Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Part 2: 'Dhikr' means the Ahlul Bayt

Describing that "Dhikr" (remembrance) means Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and that Shias are duty-bound to ask them but that they are not bound to answer them

The Creator of the world says:

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ.

If you do not know ask Ahle Dhikr (***the people of remembrance***) (***Sura Nahl 16:43***)

At another place, He says:

هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

This is Our free gift, therefore give freely or withhold, without reckoning. (***Surah Sad 38:39***)

And then says:

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ.

And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people, and you shall soon be questioned. (***Sura Zukhruf 43:44***)

The apparent meaning of the first and second verse is that inquire from the knowledgeable if you do not know. Commentators have different opinions about the term Ahle Dhikr (the people of remembrance).

Some say they are those who have knowledge. Some have said they are People of the Book (Ahle Kitab). But in many traditions, it is mentioned that they are the Pure Imams (a.s.) because of two reasons: First, Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) have the perfect and complete knowledge of the Holy Quran. Hence the Lord of the universe in the subsequent Surah Nahl, says:

وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ.

And We have revealed to you the 'Reminder' (***Quran***) ***that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect.*** (***Sura Nahl 16:44***)

The second reason is that the Pure Imams (a.s.) are the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) of the Prophet as He has said:

قَدْ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا رَسُولًا.

Allah has sent to you a messenger who is Dhikr. (***Sura Talaq 65: 10-11***)

As regards the third verse, many commentators are of the opinion that this is an address to Sulaiman meaning that this kingship is a gift from Us which has been given to you. If you want you may favor anybody by giving it to anyone of your choice or you may retain it for you (may not give it to anyone). You will not have to account for it, either about keeping it or giving it away. The traditions to be described in future will show that 'Ataa' means knowledge.

In the fourth verse most the commentators have held that the Holy Quran is a thing of honour for you and your people. On the Day of Qiyamat people will be asked about thanksgiving due to revealing of this Quran and about acting upon its commandment. It has been mentioned in the traditions to be narrated in future that what is that you will be questioned are the sciences and commands.

Ali bin Ibrahim and Saffar have narrated through many reliable chains of narrators that Zurarah asked Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) about Ahle Dhikr (the people of remembrance). The Hazrat said that they are we. Zurarah inquired: Should we ask you? He replied: Yes. He said: Then it is your duty to give reply to them. He said: We have the choice, that is, we may reply or we may not. Then he recited the verse:

هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ أَوْ أَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

This is Our free gift, therefore give freely or withhold, without reckoning. (***Sura Sad 38:39***) 1

In *Uyoon Akhbar Ridha* it is mentioned regarding the grace of the holy Progeny that (if as held by the Ahle Sunnat) the Holy Prophet (S) has said that Ahle Dhikr are Jews and Christians, then Imam Ridha (a.s.) has said: Is it permissible to ask them?

If we will ask them, they will invite us towards their religion saying that their religion is better than Islam. Mamoon once asked the Imam: Have you any statement or argument against their word? The Hazrat said: Yes, the Holy Prophet (S) and we Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) are Dhikr and this is quite clear when Allah Almighty says in Surah Talaq:

يَا أُوْلِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَدْ أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكُمْ ذِكْرًا رَسُولًا يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ لِيُخْرِجَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا قَدْ أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ رِزْقًا.

O men of understanding who believe! Allah has indeed revealed to you a reminder. An Apostle who recites to you the clear communications of Allah so that he may bring forth those who believe and do good deeds from darkness into light; and whoever believes in Allah and does good deeds, He will cause him to enter gardens beneath which rivers now, to abide therein forever, Allah has indeed given him a goodly sustenance. (***Sura Talaq 65:10-11***)

So Dhikr is Allah's Prophet and we are his Ahlul Bayt.

It is narrated with true chains of narrators in *Qurbul-Asnaad, Basairud Darajat* and *Kafi* that Imam Ridha (a.s.) wrote to Ibne Abi Baseer that the Lord of the universe says:

If you do not know ask Ahle Dhikr (***the people of remembrance***) (***Surah Nahl 16:40***)

He has also said:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا كَافَّةً فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ.

And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth all together; why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious? (***Sura Tawbah 9:122***)

The Imam said that this command has made it a must for you to approach and to inquire from us. But it has not compelled us to give you a reply. The Lord has said:

فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِنْ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ.

But if they do not answer you, then know that they only follow their low desires; and who is more erring than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from Allah? (***Sura Qasas 28:50***)

In *Basairud Darajat,* the Imam has, according to several reliable sources said: You are Shias. The narrator says that he submitted that: You have been appointed so that we may ask you.

Then I understood that when the position will be known to us we will ask him whatever we like. Hearing this, the Imam said: You have been ordered to ask us but we are not bound to reply or not to reply.

Saffar has in *Basairud Darajat,* dealt with this subject, through thirty reliable sources quoted Zurarah and Allamah Hilli has in *Kashaful Haqq* narrated after going through twelve Tafsirs quoted from the commentary of Muhammad bin Moosa Shirazi who is a Ahle Sunnat scholar, the words of Ibne Abbas that the Ahle Dhikr are Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain (a.s.) only.

They are Ahle Dhikr (People of remembrance), Ahle Ilm (People of knowledge), Ahle Aql (People of intellect) and only they are Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) and the mines of divine message and angels visit them. By Allah, He has given the name 'Momin' (believer) to the Muslims due to the dignity of Amirul Momineen (a.s.).

Sufyan Thawri has also quoted this narration through Saddi and Harith Awar.

Imam Ja'far (a.s.) is quoted in *Basairud Darajat* through four true sources about the explanation of verse:

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ.

And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people, and you shall soon be questioned. (***Sura Zukhruf 43:44***)

Imam said: Dhikr means Quran and we are the people who are being asked about the meanings and commands of the Holy Quran. In another true narrator Imam Baqir (a.s.) has said that who are mentioned in this verse are we.

In another true narration Imam Baqir (a.s.) has said: It is we who are meant by this verse and we are Ahle Dhikr (People of remembrance), we can be asked and should be asked.

In yet another tradition, Imam Baqir (a.s.) has explaining this verse said that the Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) are Ahle Dhikr (People of remembrance) and these are the great person who can be asked.

According to a reliable and true narration Ali (a.s.) is reported to have said: We are community of the Holy Prophet (S).

In his *Tafsir*, Ibne Mahyar has quoted a similar narration from Amirul Momineen (a.s.) through Sulaym Ibne Qays that he recited this verse and said: The Holy Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) are Ahle Dhikr (People of remembrance); that only they can be asked (for guidance). Allah has commanded people to ask them (about issues and problems).

They only are the rulers of the people and are the people in charge of their affairs. Therefore it is not lawful for anyone to snatch from them this right which Allah has ordained for them.

Likewise, it has been similarly narrated in the same reliable tradition that Ali (a.s.) said: Imam Ali (a.s.) is the Community (Qaum) of the Holy Prophet (S) and on the Day of Qiyamat, people will be asked about his Wilayat.

In *Kafi*, there is a narration from Moosa bin Aseem that he says that once I was present before Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when a man asked for the explanation of this verse. The Imam (a.s.) replied to him. Another man also came at that time and asked about the same verse. The Hazrat replied him differently. Only Allah knows how much perplexed I was after hearing this. I was feeling that my heart was being cut into pieces. I said to myself that I had seen in Syria that there never was a difference of even a single word in the statement of Abu Qatada. Now how much injustice this man is showing. I was thinking like this when yet another person came and he also asked about the meaning of the same verse.

The Imam (a.s.) gave him a third interpretation. It was different from the two earlier ones. Hearing it I was satisfied. I realized that this is no mistake but a wilful statement based on the demands of Taqaiyyah (dissimulation) and Maslihat (expedience). When the Imam (a.s.) understood that my hearts was full of confusion he turned towards me and said: O Aseem's son! Allah has commanded:

وَمَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا.

And whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back. (***Sura Hashr 59:7***)

Whatever was bestowed to the Holy Prophet (S) has been bestowed to us too.

This tradition has been mentioned in *Kitab Ikhtisas* also and it is added at the end that when the audience dispersed, the Imam (a.s.) turned to me and said: It seems you are confused. I said: Yes, may I be sacrificed for you. I am confused due to your three different replies to one and the same question. He said: O son of Aseem! Verily, Allah gave kingdom and rule to Sulaiman (a.s.) and said:

This is Our free gift, therefore give freely or withhold, without reckoning. (***Sura Sad:39***)

And He has bestowed His Religion to Muhammad (S) and said:

And whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back. (***Sura Hashr:7***)

And He has bestowed to us all that was bestowed on the Holy Prophet (S). So do not be perplexed.

It is mentioned in *Basairud Darajat*, with authentic and true chains of narrators that Safwan asked Imam Ridha (a.s.): Is it ever possible that an Imam is asked about the Halaal and Haraam (lawfulness and unlawfulness) of something and the Imam may not have its reply? The Imam (a.s.) said: It so happens, sometimes that the Imam does have the reply but he does not respond because of some expedience.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) is according to reliable sources, reported to have said: We are Ahle Dhikr (People of remembrance) and the owners of knowledge and we do possess the knowledge of every lawful and unlawful thing.

Ali bin Ibrahim (r.a.) is reported to have said in explanation of the verse:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ.

Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest. (***Sura Ra'd 13:28***)

That: The Dhikr of Allah is Amirul Momineen (a.s.) and the holy Imams (a.s.), that is, their love and Wilayat, because their remembrance is Allah's remembrance.

Ibne Mahyar has quoted Imam Kazim (a.s.) regarding the explanation of the verse:

لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ.

Certainly We have revealed to you a Book in which is your good remembrance; what! do you not then understand? (***Sura Anbiya 21: 10***)

It means that Verily we have revealed to you the book in which there is your Dhikr means the obedience to the Imam, who has after the Prophet, the Grace and Honour of both the worlds (this world and the Hereafter).

---

1. The writer says: To guide the misguided and to prevent evil and to ordain good is compulsory for all without any obstruction when all other conditions are fulfilled, especially for these Imams and religious leaders because they have been appointed for these things. So these Traditions and other similar Traditions are either by way of Taqaiyyah [because they have not been appointed to give up Taqaiyyah they should not express the truth if there is a danger of harm. It is one of the conditions of 'Amr bil Maroof' and 'Nahy anil Munkar' that there should be no risk of a loss. Another condition is that there should be a likelihood of a good response of effectiveness. Or this word of the Imam is based on some interpretation of verses, which the Imam has said about a group who have no intelligence to understand them or it is due to some delicate points of Divine recognition.
Our Imams (a.s.) were doing Taqaiyyah from Ahle Sunnat because some of Shias had become extremists after observing their wonderful miracles and extraordinary conditions and they believed in their godship, that is, just as Prophet Sulaiman was given authority in the worldly affairs as to give or not to give, we have been authorized to increase awareness and facts or that in the case of Sulaiman's story also there may be some speciality of awareness and knowledge or it may also mean worldly affairs or that in the favour of Imam (a.s.) too, both the affairs of Religion and world may be meant generally.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/hayat-al-qulub-vol3-allamah-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/part-2-dhikr-means-ahlul-bayt