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The Dhikr of the Friends of God

The reverend Shaykh had a basic guideline that on various occasions he would repeatedly emphasize it. Although this guideline is adopted from Islamic traditions, the significant point here is the Shaykh's personal experience in that respect.

In principle, the significance of this divine man and righteous servant lies in the fact that his sayings are his own findings and inner experience.

Perpetual Presence

The reverend Shaykh insisted to train his disciples in a way that they see themselves in all states in the presence of the God Almighty. And this is in fact the instructive and significant words of the Holy Prophet (s) who said:

"انكروا الله ذكرا خاملا، قيل: وما الذكر الخامل؟ قال: الذكر الخفي"

"Remember God by the *khamil dhikr*. He was asked: 'What is *khamil dhikr*?' He replied: The silent and *covert dhikr*."¹

In another hadith, His Holiness (s) said:

"يفضل الذكر الخفي الذي لا تسمعه الحفظة على الذي تسمعه سبعين ضعفاً"

"The *covert dhikr* that is not heard by the angels is seventy times better than the *dhikr* that they hear it"

The superiority of the covert remembrance of God over the overt one is due to its significant and determining role in man's development. Remembrance by tongue is easy; however, remembrance by the heart, especially when done uninterrupted, is too difficult. Thus, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a) views it

as one of the most difficult tasks

ثلاث من أشد ما عمل العباد: إنصاف المؤمن من نفسه، ومواساة المرء أخاه، وذكر الله على كل حال، وهو ان يذكر الله عز وجل عند المعصية يهيم بها فيحول ذكر الله بينه وبين تلك المعصية، وهو قول الله عز وجل (ان الذين اتقوا اذا مسهم طائف من الشيطان تذكروا فاذا هم مبصرون)

"Three tasks are the most difficult for people equity by the faithful, a man's financial assistance to his brothers, and remembrance of God in all states, i.e., man should remember God when encountering a (temptation) sin and decision to commit it. Then this remembrance of God prevents him from sins, as per the words of Almighty God (Verily, those who are pious when an evil thought touches them by Satan, they invoke Allah's remembrance, (then) they see things clearly) (al-A'raf 201)"²

In another *hadith*, viewing equity, charity and perpetual *dhikr* as among the most difficult Divine obligations, Imam al-Sadiq (a) clarifies that what he means by remembrance in all states is not merely remembrance by tongue, although it is also regarded as remembrance of God:

أما أني لا أقول: سبحان الله، والحمد لله، ولا إله إلا الله، والله أكبر، وإن كان هذا من ذاك، ولكن ذكر الله في كل موطن إذا هجمت على طاعته أو معصيته

"By remembrance of God, I do not mean reciting *Subhan Allahi, wal Hamduli'lalahi, wa la ilaha il Allahu wa Allahu Akbar*; although these are also regarded as *dhikr*, but what is meant is remembering God when encountering obedience and disobedience of God."³

It is extremely difficult for man to see himself in the presence of God. If man attains such consciousness, it is impossible that carnal vain desires and Satan overpower him and force him to disobey his lord.

How to Liberate from Carnal Soul and the Satan

The reverend Shaykh said: "There is no way to liberate from the evils of carnal soul except by attention to God and perpetual presence in Him. As long as you are in His presence and you are not disconnected from God, the carnal soul will not be able to deceive you."

With reference to the following verse:

(ومن يعيش عن ذكر الرحمن نقيض له شيطاناً فهو له قرين)

(If anyone withdraws himself from remembrance of (Allah) the Most Gracious, We appoint for him an evil one, to be an intimate companion to him.) (al-Zukhruf: 36)

The Shaykh would say on many occasions:

"Whenever man's attention is turned away from God, the carnal soul and the Satan that are lying in ambush will capture his heart and start their job from there."

Take your Hands Off me!

One of the Shaykh's disciples quoted him as saying:

"I saw my own carnal self in (my) spiritual state; I told it to take his hands off me! It responded: Do not you know that I will not take my hands off you until I destroy you!"

Perhaps due to the same intuition the Shaykh was very interested in the following couplets:

'In the school of Eternity Your Beauty guided me.

Your Bounteous Grace assisted me to be enslaved by You. My vile carnal soul favored all vanities.

Your Blessed Emanation liberated me from its clutches.'

Divine Grace descends on man's heart through perpetual remembrance of Him. Once God's remembrance enters the heart, as the first step it will purify the heart of satanic temptations and carnal vanities and prepares it for receiving Divine Grace from the Absolute Bestower of Bounties.

In this respect, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) says:

"أصل صلاح القلب اشتغاله بذكر الله"

"The quintessence of heart's soundness lies in its occupation with remembrance of God."[4](#)

Feeling perpetually present in the Presence of Almighty God liberates man from the captivity of the carnal soul and the Satan and consequently cures various maladies of the soul. Imam Ali (a) is quoted as saying:

"ذكر الله مطردة الشيطان"

"Remembrance of God drives the Satan away."[5](#)

"ذكر الله دواء أعلال النفوس"

"Remembrance of God is the medicine for the soul's maladies."[6](#)

"يا من اسمه دواء وذكره شفاء"

"O He whose Name is a Remedy, whose remembrance is cure."[7](#)

Through perpetual remembrance of God, the Divine grace grants the heart a human life and makes it radiant, reinforces the soul, makes the man of heart intimate with his God, gradually gracing man with the elixir of love and affection;

Imam Ali (a), the great knower of Allah and the one familiar with the maladies of human soul, said accordingly:

"من ذكر الله سبحانه أحيى الله قلبه ونور عقله ولبه"

"Whoever remembers God Almighty, God will enliven his heart and enlighten his mind and intellect."[8](#)

"مداومة الذكر قوت الأرواح"

"Perpetually remembering God gives sustenance to the soul."[9](#)

"الذكر مفتاح الأنس"

"Remembrance of God is the key to proximity (to Him)."[10](#)

"من أكثر ذكر الله أحبه"

"Whoever remembers God abundantly, God will love him."[11](#)

What was briefly brought up here is a small part of the blessings of remembering God in life and in enrichment and development of human beings.[12](#) With some deliberation on the above mentioned, however, it will be clarified that how valuable is any moment that we are remembering God and how detrimental is any breath that we take without remembering God.

Remembrance of God in Sleep

Dr. Thubati said: Once we were invited by a member of the session to his house for lunch. After lunch, everybody proceeded to rest. I was lying down and remembering God and thinking in this relation with my eyes closed. At this moment, the Shaykh who was sitting before me and noticing me recommended to the friends:

"You should be remembering God even when you are sleeping."

That was the only time I heard him recommend remembering God even at sleep in that session and I do not remember him mentioning it anywhere else.

A Message from *Barzakh*

One of the Shaykh's friends related: Once I had an audience with the Shaykh who said:

"I saw a young man in *barzakh* who was saying: 'You do not know what is going on here! When you come here you will find out; any breath that you have taken for other than God has ended up to your loss.'

Virtues of some *Dhikrs*

When we talk about the virtues (benefits) of *dhikrs* in the school of the Shaykh, it must be remembered that his is a school of love not of outcome and results, and that he who does not seek anything other than God, the one who does not even seek his own perfection, will gain results. Similarly, whatever the results of remembrance of God, the goal mustn't be anything other than God.

Giving Importance to Two *Dhikrs*

One of the Shaykh's devotees said: The Shaykh regarded *Istighfar* (asking forgiveness) and *Salawat* as highly important, and had figured out that these two *dhikrs* were two wings for the wayfarer to fly with.

The Shaykh would say:

"If you send *Salawat* abundantly in your lifetime, the Apostle of God (s) will kiss your lips at death."

On Overcoming Carnal Desires

1. Perseverance in the *dhikr*: "لاحول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم" *Lahawla wa la quwwata illa billa al 'Ali al-'Azim* (there is no might neither power except through Allah, the most High, the Supreme-in-Glory)."
2. The *dhikr*: "يا دائم ويا قائم" *"Ya Da'im-u ya Qa'im* (O Eternal! O Persistent!)
3. In order to suppress the unruly carnal desires, recite the following *dhikr* thirteen or one hundred times in the morning and evening: "اللهم لك الحمد وآليك المشتكى وأنت المستعان" *"Allahumma lakalhamdu wa alayka 'I mushtaka wa Anta al-Musta'an* (O Allah! All praise is due to You, complaints are made to You, and You are the one whose help is sought for)."
4. Recite one hundred times every night: "يا زكي الطاهر من كل آفة بقدسه" *"Ya Zakiyyut Tahiru min kulli afatin bi kudsih* (O You who are) pure and clean from any bane through Your sanctity). [13](#)

The reverend Shaykh stated while recommending the above *dhikr* for suppressing the carnal desires:

"I myself have applied it and started (the spiritual seeking) through reciting it. One day I recited this *dhikr* so many times that my carnal soul died. I said to myself: I will continue until my (worldly) existence turn into non-existence. However, when for a time I neglected reciting it as is expedient to human nature, I found my carnal soul was alive. Obviously anyone who directs his attention toward the world his carnal soul will strengthen; reciting this *dhikr* is effective in overcoming the carnal soul."

Suppressing the Satanic Temptations when Encountering Women other than our Next of Kin

Dr. Farzam related: the reverend Shaykh Rajab Ali considered the *dhikr*

"أيا خير حبيب ومحبوب صل على محمد وآله" *Ya khayra Habibin wa Mahbubin, Salli 'ala Mubammadin wa Alihi* (O Best of Lovers and the Best of Beloved! Bless Muhammad and his Family)) very effective after one glances at a woman other than his next of kin. He frequently advised me to recite this *dhikr* to remain secure from the Satan's temptation. He said:

"When you glance at a woman other than your next of kin, if you do not enjoy looking at her you are sick! But if you enjoy, you ought to cast your look away from her and say: *ya khayra Habib* Which means: O God! I cherish you. These are not likeable; whatever is mortal is not likeable. ..."

For the Love of God

Reciting one thousand times Salawat (every night) for forty nights.

For Purifying the *Batin* (the inner)

The reverend Shaykh regarded the recitation of the Sura *al-Saffat* every morning and the Sura *al-Hashr* every night as very helpful in purification of the *batin*.

One of the Shaykh's devotees said that he advised him to recite the Sura *al-Hashr* every night, and he believed that the Greatest Name (of God) is mentioned in the latter *ayahs* of this blessed Sura.

For Attaining the Honor of Meeting Wali 'Asr (aj)

Reciting one hundred times the holy Sura,

(رب أدخلني مدخل صدق وأخرجني مخرج صدق وأجعل لي من لدنك سلطاناً نصيراً)

(O my Lord! Let my entry be by the Gate of Truth and Honor, and likewise my exit by the Gate of Truth and Honor; and grant me from Thy Presence an authority to aid (me)) (al-Isra: 80), up to forty nights.

As narrated, many of the Shaykh's students have found the honor of meeting Imam al-'Asr (aj) through

persevering with this *dhikr*; although at the time of meeting they have not realized the Imam (a). Two instances are given as follows:

1. How Ayatollah Ziyarati Attained this Honor

One of the Shaykh's disciples narrated: 'The reverend Shaykh had given instructions to the late Ayatollah Ziyarati in Mahdi Shahr to meet Wali' Asr (AJ) –apparently by the above–mentioned *dhikr*. After having performed the instructions, he went to the Shaykh and said he had done what he instructed but to no effect.

The Shaykh deliberated for a while and said: "When you were performing prayers in the *Masjid*, a Sayyid told you: 'Wearing a ring on the left hand is abominated'. And you replied: 'All the abominated (*Makruh*) are permissible'. That holy man was Imam al-'Asr (a)."

2. How a Shopkeeper found this Honor

Two shopkeepers undertook to provide for the needs of a Sayyid family. One of them began the *dhikr* instructed by the Shaykh to find the honor of meeting Imam al-'Asr (a). Before the fortieth night, one of the children of the Sayyid family went to his shop and asked him for a bar of soap. The shopkeeper grumbled that why her mother did not send him to such and such –meaning the other shopkeeper – to get what they want!

This man said: When I went to sleep at the same night, I heard someone was calling me. I went out to check but I did not see anyone. I went to bed again; I heard that voice calling me by name. The third time I went out to see who it was. When I opened the house door, I saw a Sayyid with covered face who said:

"We can sustain our children, but we wish you to attain a (high) position."

For Solving Problems and Curing Illnesses

Dr. Farzam said: The reverend Shaykh would recommend some Qur'anic verses and supplications along with sending, *Salawat* as *dhikr* for solving problems and remedy to illnesses, such as:

"رب اني مغلوب فانتصر وأنت خير الناصرين"

"*Rabb inni maghlubun, fantasir wa anta Khayru'l Nasirin* (O Lord! I am defeated. Help me Thou who art the Best of Helpers!)"

Once I had a problem, the Shaykh instructed me to say the following *dhikr*:

"رب اني مسني الضر وأنت أرحم الراحمين"

"*Rabb inni massani al-durr wa Anta Arham al-Rahimin* (O Lord! I am afflicted with a loss, and Thou art the Most Merciful)." He would say: "These are *dhikr*, say them along with Salawat!" Or when our children got sick, he would recommend us to say:

"يا من اسمه دواء، وذكره شفاء صل علي محمد وآل محمد"

"O He whose Name is a remedy, whose remembrance is a cure! Bless Muhammad (s) and the Family of Muhammad (s)!"

For Averting Heat and Cold

One of the Shaykh's disciples related: 'On my first journey to the noble Makkah for Hajj pilgrimage I asked the Shaykh what I should do for warding off the extreme heat. He instructed me to resort to the following verses to protect myself from cold and heat:

(سلام على ابراهيم * كذلك نجزي المحسنين)

(Peace and salutation to Abraham! Thus indeed do We reward those who do right.) (al-Saffat: 109, 110)

(يا نار كوني برداً وسلاماً على ابراهيم)

(O Fire! Be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham.) (al-Anbiya: 69)

[1.](#) Mizan al-Hikmah, IV, 1866: 6491 and 6493.

[2.](#) Mizan.al-Hikmah, IV, 1856 6454

[3.](#) Ibid. IV, 1856: 6455

[4.](#) Mizan al-Hikmah, IV, 1846: 6394

[5.](#) Ibid, IV, 1850: 6427.

[6.](#) Ibid, IV, 1850: 6418.

[7.](#) Ibid, IV, 1850: 6419.

[8.](#) Ibid. IV, 1848: 6399.

[9.](#) Ibid. IV, 1848: 6403.

[10.](#) Ibid. IV, 1850: 6422.

[11.](#) Ibid. IV, 1842: 6435.

[12.](#) For more information about the impact of God's remembrance in life, see Mizan al-Hikmah, under the entry: "Al-Dhikr", Thamarat al-Dhikr.

[13.](#) This dhikr is an item in the Dua -i Hazrat-i Idris (a). See Misbah al-Mutahajjid p. 601.

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