Allah said:

“Whoever is given four (things) is (also) given (other) four (things). And its explanation is (found) in the Book of Allah. Whoever is given remembrance, Allah remembers him, because Allah says, '**Remember Me, I will remember you**'; and whoever is given *ad-du'a'* (الدُّعَاءُ) = invocation) is given response (i.e., its acceptance), because Allah says; '**Call on Me, I will answer you**'; and whoever is given thankfulness, is given increase, because Allah says, '**If you are grateful, I will certainly give you more**'; and whoever is given to ask forgiveness, is given pardon, because Allah says, '**Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving.**' ” ’ ”

It is written in the same book: “Sa'id ibn Mansur, Ibnu 'l-Mundhir and al-Bayhaqi (in his *Shu'abu 'l-iman*) narrate from Khalid ibn Abi 'Imran that he said that the Messenger of Allah said: 'Whoever obeys Allah, he indeed has remembered Allah, even if his prayer and his fast and his recitation of the Qur'an are small in quantity. And whoever disobeys Allah, he indeed has forgotten Allah, even if his prayer and his fast and his recitation of the Qur'an are abundant.' ”

The author says: This tradition indicates that man commits sin only when he forgets Allah and becomes inattentive to Him. Had he remembered what was the reality behind his sin and what effect it would produce, he would not have gone near it.

If someone disobeys Allah – and does not care even if he is reminded of Him – and gives no importance to his Lord and Creator, then he is a transgressor (who) does not know the dignity and the sublime majesty of his Lord, nor does he understand how Allah encompasses every thing.

This theme is also found in another tradition, which has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthur* from Abu Hind ad-Dari who said that the Prophet said: “Allah says: 'Remember Me by obeying Me, I will remember you with My forgiveness.

And whoever remembers Me – and he is obedient – then it is My duty to remember him with My forgiveness. And whoever remembers Me – and he is disobedient – then it is a right on Me to remember him with hate...' ”

The last sentence of this *hadith* has used the word, remembrance (at the time of disobedience), in its opposite meaning; the verse under discussion and other traditions used the word 'forgetfulness' to convey that same idea.

We shall give some more details of this subject elsewhere.

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