

# Divine Remembrance

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## FOREWORD

O Lord of honour! I am a very humble slave of thy messenger Muḥammad (p.b.u.h.) and of his pure progeny, the guiding Imams. Therefore, through the noble relation of this family and by means of this holy lineage, aid me and grant me help and luminous (*nūrānī*) guidance so that every intention, speech and action of mine will be in accordance with thy pleasure.

My spiritual brothers and sisters! May the Lord of the world illuminate your hearts forever with the light of *maʿrifat* (gnosis). In view of the need of success in *dhikr-ū ʿibādat* (i.e. remembrance and devotion) and spiritual progress it was discussed in a circle of friends that a useful book pertaining to the subject of *dhikr-i ilāhī* (divine remembrance) should be written which would deal with the problems related to this subject. That is to say that there was a need for the satisfactory solution to these questions:

How may one achieve success in *dhikr*?

Why is one distracted while engaged in *ʿibādat*?

Why do various types of worldly thoughts occur immediately at the beginning of the *dhikr* of God, despite the fact that we do not wish this to be the case? etc. etc.

Thus a book, the need of which was felt with great intensity, has been completed, and is now in front of you by the grace and favour of God, the Knowing and the Wise and by the blessings of the guidance of Muḥammad and his progeny (peace be upon them). For the completion of this book I was extremely in need of divine help and I am also in need of that during the present and in the future and I pray that may God, through His mercy, place such blessings in this book that owing to those blessings faithful readers may achieve that pleasure and happiness pertaining to the spirit and knowledge. Otherwise who am I and what is my effort?

Inasmuch as the subject of *dhikr-i ilāhī* is lofty and exalted, so is it as delicate and difficult. Therefore, the responsibility of writing something on this subject proves to be a heavy burden. Notwithstanding my circumstances, I am extremely grateful to my kind and affectionate Lord for having turned all my difficulties into facilities through having bestowed upon me the great favour of *darwīshī*. This is the kindness of this holy and miraculous being.

In this connection, I deem it necessary to advise those friends who will read this book that they should study it carefully. They should study it not only once, but they should study it deeply several times and reflect upon it and understand it and put it into practice. Some of my friends may pose the question that after having read this book once or twice and understanding its contents, what else remains in this book, to require its being studied furthermore again and again?

The answers to this question follow as under:-

1. This book is on the subject of *dhikr-i ilāhī*. It contains instructions pertaining to *dhikr-i ilāhī*. In order to instill these, constant study and a continuous struggle is extremely necessary.
2. This book contains the description of ethical and spiritual diseases, and thus it is a kind of physician. It is necessary, therefore, to have recourse to this kind physician until the patient's health is completely restored.

3. This book is a mirror of spirit and spiritualism and, therefore, the *mu'min* should look at it again and again to examine whether the luster and beauty of his soul's countenance is in progress or in decline.
4. The topics covered in *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* include the realization of *dhikr-i ilāhī*, the course of *dhikr*, the important points about *dhikr*, preparation for *dhikr*, repentance for our weaknesses in *dhikr* and the determination to progress in *dhikr* observing its possibility of progress. Therefore, the book should be studied repeatedly.
5. There are several occasions of having a glimpse of *'ilm al-ladunnī* (given knowledge). One of them is that the *mu'min* should create in himself love for religious knowledge and in order to do that he should study a religious book which contains sublime purports again and again. Then all of a sudden he will begin to experience spiritual grace and (a current of joy) will pass through his heart, particularly, when he is reflecting seriously on the meaning and wisdom of a comprehensive word.
6. Most people complain that they engage in *dhikr-ū riyādat* (remembrance and spiritual exercise) for extended periods of time, but nonetheless they are unable to achieve any special spiritual progress. Generally, the reason for this (failure) is that they are unaware of the science of *dhikr-ū 'ibādat*; they do not engage in the theoretical *riyādat* (spiritual exercise) of pondering and reflecting upon religious books in order to reach to the essence of their wisdom. This *riyādat* should particularly be carried out upon such a book which itself pertains to the subject of *dhikr-ū 'ibādat*.
7. Almost everyone is aware of the saying "Die before Death." However, I think very few people understand its meaning, for it is quite complicated. Its meaning is that in this world life is of two kinds: Ordinary life which means to live in *nafs-i ammārah* (carnal soul) and the special life, which means to live in *rūh al-īmān* (soul of faith). However, it is extremely difficult in practice to defeat the tyrannical enemy, *nafs-i ammārah*, only by means of *'ibādat*, until the true *mu'min* equips himself with *'ilm-i haqīqat* (knowledge of reality). There is a dire need for such a science, which has here been prepared for this purpose.
8. In the world, no action can be accomplished only by the body without the soul nor by the soul without the body. Similarly, in religion, action stands for the body and knowledge for the spirit. Therefore, it should be known that *'ibādat* is action and is in the status of a body which needs the spirit of knowledge and wisdom. Their union is necessary in order to accomplish the religious purpose of the *mu'mins*.
9. In addition to the abovementioned, one further reason requiring constant reference to this book is that in numerous places, references to the *Qur'anic* wisdom pertaining to *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* are made. Thus, if in addition to *'ibādat-ū bandagī*, a pure *mu'min* will continue to study this book, it is more likely that through the light of these allusions (references) he will be able to understand the weakness of his *'ibādat*, which he was not able to understand previously in a clearer and more thorough manner.

I am sure that if the spiritual help of God, the Prophet and the Imam of the time is granted, this book will be of great interest to the readers, and the *mu'mins* will gain thereby the benefits of knowledge and spiritualism. This is among the supreme and sublime purposes of writing this book. If this, as I greatly hope, is materialized, then I will try to perform the prostration of thanksgiving once again before the Lord of the universe with utmost submission and humility. For myself and all my works, those which have been completed and those which are yet incomplete, are extremely in need of divine mercy.

This book is entitled by the subject itself, *dhikr-i ilāhī*: It is divided into six chapters and each chapter is divided into many topics so that there should not be any confusion and complication in the understanding of the meanings and implications of the subject, and through the topics, each meaning should be understood distinctly.

In order to make the book easily understandable an attempt has been made to keep the style of writing simple, and, devoid of mannerism of every kind of verbosity and without unnecessary difficult words so that the essence of the meaning should not be obscure and inaccessible to the readers and they can easily benefit from the realities and the gnosés of the book.

It was under consideration to write the second part of this book *dhikr-i ilāhī*, but since the subject-matter of this part is mainly related to the results and consequences of *dhikr-i ilāhī* and the marvels and wonders of the spirit and spiritualism, therefore, the writing of the second part has been delayed until it can be estimated from the effects of the first part how rapidly spiritual delicacies can be digested.

Arriving at this stage, I remember all those spiritual brothers and sisters who will read or listen to this book and recall those friends who support me for my service in knowledge, whether this encouragement is in the state of kind prayers, good thoughts and bright ideas or in the form of material words or deeds. In any case, I am cordially grateful to them for their various kinds of encouragements and I pray as a *darwish* that may God, the Great and Exalted grant them the wealth of felicity (eudamonia) of both worlds and may the pleasure and peace of true knowledge fall to their lot.

For Knowledge,  
The servant of the Jama'at  
Nasir al-Din Nasir Hunzai  
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CHAPTER I

THE MEANINGS AND PURPORTS OF DHIKR

*Dhikr* has various meanings and purports which we are going to explain here in detail so that this will sufficiently help those our brothers, sisters and friends who are interested in and related to this magnificent, mysterious and sacred feat and for whom this book is written to understand the profound realities of *dhikr*.

The Literal Meaning of Dhikr

In the Arabic lexicon *dhikr* means remembrance, and remembrance is such a word which can correctly be used for a thing, only and only if that has been forgotten or if attention has been diverted from it, after having once entered into the scope of knowledge. Otherwise, if a thing has not been known either by the senses or by the intellect, i.e. it has not yet entered into the knowledge and gnosis of man, then the word remembrance cannot be used for such a thing. The same example can be used in the case of forgetfulness, i.e. forgetfulness cannot be used for a thing which is totally out of the scope of knowledge and gnosis of man.

Five Forms of Dhikr

1. Suppose, there was a young boy called Zayd. He took a new lesson of four words from his teacher and repeated it for a while, and he thought he had memorized it.
2. Then next day, when he opened the book and looked, he came to know that he remembered only one word perfectly.
3. Then one more word came to his memory after his having forgotten it.
4. The third word came to his memory as a result of reflecting.
5. The fourth word he had forgotten completely. He could not remember it despite reflection. Therefore, asking the teacher, he memorized it again.

This example reveals that there are five forms in *dhikr* or remembrance. Now in the following we will explain these five forms separately.

The First Form of Dhikr

Whatever man sees; the voices which he hears; whatever he smells; the things which he tastes and the things which he touches, the store of the results, experiences and informations of all these things is preserved in the custody of the retentive faculty. Further, reflective and spiritual information is also in the custody and care of the *retentive* faculty. In this connection, the function of the faculty of memory and the first form of *dhikr* mean to feel and know something through the external or internal

senses and entrust it to the retentive faculty. This is called retention (*hifz*). For the sake of firm remembrance and to assure retention, this thing is brought repeatedly to the heart and tongue or continually conceived through the faculty of memory (i.e. it is learned by heart or note). This is the first form of *dhikr* and remembrance. As Zayd tried to remember his lesson in this manner, i.e. by repetition on the first day.

### The Second Form of Dhikr

It is when for the first time some words are repeated through the retentive and memorizing faculties and understood that now these words become preserved in the record-office of the retentive faculty. The person then diverts his attention from them and becomes busy in other activities. When he needs them he orders the memorizing faculty directing it towards the retentive faculty, to bring those words in the heart and on the tongue which were memorized sometime ago. Thus the memorizing faculty asks the retentive faculty or itself peeps (into the record-office). If the required things are there, then the memorizing faculty carries out the order. This action is the second form of *dhikr* or remembrance. As in the abovementioned examples when Zayd used the memorizing faculty, only one word came to his memory properly.

### The Third Form of Dhikr

Sometimes a person forgets some of his memorized words but surprisingly some of them come to his mind automatically. The reason behind this is that extremely small conscious or luminous atoms or particles are appointed to the function of the faculties of retention, memory etc. and these small particles are controlled by the small animal souls. Now among these particles the one on which the word is recorded, if it becomes absent from its place or if becomes unconscious the word is forgotten; then when it presents itself in its place or comes to consciousness then the word comes to memory automatically. This is the third form of *dhikr*. As in the case of Zayd's forgotten lesson one word came to his mind automatically without any reflection.

### The Fourth Form of Dhikr

It is also a common experience that man does not succeed in recall his forgotten words even after reflection and thinking. The reason, as mentioned above, is that in this case the conscious particles of the apartments which are built separately for the function of different faculties in the brain become absent for some reason or the state of unconsciousness overtakes them. When, as a result of reflection and meditation, the motion of consciousness takes place in the brain, the particles come to their own place or they regain consciousness and begin working. Consequently, the forgotten words come again into the memory. This is the fourth form of *dhikr*. As Zayd recalled the fourth word after reflection.

### The Fifth Form of Dhikr

One is not always successful in recalling the forgotten thing even after pressing the mind through reflection and thinking. For the reasons and causes of forgetfulness are not only one but numerous. Absent-mindedness, or not paying attention or being difficult are some of the reasons for which the word does not remain in the retentive faculty or the particles upon whose soul the word is recorded disappears forever. Anyhow, if the word does not come to mind despite reflection, then there is no other way of making it available except by having recourse to the person who had originally

told the word. This is the fifth form of *dhikr*. As Zayd asked the word which he had forgotten completely from his teacher and remembered it again.

### Dhikr-i ilāhī

*Dhikr-i ilāhī* means the remembrance of God. This has many aspects and numerous stages. The highest stage is the one where *dhikr-i ilāhī* is performed in the light of *maʿrifat* (gnosis). The concept of gnosis or the recognition of God exists almost in every religion, but there are differences in their interpretation of it. However, regarding the recognition of God the most comprehensive guidance is that God asked all the souls of the children of Adam –“Am I not your Lord? They said – Yea, verily.” (*Qur’an VII:172*).

This clearly shows the fact that the most important and the most delicate confession of Lord and Lordship cannot be made in the darkness of ignorance, incognizance and agnosis, nor in accordance with divine justice was is worthy to take witness from the souls of the children of Adam about the unseen realities of providence without fulfilling their physical, spiritual and intellectual upbringing. In fact, this confession of “Yea, verily” was made in the light of *maʿrifat*.

### Dhikr and Guidance

If man has forgotten those realities and gnoses (*haqāʾiq-ū maʿārif*) in which was hidden the true gnosis (*haqqānī maʿrifat*) of God, then its remedy lies in the obedience of God, the Prophet and *ulu al-amr* i.e. the Imam, so that practising *dhikr-ū ʿibādat* and acquiring *maʿrifat* in the light of the external and internal guidance of these stages of obedience everything will come to his memory gradually. As the Qur’an says: “Remind them, for thou art but a remembrancer”. (LXXXVIII:21). This means that the Prophet was entrusted with the duty of inviting and admonishing the entire people of the world towards the right path and of reminding the people of his community, according to their status, all that which they had forgotten, even the realities and gnoses of the day of *alast* (i.e. the day when God made His covenant with man). But the (divine) law is that the knowledge of the secrets of *maʿrifat* is imparted step by step.

### Ahl-i Dhikr (the people of *dhikr*)

*Dhikr*, in addition to the remembrance of God, means the Qur’an and also it is the blessed name of the holy Prophet. Thus “the people of *dhikr*” has three meanings:

- (a) Those who are the owners of *dhikr* i.e. those who are means of *dhikr*;
- (b) Those who are the owners of the Qur’an, i.e. those who are the bearers of the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur’an; and
- (c) Those who are the progeny of the Prophet

These characteristics belong only to the Imams from the progeny of the prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon them). Therefore, after the prophet it is only these pure Imams who hold the position that in the case of all problems or question pertaining to guidance or knowledge and wisdom, people should have recourse to them. As God says: “Ask the people of *dhikr* if ye know not” (XVI:43).

From this it appears clearly that the people of *dhikr* are no other than the bearers of the light of *imāmat*, for it is only these people who can answer every question correctly, can tell every hidden reality and can remind others of every forgotten thing, howsoever lofty it may be. For these are the successors of *dhikr* (remembrance) and *mudhakkir* (remembrancer), i.e. the successors of the Prophet and the people of *dhikr*, that is to say the pure Imams who are the treasurers and trustees of all the sciences of the illustrious Prophet and reminders to the people about God through *dhikr-ū maʿrifat* (remembrance and gnosis).

### Dhikr and Self-Cognizance (*khud-shināsi*)

According to Islam it is impossible to attain to the *maʿrifat* of God without the recognition of one's self, for *maʿrifat* or gnosis is nothing but the cognizance which the *ʿārif* (gnostic) attains through the observation of the inner eye, while the Lord through epiphanies of His luminous attributes brings him up spiritually. This is possible only if such an *ʿārif* lives in this material world. For if it were possible to test the worship of God and to acquire *maʿrifat* without this world, then this world would have been meaningless and useless.

Here it is quite clear that the Qur'anic purport of *dhikr-i ilāhī* the remembrance of God – is to remove the veil of negligence from the eye of the heart and to remember the divine epiphanies of the event of *alast* in a practical form. For *dhikr-ū maʿrifat* is the practical form of *dhikr-ū maʿrifat* and is also the main purpose of *dhikr*.

Further, here we have drawn the attention repeatedly towards the event of *alast*, for it is a simple and easy concept and a well accepted fact, which cannot be doubted. In that state, which man was in during the event of *alast*, man was recognizing his soul perfectly and as a result of this, he was also recognizing God. But, later on, he forgot this recognition.

As God says: “And he has coined for Us a similitude and has forgotten his creation”. (XXXVI:78). This holy verse alludes to the truth that long ago before this state of forgetfulness, man was rich in the wealth of self-cognizance and was cognizant of the realities of his creation. But afterwards he forgot all this. Now there is no remedy for the regaining of this cognizance except *dhikr-i ilāhī*.

The holy Qur'an says “It is We Who Created you then made your (spiritual) forms, then told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate all save Iblis”. (VII:11).

This Qur'an wisdom teaches that man exists not only to-day but has done so since a very long time and he existed even when all the angels save Iblis prostrated before Adam. Nobody remembers this event, except the Perfect Man (*insān-i kāmīl*). There are very few people who may believe this dogmatically. This is to say that these matters belong to the high and lofty stages of *maʿrifat* and to understand these matters means *self-recognition*, wherein lies the recognition of God. Man has forgotten all that which belongs to this stage, which he can remember only in the light of *dhikr-i ilāhī*. And this is the Qur'anic purport of remembrance of God.

It is said in the Qur'an: “And be not ye like those who forgot Allah, and caused them to forget their own souls.”(LIX:19). This means that the one who gets away from the remembrance of God, forgets also the pre-eternal realities of his own soul. And those



who are on the different stages of *dhikr* can conceive about the past and future realities and gnosés of their soul according to their status.

### The Divine Law (*qānūn-i ilāhī*)

How can the forgotten secrets of the world of spiritualism and the lost treasures of *maʿrifat* be found again? The reality of this is that the unchangeable divine practice, habit and law is one and the same forever. That is to say that the law which is pertaining to the Qurʾan is also applicable to the physical as well as the spiritual world.

Thus this command: “None of Our verses do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, but bring one better or similar.” (II:106) is not only about the Qurʾanic verses but also about the internal and external signs of entire universe and all existents.

Here it is necessary to think seriously about the difference between abrogating a verse and causing it to be forgotten for none of the Qurʾanic verses after being revealed and brought before the people has been taken back thus allowing the people to forget it. From this it becomes logical (to think) that abrogation belongs to the *tanzīl* (exoteric aspect) of the Qurʾan while the causing it to be forgotten belongs to the *taʿwīl* (esoteric aspect) of the Qurʾan; for God according to the demands and needs of the time and place takes away one *taʿwīl* and inspires another *taʿwīl*. Further, abrogation pertains to the verses of scriptures and causing to forget to the signs of the physical and spiritual worlds or the external and internal worlds. Thus there should not be any surprise if man, according to this divine law, has forgotten the numerous secrets of life and universe. For He is the Omnipotent, therefore, He can acquaint man with a better *maʿrifat* of those secrets or grant him a *maʿrifat* similar to the previous one, which depends on the *dhikr* of the *dhākir* (rememberer). Thus according to the Qurʾan *dhikr-i ilāhī* means to regain those secrets of *maʿrifat* which have disappeared from the memory of man and which are of pertinence to the epiphanies of the divine attributes.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE BARAKĀT (BLESSINGS) OF DHIKR

In this chapter we will mention some comprehensive points regarding the *barakāt* (blessings) of the ‘*dhikr-i ilāhī*’. In this connection, first of all, it is necessary to understand the meaning of ‘*barakāt*’ (*Arabic barakah*), which is translated into English as “blessing” properly. Thus ‘*barkat*’ means increase, abundance, affluence, prosperity, i.e. increase in grace (favour) and good fortune, whether it is external or internal or physical or spiritual.

#### The Fountainhead of Barakāt (Blessings)

*Dhikr* is done through the sacred and blessed name of the Lord of Glory. According to the teaching of the Qur’an, there are limitless hidden treasures of blessings, such as knowledge, wisdom, guidance and infinite other favours in the blessed name of God. In allusion to all these meanings of *barakāt* it is said in the Qur’an “(O! Prophet! the name of thy Lord, Who is Mighty and Glorious, is blessed.)” (LV:78). This means that the unending fountainhead and the limitless treasure of all those blessings and mercies which the entire universe and all existents are receiving, or which they are going to receive either openly or secretly, or those which are specified for the prophets and *mu’mins*, is the pure name of God and its *dhikr*. Thus as a proof of this reality and in order to show the attributes and benefits of ‘*dhikr*’ the attention of readers has been drawn in what follows towards some Qur’anic verses abounding in wisdom.

#### Dhikr and Adam

It was through the blessings achieved by the *dhikr* of the blessed name of God that Adam became rich with the science of names (*‘ilm al-asmā’*) and reality of things (*haqīqat-i ashyā’*) and became then the vicegerent of God on earth and the object of prostration of the angels (*masjūd-i malā’ik*). For the names which were taught to him were, in reality, the names of God. This teaching was given in the form of the spiritual miracles of these supreme names. And all these blessings and felicities were based on the sacred *dhikr* of the Supreme Name (*ism-i a‘zam*), which was taught to Adam. In addition, Adam also learnt some words (*kalimāt*) i.e. some supreme names after the descent (*hubūt*) from Paradise, he completed their *dhikr*, as was necessary, and due to the blessings accorded to him through his *dhikr*, his repentance was accepted. The acceptance of Adam’s repentance means that his previous state of spirituality and luminousness was completely restored and he was thus able to discharge the enormous duty of the vicegerency and representation of God, the Exalted, on the planet of earth.

#### Dhikr and Noah

If we study the verse (XI:48), we will certainly come to know that in the background of Noah’s Deluge there was also a spiritual deluge. As it is narrated in the story of the Qur’an: “It was said (unto him): O Noah! Go thou down (now from the deluge of

spiritualism) with peace from Us and blessings upon thee and upon those people who are with you.” (XI:48).

It is a matter of principle to believe that Noah had achieved these blessings as a result of the *dhikr* of the great names of God and not as a result of any kind of external deluge. For there cannot be peace and blessings without the name of God and (its) *dhikr*. It is essential to note that the peace and blessings of God were bestowed on Noah specifically since the time he attained the status of prophethood.

### Dhikr and Abraham

There is also this Qur’anic proof with regards to Abraham; that God tried him with certain Words (*kalimāt*) and those certain Words mean the names of God. That is to say that Abraham duly fulfilled the blessed *dhikr* of the great names of God, as a result of which he was appointed as Imam for the people of the entire world in his personal status as well as in the status of his progeny and became the fountainhead of all divine blessings. This is clear from the purport of (II:124).

### Dhikr and Moses

It is mentioned in verse (XXVII:8) When he came to it (fire) a voice was raised: “Blessed is whosoever is in the fire (i.e. light), and whosoever is round about it. And glorified be Allah, the Lord of the worlds.” (XXVII:8). It was that light of guidance which Moses, as a result of *dhikr* of God, saw with the inner eye and in which there were the blessings of reason and understanding, knowledge and wisdom, discretion and guidance, and it was through the presence of this same light that Moses also obtained blessings and mercies.

### Dhikr and Jesus

In the verse (XIX:31) God says about Jesus that he said: “And He has made me blessed wheresoever I may be”. (XIX:31). Here it is very necessary to understand that this verse is full of abundant wisdom, and the keys of numerous realities are hidden therein. In this verse the allusion of the “wheresoeverness (*ayniyyat*)” of the word “wheresoever (*ayn*)” is towards both the physical as well as the spiritual states. That is to say that in “wheresoever I may be” Jesus says that in the entire period of my prophethood I have been made the source of blessing for those people among whom I will live physically as well as spiritually.

One wisdom of this Qur’anic verse is that the acquisition of the general and special guidance the way of which is ordained to acquire the blessing and goodness from the *ism-i a‘zam* and the heavenly book, is impossible without the Imam of the time. The second wisdom is that the proximity and nearness and companionship and friendship of the religious guide (who has been appointed by God) is of two kinds: Physical and spiritual. For if we think that Jesus was the source of blessing only for those people who were always living in his company physically, then this will necessitate a spatial and temporal limit on divine graces and blessings and consequently, all those who are very faithful and obedient, but who physically live far away from their guide, will be deprived from these blessings and mercies. The third wisdom in this verse is that the spiritualism and luminousness of the *ism-i a‘zam*, the heavenly book and the Imam of the time are in reality the same. This is the reason why the source of blessing is sometimes regarded as the name of God, sometimes as the revealed book and

sometimes as the true guide (i.e. the Imam), and all these three words have the same meaning. For it is the principle of spiritualism that one reality has several names.

The gist of this description is that Jesus's being the source of blessing from God is a clear proof of the fact that he received this highest status as a result of the *dhikr* of God, for without the great name of God and (its) sacred *dhikr* no blessing and mercy can be obtained.

### Dhikr and Muhammad

From the numerous Qur'anic verses it is seen to be an established fact that the Prophet had the spiritual relation and the luminous connection with the blessed *ism-i a'zam* of his Lord. The Prophet used to remember the *ism-i a'zam* and its accompanying great names (*asmā' uzzāma*) of God before and after attaining to the status of prophethood, and God had made him the treasurer of the spiritualism, luminousness, knowledge and wisdom of all His great names.

As already mentioned *dhikr* also means the Qur'an. The basis of naming it this is that Qur'an means recital (LXXV:17-8) and the meaning of *dhikr* means to remember God. The Prophet used to recite the *ism-i a'zam* and remember God, as a result of which the final Book of God was revealed to him. Thus on account of the recital of the name of God by the Prophet the Book is called the Qur'an and because of the remembrance of God it is called the *dhikr*.

Another reason of calling the Qur'an *dhikr* is that to facilitate the *mu'min* that all admonitions, guidances, spirit and living realities of the Qur'an are included in the blessed name of God and (its) holy *dhikr*. As is said in the chapter "The Moon": "And indeed We have made the Qur'an easy to remember; but is there any that remember?" (LIV:17,22,32,40). To make the Qur'an easy to remember means that the Omnipotent God has encompassed it (the Qur'an) in the spiritualism of His miraculous name in the form of a living spirit and a perfect light. This has repeatedly been mentioned in this chapter, by which God means (intends) that the intelligent and wise people should draw their attention towards this great wisdom that the holy Qur'an with its exoteric and esoteric meanings and with its entire attributes is encompassed in the *ism-i a'zam*. From this example *mu'mins* can estimate how innumerable are the mercies and blessings contained in the blessed name and pure *dhikr* of God, the Great, the Exalted.

As mentioned earlier, *dhikr* is one of the names of the Prophet, and this is mentioned in verses (LXV: 10-11); for the Prophet in his own blessed period was the living *ism-i a'zam* and miraculous *dhikr* of God. Further, the Prophet's light and the reality of the holy spirit of the Qur'an were one and the same.

### The Prophet's Prayer for Blessings

As God had made Jesus the source of blessings (*mubārak*) in his time for the obedient people, similarly, He made the Prophet the source and means of blessings and mercies, in his time in his personal status and in future through his successor, lest the world be devoid of the mercy and blessings of God. One Qur'anic example of the blessed prayer of the Prophet is "Who is he that will loan God a beautiful loan, which He will double unto his credit and multiply many times." (II:245). This clearly means that God wants to take some wealth under the name of a beautiful loan (*qard-i*

*hasanah*), and in return for this material sacrifice He wants to shower upon them the blessings and mercies belonging to the world and religion. But it is obvious that God himself takes no material thing except through His prophet. Also in return for the payment of *zakāt* the blessing can be received only through the Prophet.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an: "Take *ṣadaqah* (alms) of their wealth, wherewith thou mayst purify them (from sins) and sanctify them and pray for them (for goodness and increase). Verily thy prayers are a source of security for them." (IX:103). It is clear from this that the source of every goodness and increase, according to divine command, is the blessed prayer of the Prophet, and the prayer of his successor has the same nature.

Further the Lord of Glory says in the Qur'an: "verily in the *dhikr-i Allāh* (the remembrance of God) do hearts find satisfaction." (XIII:28). Now the question arises about this verse which abounds in wisdom that if it was possible for the heart to find satisfaction only through the remembrance of God without any condition, then why did He say to the Prophet that there was satisfaction for them in his prayers. The answer to this question is that the *dhikr-i Allāh* which is mentioned here as the satisfaction for hearts is the one, and only the one, of which the Prophet or his successor has granted permission, guidance and blessings. Otherwise, real satisfaction is difficult, rather, is impossible.

### Dhikr and the Pure Imams

As briefly mentioned in the first chapter, *ahl-i dhikr* (the people of *dhikr*) are only the Imams from the family of the Prophet. This appellation is one of the Qur'anic appellations of the holy Imams.

It has various aspects of reality and meaning, such as:

1. The people of the Prophet (*ahl-i rasūl*) or the progeny of the Prophet (*āl-i rasūl*) i.e. those people who are from the household of the Prophet and have the status of the gate of the city of the knowledge of the Prophet and the door of the house of his wisdom and are aware of the religious secrets, as ought to be.
2. The people of the Qur'an (*ahl al-Qur'ān*), i.e. those people whom God has mentioned with the favourite name of "*al-rāsikhūn fi al-ilm* (those who are well-grounded in knowledge)" and has granted them the knowledge of *tanzil* an *ta'wīl* of the Qur'an and they are the treasurers of the all the realities and gnoses of the physical and spiritual worlds.
3. The people of admonition or exhortation and guidance, i.e. those who guide and lead people as *ulū al-amr* after God and the Prophet and obedience to whom is incumbent upon the people.
4. The people of the remembrance of God (*dhikr-i ilāhī wālay*) i.e. those who remember God, remind the people of the *dhikr* of God, teach the great names, guide in all procedures of *dhikr*, are aware of all the secrets and symbols of *dhikr* know the stages of spiritualism and luminousness and are the light of guidance of the path of *ma'rifat* (gnosis). Each Imam from among the Imams, in his own time is the present and living (*ism-i a'zam*) of God and the treasurer

and the protector of the hidden and inner remembrance (*dhikr-i khafi-ū qalbī*). For the Imam holds the vicegerency and representation of God and the Prophet. Therefore, the endless treasures of the blessings and mercies of God and the Prophet are entrusted only to the Imam.

### Partial Vicegerency (*khilāfat-I juzwi*)

It is necessary for a true mu'min to understand that in consideration of the collective and individual state of mankind there are two vicegerencies: one is the universal vicegerency which is related to the entire universe as the vicegerency of Adam. The other one is partial vicegerency, which is related to a mu'min's own self. Universal vicegerents are the Prophets and Imams in their respective times. Partial vicegerents can be any true mu'min who remembers the pure *ism-i a'zam* of God in accordance with the luminous guidance of the true guide of his time and has achieved due success in it. Such a successful and fortunate mu'min succeeds to the vicegerency and representation of God in the world of his personal spiritualism, and its external result is in the form of knowledge of reality and gnosis. This is among the blessings of *dhikr* as God says: "Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them (His) vicegerent in the earth as He made vicegerent those who were before them." (XXIV:55). When God said "those among you" shows that this is addressed to all those who believe but those whom God has promised to grant vicegerency are not all of the believers but only those who truly believe and do good works in the true sense. Such mu'mins will be given the vicegerency on the earth of spiritualism as it was granted to the true mu'mins of the past communities. But as it was not made public in the past, similarly it will not be open to-day, for this is a personal vicegerency.

### An Example of Barakāt (Blessing)

The example of the blessings and mercies of the sacred *dhikr* of God is that of clean and clear water which comes down from the sky. For according to the Qur'anic verse (L:9) water is regarded as the source of material blessings. Now we have to see how because of water the entire world becomes fertile and prosperous, beautiful and attractive gardens and parks come into being, and grain is stored from blooming and flourishing fields for the sustenance of the people. We also have to see how that city which was dead in the winter, comes into life because of water. This example of water is given in order to understand the blessings and favours resulting from the *dhikr* of God, whereby the spirit of faith (*imāni rūḥ*) becomes prosperous and the real life of mu'min is made possible.

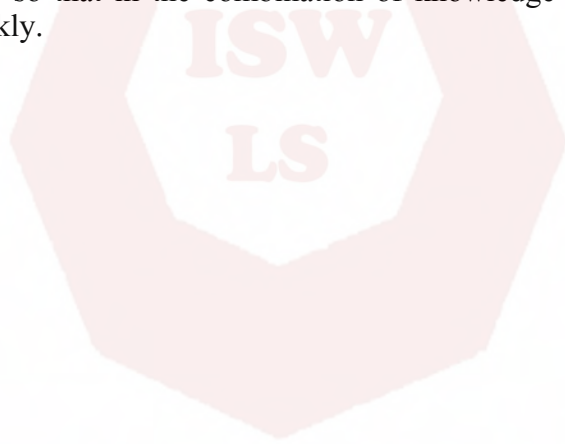
### The Barakāt (Blessings) of the Heaven and the Earth

In the verse (VII:96) it is said: "And if the people of the towns had believed and had been righteous, surely we should have opened for them (the doors of) the blessing of heaven and earth". (VII:96). The meaning of this verse is related more to spiritual blessings than to material ones. In any case, the keys to blessings and favours are in the names of God and the necessary guidance can be achieved (only) from the holder of the (divine) command.

### The Barakāt of Both Worlds

In the Qur’anic verse it is said: “Indeed both the physical world and spiritual world belongs to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds”. (VII:54). In this holy verse it is alluded that the infinite blessings and mercies of the Lord of the worlds are spread in both the physical and spiritual worlds, the keys of which are, as mentioned above, in the remembrance of the blessed and holy name of God.

In this chapter, from the beginning to this juncture, the purpose of those important and special points which we have discussed in the light of the holy Qur’an is to show that the dhikr of the blessed and holy name of God embraces all the blessings and mercies of this world and the world of religion and the external and internal worlds. No religious person should remain heedless of the *dhikr* of God. The one who is occupied in the remembrance of God should be aware of all its benefits and hence practise accordingly, so that in the combination of knowledge and practice he may achieve success quickly.



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## CHAPTER III

### KINDS OF DHIKR

It is one of the essential duties of the true mu'mins that they should learn some examples of the different kinds of the *dhikr-i ilāhī* so that they may benefit from them, religiously and spiritually, according to the requirements of the time and the place. For it is a natural law that nothing in religion nor in the world can prove to be beneficial and profitable until it has been completely understood and known. Therefore, it is necessary to know that *dhikr* is of various kinds taken from different considerations. Thus we are going to discuss some of the more important kinds of *dhikr* in the following:-

Dhikr-i Fard	(individual remembrance)
Dhikr-i Jamā <sup>c</sup> at	(collective remembrance)
Dhikr-i Jalī	(open remembrance)
Dhikr-i Khafī	(hidden remembrance)
Dhikr-i Kathīr	(abundant remembrance)
Dhikr-i Qalīl	(little remembrance)
Dhikr-i Lisānī	(oral remembrance)
Dhikr-i Qalbī	(cardiacal remembrance)
Dhikr-i Baṣarī	(visual remembrance) and
Dhikr-i Khwāb	(visionary or dreamstate remembrance)

#### Proof of the Kinds of Dhikr

If we ponder on the following verse, we will find clear examples of the above kinds of *dhikr* therein. As it is said: “Then remember (*udhkurū*) Allah as ye remember your fathers or with a more lively remembrance.” (II:200).

Thus from this verse we find the example of the individual remembrance, for any individual can remember his father, and the same proves to be the example of *dhikr-i jamā<sup>c</sup>at* (collective remembrance), for the sons of a person can gather together and remember their ancestors. Further, this also alludes to the *dhikr-i jalī* (open remembrance), for a person can recite the eulogy of his ancestors in the form of modulation. And the same is a proof of *dhikr-i khafī* (hidden remembrance), for a person can remember his ancestors secretly. Furthermore, the examples of the *dhikr-i kathīr* (abundant remembrance) and *dhikr-i qalīl* (little remembrance) can also be quite clearly found for a person remembers his forefathers often or rarely, *dhikr-i lisānī* (oral remembrance) and *dhikr-i qalbī* (cardiacal remembrance) are related to the *dhikr-i Jalī* (open remembrance) and *dhikr-i khafī* (hidden remembrance) respectively. The proof of *dhikr-i baṣarī* (visual remembrance) in this example is that a son looks at his father and his personal possessions with love and affection, or with yearning in the hope of seeing him. The proof of auditory remembrance in this example is that every individual listens to the praise and mention of his forefathers eagerly.

The example of the physical or bodily remembrance is that when it is necessary for someone to go to his father, he moves physically and takes pains (to reach to him). The example of the *dhikr-i khwāb* (visionary remembrance) is that every kind-hearted person dreams of his father which strengthens further the love for and remembrance of his father.



## Dhikr-i Fard

This means the remembrance of a person whether he is in a group or alone; when he remembers according to his own desire freely without feeling restricted by the group rules and without their accompaniment. *Dhikr-i fard* of the *dhākir* (rememberer) is beneficial and profitable everywhere and at all times. But one should not choose it in preference to *dhikr-i jamā'at*, for the grace of *dhikr-i jamā'at* is far greater.

## Dhikr-i Jamā'at

The form of *dhikr-i Jamā'at* is that it is based on a *majlis* (assembly or gathering) of more than one *mu'min* in which they perform the *dhikr* with one voice. If all the conditions and rules (or etiquettes) pertaining to the *majlis-i dhikr* (assembly of remembrance) are fulfilled, then there are more chances and possibilities of spiritual progress than the other ways of *dhikr-u 'ibādāt* (remembrance and devotion). The wisdom in this is that *dhikr* of this kind is the luminous rope (*nūrāni rassī*) of God and man has been ordered to hold to it firmly in collectivity.

## Dhikr-i Jalī

This kind of *dhikr* is called that remembrance which is performed by one or more people with an effective voice. The need for such a remembrance is that the human heart becomes rusty and dark very quickly, and in such a heart *dhikr-i khafī* does not descend until it has completely been cleaned through *dhikr-i jalī* and weeping and crying.

It should be kept in mind that any part from the parts of divine worship, when it is recited with a loud and effective voice, is called *dhikr-i jalī*, such as the recitation of 'subḥān Allāh' by a group. In other words, any worship which is performed loudly is called *dhikr-i jalī*.

## Dhikr-i Khafī

The purpose of *dhikr-i khafī* is to perform *dhikr* hiddenly and secretly. This is very close to *dhikr-i qalbī*. The benefit of this *dhikr* is that there is no show of *darwīshī* therein, nor can people spread rumours about the *dhākir* (rememberer). Further, one another benefit of this *dhikr* is that it gradually descends to the heart and takes the form of *dhikr-i qalbī*.

## Dhikr-i Kathīr

This means to remember God abundantly, whether it is in the form of different *adhkār-ū 'ibādāt* (remembrances and worships) or one *dhikr*, by intervals or continuously; open or hidden, it will be regarded as *dhikr-i kathīr* when as a whole it is performed in abundance.

In this connection it is essential to know that in the holy Qur'an not only in one verse but rather in numerous verses it has been ordered to do abundant *dhikr*. Therefore, it is necessary for and incumbent upon the *mu'min* to devote himself to the *dhikr-i ilāhī* and good works increasingly. For there are two opposing controlling powers in the

heart of man: one is the power of good and the other is the power of evil. Therefore, so long as the *mu'min* properly continues remembering God, the authority of evil comes to an end and good is set free to exercise its authority. On the contrary, when man forgets God the ability of good is suppressed and the power of evil is raised. Thus if it is desired to remain safe from the roots of all evils of Satan and the carnal soul, then the only remedy is *dhikr-i kathīr*.

### Dhikr-i Qalīl

This means to do very little *dhikr*. If this is only due to laziness, then this is not a good sign, for the *Qur'an* disparages laziness and idleness. If there is any other reason, and *dhikr* is certain to increase hereafter, then it does not matter.

### Dhikr-i Lisānī

This means any one *dhikr* in which the tongue is moved, whether the voice is high or low. The benefit of this *dhikr* is that not only does the heart of the *dhākir* attend to and wait for the true love, but also awakens the sleeping hearts of others from the deep sleep or the sleep of negligence. Why not, while God has given the tongue, to remember Him thereby as much as possible.

### Dhikr-i Qalbī

This means the *dhikr* of heart. This is the most special *dhikr* among the *adhkār* (remembrances), and is the bearer of the wonders and marvels of spiritualism. But as much it is special, miraculous and full of wisdom so much is this kind of *dhikr* delicate and difficult. This is the reason for which it is aided by all other *adhkār-u 'ibādāt* (remembrances and worships) and good deeds in order that it may progress. It has innumerable benefits, and the basic and most essential benefit is that through its regular and constant practice the tongue of the heart is opened as a result of which the door of spiritualism remains open forever.

### Dhikr-i Baṣarī

This is the *dhikr* of the eye of a *mu'min*. This can be done in various manners. For instance, through keeping an attractive written form of one of the great names of God with the purpose that this blessed name may engrave itself upon the heart through the practice of regularly and constantly looking at it with fixed eyes. Or, through conceiving any such name directly, or, studying the *Qur'an* and religious books of the first category. Also studying the signes of the universe in search for the truth is included in *dhikr-i baṣarī*.

### Dhikr-i sam'ī (Auditory Remembrance)

This *dhikr* relates to the ear. For instance, if someone is doing *dhikr* and another one is listening to him eagerly, then both are doing *dhikr*. The *dhikr* of the former is oral, and the *dhikr* of the latter is auditory. Further, if a *mu'min* is reading the *Qur'an* with a beautiful recitation, or praises God in poetry or prose, then this soul-nourishing voice is stands for *Dhikr-i Sam'ī* for a person or people who listen to it with attention and absorption.

## Dhikr-i badanī (Physical Remembrance)

This *dhikr* is related to the body. It is also of several kinds. But suffice to say that in any kind of *dhikr* and any type of worship, whatever trouble and whatever pains have to be taken, are taken only by the body. Particularly, whatever profitable religious service which is the spirit for the progress of *dhikr* is performed for the community and *jamā'at* is accomplished through the potentialities of the body. This service is the spirit for the progress of *dhikr*, provided it is not for the fulfillment of worldly purposes, but is purely with the intention of seeking the pleasure of God.

## Dhikr-i Khwāb

Sometimes a *mu'min* sees such a nice dream that therein he is doing *dhikr-ū 'ibādat*. Now we have to examine what his condition is during such worship, to ascertain whether he is correctly fulfilling his *dhikr* or not. Thus, if in the state of the dream he does *dhikr* for a certain time continuously and also feels pleasure, then there are glad tidings for his spiritual progress. Contrary to this, if he faces difficulty in the *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* in the dream and discontinues the chain of *dhikr*, then it should be understood that in matter of *dhikr* he is still weak.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF DHIKR

For the execution and completion of the general conditions of *dhikr*, the *darwīsh*, in accordance with the clear and exoteric teachings and guidance of Islam and Iman (submission and true faith), must adorn himself with good manners and with the attributes of righteousness. All this can be done only in the form of good intentions, words and deed. Thus in this chapter (regarding this) we will discuss some important matters.

#### Source of Goodness

It should be known that in the personal case the source of goodness is first of all intention, then word (or speech) and finally action. Thus through these three sources any one good which is within the limits of the principles of religion, and which is exactly in accordance with the spirit of Islam and wisdom of religion, whose purpose and purport is to perform the rights of God and the rights of servants and the seeking of God's pleasure, which can avail strength to religion and faith, splendour to knowledge, peace to the heart and comfort to the soul, can be achieved. It is not only the ground of the moral elevation of an individual, but also the means of respect, luster, progress and prosperity, which is called good intention, good word and good deed, and the same is called faith and right action (*īmān-u a'ḥmāl-i ṣāliḥ*) and righteousness (*taqwā*), justice and favour (*adl-u iḥsān*), and therein is the welfare and success of this world and the world of religion. Therefore, the *bandah-i dhākir* (of God), should always stick to goodness, the source of which is intention, word and action.

#### Word and Work

If you wish to go into the details of religion, then you have to take into consideration many things. But if you want to define religion succinctly, then it can be epitomized into two words: Word and Work. That is to say that the name of pure words and good deeds is religion. As is said in the *Qur'an*: "Unto Him ascends good word and the good deed raises it up (elevates it)". (35:1). The "Word" here includes dogma, faith, worship remembrance and knowledge. And whatever the word may be, it cannot reach the presence of God without good deed. This means that the remembering *mu'min* (*mu'min-i dhākir*), should, in addition to the remembrance, also necessarily perform good deeds so that he may achieve the proximity and nearness of the holy light of God.

There are numerous verses in the *Qur'an* which prove that all the ordinances (*aḥkām*) of the religion of Islam are comprehended and confined within Word and Work and that nothing is excluded from Word and Work. Intention, after all, is nothing but the name of the volition of the heart, which is related to both. That is to say that in good word and good deed the intention (i.e. volition of heart) is already included. As it is said: "Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to God and does good deed, and says: Lo! I am of those who surrender (unto Him)". (XLI:33). Here "call to God" comprises all the matters of religion, for in all the words of Islam there is nothing which does not have an aspect of "calling or inviting to God" directly or indirectly. Similarly, in "good deed" there is mention of all the deeds taught by

religion. In short, religion, is the sum total of two important things – word and work. Thus remembrance is a calling to God (*da'wat*), not only in the sense that God is called upon (invoked) therein, but also in the sense that man calls his own soul to God thereby. But whatever may be the purpose of this calling, it can only be accepted and can only achieve its purpose when it is accompanied by good deeds.

### Work and Divine Help

It is obvious that remembrance means calling upon God. Now it is important to see with what purpose the remembering *mu'min* (*mu'min-i dhākir*) calls upon God. If he is calling upon Him for some kind of help then the divine law (*qānūn-i qudrat*) of necessity advises that first you should work according to your abilities and only then ask for help. For it is the principle also from the worldly point of view that a person is helped only when he is unable to accomplish some work despite having used all his ability with the utmost struggle.

### Work and Love of God

If the purpose of *dhikr* is friendship and love of God, then nonetheless, it is not possible without good deeds. For the friendship and love of the friends is possible only if his order is put into practice. Whatever he orders to be done should be fulfilled, and whatever he prohibits should be refrained from. Thus it is clear that it is necessary to follow all the ordinances (commandments) of religion before or while engaging in *dhikr*.

### Work and for Pleasure of God

It is possible that a person remembers God for no purpose and intention other than for the pleasure of God. But he should understand that His pleasure can be achieved only through following His command and order (*amr-ū farmān*). Therefore, both the word and work of a *mu'min* should be in accordance with the principles of the religion (*ā'īn-i dīn*).

### Work and Worship (<sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādat*)

It is also possible that a simple person may apply himself to the *dhikr* of God and may go into seclusion with it, with the notion that the entire <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādat* (worship) lies in engaging in *dhikr* in seclusion. <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādat*, however, is in a sense a form of slavery, and the true slavery of a slave is that in which he performs all the duties in and out of the house, according to the command of his Lord. Similarly, the <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādat* of God is realized through both word and work. This example proves that the <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādat* or *bandagī* (slavery) of God comprises all words and deeds pertaining to religion.

### Work and Spiritual Progress

It is absolutely true that from the numerous purposes of *dhikr* of God, one special purpose is that of spiritual and moral elevation, which includes every sublime thing. It includes the help and true love of God and also His pleasure and worship. But here again the question of work or deed arises, for spiritual elevation, which is the supreme work of religion, is not possible without the fulfillment of good deeds. For instance, suppose a person having separated himself from his family and society, occupies himself for forty days in *dhikr* of God in a secluded corner. We accept that he would

accomplish the achievement of a considerable right of God from among His rights, but the rest would remain on his neck. On the other hand, the rights of the servants of God upon him, would have remained the same as before, namely, that he did not accomplish the fulfillment a single right from the numerous rights of the servants of God upon him such as the rights of his parents upon him, the rights of his wife and children upon him, the rights of his family members upon him, the right of his relatives and neighbours upon him, the rights of orphans, the poor, the needy and the sick, the rights of the living and of his forefathers, the rights of society, community, nation and country. How then could the spiritual progress or elevation of such a person who has escaped from all these rights of others upon him be possible? Those are rights which God and the Prophet had ordained and from the fulfillment of which good deeds are set up. This shows not only the importance and benefit of good deeds but also shows why monasticism is prohibited in Islam. For that much spiritual benefit cannot be achieved in monasticism which can be achieved in living together in the community.

### Work is Body and Word is Soul

In this world human existence is made manifest due to the combination of two things—the body and soul. Otherwise, neither the soul nor the body alone can do anything. Similarly, the pure word stands for the soul of religion and good deed for its body. Therefore, the faithful servant (of God) (*bandha-i mu'min*) should perform good deeds inasmuch as the spirit of the *dhikr* of God is pure, so that he may be an angel with the achievement of the completion of his angelic existence. The true religion (*dīn-i haqq*) is like the body of a very wise, sound and healthy person. In this body of religion, the *dhikr* of God holds the position of the brain, the heart, i.e. the intellect and wisdom. But it is obvious that the protection of the heart depends on the chest and the protection of the brain depends on the head. Similarly, the chest and the head are also in need of other organs, each of which holds a great importance in its own place. This example shows the fact that just as man's spiritual and physical faculties and external and internal senses are organized and connected with each other, in the same way all the words and works of religion are joined to and connected with each other. Since negligence in any word and work of religion upsets the entire system of religion, therefore, it is necessary to follow every guidance of religion.

### Nothing in Religion is Useless

When an intelligent person ponders on the manufacturing system of a ship, a motor car or a machine, he cannot say that such and such part or such and such thing is useless and superfluous. For he knows that all its small and large parts are necessary in their own place, and that not one of them is unnecessary. The same example is applicable to the holy summa of the commands of religion, in which whatever minor or major commands there are, are useful and fruitful, and none of them are considered useless. Therefore, it is imperative to put into practice every commandment of religion.

It is clear that nothing in religion is useless. Yet, in order to explain this reality (fact) further, another example of religion can be drawn from a tree. A tree is the sum total of its parts and its supreme purpose is the fruit. But the fruit is born on small and tender branches and they depend upon the big branches which further depend upon the trunk, and the trunk depends upon the roots. Further, neither the leaves of a tree nor its bark are useless, for if the leaves were plucked from the tree the fruit would not

ripen properly. The bark serves the tree as its garment; in the absence of the leaves and its bark, the tree would dry up due to the cold and the heat. This very case pertains to the tree of religion. Although its fruit, the supreme purpose, is the *dhikr* of God, how can it be possible to grow mature and delicious fruit without bringing up and protecting the entire tree. Whether, the purpose of the tree of religion is fruit or flower or shadow, in any case the protection and care of all its parts is necessary.

### Example of a Boat

If a person complies with either the word and or the work of religion while neglecting the other, then such a person can be likened to an ignorant and inexperienced sailor who in order to sail his boat to its destination, rows it only with one oar and does not use the other. Consequently, instead of going ahead the boat continues to move in a circle. The ignorant sailor thinks that the boat is advancing towards the desired destination. From this example you can estimate how great a mistake and failure there lies in adopting either the word or the work of religion and neglecting the other. Therefore, the wise *mu'min* is the one who knows the worth and value of both every word and every work of the religion and complies with them duly as indeed he should.



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## CHAPTER V

### SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF DHIKR

Among the matters of religion, *dhikr-i ilāhī* is a matter which is common for common people and special for the selected people. It is for this reason that in the preceding chapter the general conditions of *dhikr* were discussed. Here we are dealing with the special conditions of *dhikr*, so that every *mu'min-i dhākir* (remembering *mu'min*) may have a sound knowledge of the subtleties and intricacies of this magnificent work, for only in the light of knowledge should one work to achieve its goal.

#### Remembrance and Permission (*dhikr awr idhn*)

*Mu'mins* should have the consummate certainty in the established fact that the secret of progress and success in the remembrance of God lies in permission and leave. Otherwise the door of real spiritualism does not open, as is evident from the gnomic teachings of the holy *Qur'an*, that permission is one of the special principles of Islam. As God says: "Only those are believers, who believe in God and His messenger: when they are with him on the occasion of a gathering, they do not depart until they have asked for his leave; those who ask for thy leave are those who believe in God and His messenger; so when they ask for thy leave, for some business of their, give leave to those of them whom you wilt, and ask God for their forgiveness". (XXIV:62)

This blessed verse reveals that to take permission from the centre of guidance is not only among the characteristics of true believers, but it is a special order to the Prophet to grant permission for special kinds of religious works to those of the believers whom he wishes to. Further, he should ask God for the forgiveness of their sins, so that God may grant them success and *barkat* (increase) in these deeds.

It is obvious that this permission pertains to those words and works which are in the circle of the firm religion – Islam, and in complying with them the pleasure of God and the prophet is invoked. This also reveals that it is not available to all, but is specified only for those *mu'mins* who believe in the true sense and who obey the Prophet with heart and soul. Thus there should not be any surprise if this is an allusion to such a magnificent and lofty matter as the *dhikr-i ilāhī*. And certainly it is. For only that *dhikr* can be the source of the satisfaction of the heart, and in which the permission of the messenger of God and his prayer is granted.

Further, what God says in verses on *najwā* (seeking secret counsel) (LVIII:12,13) in the *Qur'an*, means that, during the time of the Prophet, *mu'mins* used to ask the Prophet about secret things in private or in whispers. This sheds light on many things. One of these is that in addition to *sharī'at* there are also the teachings of *tarīqat*, *ḥaqīqat* and *ma'rifat*. Had these not been there, then why there was it necessary to trouble the Prophet in enquiring again after those general instructions and guidance which had already once been placed before all Muslim as the religious law (*qānūn-i sharī'at*). But the Prophet in addition to collective teaching, used to impart to *mu'mins* the teachings of *tarīqat*, *ḥaqīqat* and *ma'rifat* according to the status of their knowledge and work and according to their demand. For had this special and individual teaching and guidance not been given to these *mu'mins* in private, then not only would the spiritual and educational upbringing of some of the intelligent and prepared *mu'mins* have remained incomplete and imperfect, but also, a precious part of the Prophet Muhammad's knowledge and wisdom would have disappeared.



Thus it is narrated in reliable exegeses that quite often *Imām ʿAlī* was receiving instructions pertaining to the special religious sciences from the Prophet through this secrecy. This reveals that those realities and gnoses which *Imām ʿAlī* received from the Prophet exist even to-day in this world in the holy lineage of the Imams from the progeny of Muhammad, being transmitted from one to another secretly (*sīnah ba-sīnah*). And the special guidance and permission of *dhikr-i ilāhī* is one of these secrets.

Regarding the contents of the abovementioned verses pertaining to (*najwā*) one may think that the secrets of which the companions used to ask the Prophet in private were pertaining to worldly welfare and betterment, for the Prophet was not only the guide for salvation in the hereafter, but had also to guide the Muslims for their worldly welfare and success. Here it can be said that the worldly welfare and success of Muslims cannot be separated from the external and general guidance of religion, for it was a collective and communal problem. Therefore, it cannot be denied that in this secrecy there might have been some secrets of the worldly kinds. But apart from the wisdom i.e. *taʿwīl* of the subject-matter of *āyat-i najwā*, its exegesis also shows that it is mostly related to religious matters, and that it alludes particularly to the secrets of the sciences and stages of spiritualism.

In this regard we should also ponder upon this verse filled in wisdom: “Remind them, for thou art but a remembrancer” (*mudhakkir*). Thus, according to this command, it is necessary for the Prophet granting some specific people the permission for *dhikr-i ilāhī* to necessarily remind them practically of those realities and gnoses which were meant to be remembered for “remind” (in Arabic *dhākkir*) means to cause to remember and to avail the means of the permission for *dhikr*. Further, it is in accordance with divine justice that this grace of the Prophet should continue from his own time till the time of *qiyāmat* (Resurrection) and this could be possible only if he would have entrusted the guidance and permission of the *dhikr-i ilāhī* to his successor, so that it could not be argued against God and the Prophet that only the people of the period of prophethood were bestowed upon with the favours of God and the Prophet.

Further, God says in the chapter on Abraham: “Seest thou not how Allah coneth a similitude: a pure Word like a pure Tree, its root set firm, its branches reaching into heaven. It brings forth (gives) its fruit at all times, by the permission of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition.” (XIV:24-25).

There are numerous great wisdoms hidden in this blessed verse and the key of all these wisdoms lies in the word “permission” (in Arabic *idhn*): this pure and purified tree, despite that it is ready in every season and at all times to give fruit can bring it forth only if its Lord permits it to do so. Otherwise, it does not give its fruit to any one. This shows that either this pure Tree has already been given the knowledge of permission and leave by God, or it continues to receive the luminous favour of and guidance from God, in the light of which it understands well as to whom God wants to give this fruit and to whom He does not wish to give.

As has been mentioned in the exegesis of *Shiʿah-i imāmiyyah*, *Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq* was asked about the meaning of the “pure Tree” in the abovementioned verse. He said that the tree which is mentioned here is such that its root is the Prophet, its trunk is *ʿAlī*, the Commander of the faithful, its branches are the Imams from the progeny of

Muhammad and <sup>c</sup>Alī, its fruit is the knowledge of the Imams and its branches are their faithful followers.

### Fixation of Ism-i A<sup>c</sup>zam

This is a well-accepted fact that if God is called upon by any of His names, He hears, and every name is a kind of *dhikr*, which is a source of reward (*mūjib-i thawāb*). All His names are beautiful and great. But inspite of this fact, the concept of *ism-i a<sup>c</sup>zam*, i.e. the Supreme and greatest Names, is also entirely true and correct, for the *ism-i a<sup>c</sup>zam* is fixed according to the requirement or the time and place, the stages of spiritualism (*manāzil-i rūḥāniyyat*) and any other requirement.

Thus when Adam, according to the command of God, came out of Paradise, it was not because at that time he had forgotten all the names of God, but because he did not know certainly which name to remember according to the time and exigency. Thus for Adam those Names and perfect Words which were exactly in accordance with his condition were fixed by God, through which his repentance (*tawbah*) was accepted, i.e. his spiritual and original status was restored.

If the conditions of the Prophets are duly pondered upon in the light of the *Qur'an*, certainly it will come to light that the fixation of *ism-i a<sup>c</sup>zam* to them was in accordance with their different situations. Therefore, it is best known to God, the Prophet and the holder of (divine) authority i.e. the Imam of the time which name is appropriate for a specific time and what should be given to a *mu'min*. A vivid example of this is that if a non-Muslim continues to remember all the names of God for forty years without confessing the prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad, it is obvious that only through the names of God he will not receive that light which is in the religion of Islam. From this is ascertained the fact that *ism-i a<sup>c</sup>zam* is fixed for every person separately. Thus had that non-Muslim (who remembered all the names of God but nonetheless received nothing) known that in the final religion of God the *ism-i a<sup>c</sup>zam* which he should adopt is itself the virtuous personality of the Prophet Muhammad, then he would have received everything.

### Dhikr and Intention

In Islam no word or work is correct without the sincerity of intention. Therefore one of the special conditions of the *dhikr-i ilāhī* is the purity of intention, which is to remember God with the intention of spiritual elevation and proximity and nearness of God and Particularly of obtaining His pleasure. Contrariwise, if one does *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* for any worldly purpose he will have no success in it; and even if he does have some success, he will derive no satisfactory benefit from it, whether in religion or in the next world.

### Dhikr and Dogma (<sup>c</sup>aqīdah)

Dogma (<sup>c</sup>aqīdah) is the basis, foundation and preliminary form of faith and certitude (*īmān-ū iqān*), and for some *mu'mins* is itself faith (*īmān*). Therefore, it is extremely necessary and essential that the *dhākir* should be firm in his belief (in religion) for the one whose belief and dogma is weak, can never achieve any success in *dhikr*. The one whose belief is not strong becomes a kind of atheist, and only those whose belief is strong can effect every kind of progress in religion.

## Dhikr and Purity (*tahārat*)

The holy Qur'an in numerous verses, has emphasized external and internal cleanliness and purity. In one verse it is said: "Truly Allah loves those who turn unto Him and loves those who have a care for cleanliness". (II:222). Here first is mentioned repentance (*tawbah*, i.e. turning unto God) and then purity (*tahārat*) the wisdom of which is that, without a decisive repentance of sins, the purity of the heart is not possible, nor can mere and sheer external purity and cleanliness help. Therefore, it is obligatory upon the *mu'mins* to adopt the habit of always living in the state of both external and internal (physical and spiritual) cleanliness.

## Dhikr and Rising At Night

The wise *Qur'an* has highly praised rising at night, i.e. *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* at night. It is clearly revealed in the wise and impressive way through which rising at night has been induced in the chapter "*muzammil* (the Enshrouded one)" that owing to the habituation of *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* at night, the carnal soul becomes subdued and is trampled upon and consequently, not only does the chain of *dhikr* remains continuous, but more and more stability and equanimity is obtained by the human intellect, the understanding and in one's mode of expression.

## Dhikr and *Giryah-ū zārī* (weeping and crying)

Technically *giryah-ū zārī* means the weeping and crying of a *mu'min* in the presence of God; demonstration of humility with remorse for one's venial and mortal sins; and begging for pardon and forgiveness and guidance and mercy from the divine court (*bārgāh-i īzidī*), constantly. This mode of *giryah-ū zārī* is not only the correct practical form of repenting from all kinds of sin, but also the basis and foundation of righteousness (*taqwā*) and humility (*tawādu'*) and the best control (*sadd-i bāb*) of pride and arrogance.

If one is not able to observe immediately the moral and religious values of *giryah-ū zārī* in the light of *Qur'anic* and spiritual wisdom, then he should assess it for its reformatory efficacy in the light of serious philosophical and psychological literature, or at least should himself experiment with practising it and observe its results.

It is a different question if a *mu'min* despite struggling in *giryah-ū zārī* cannot do it when it is necessary. In such a case he should feel vehemently because he is suffering from the spiritual disease of "callousness (*qasāwat-i qalbī*)" which is the disease indicating excessive hardheartedness and absence of fear of God. The one who is suffering from callousness can neither progress in spiritualism nor be called a *darwīsh*.

The absence of tenderness and mildness and burning and melting from the heart of a *mu'min* while listening to religious knowledge, during *'ibādat-ū riyāḍat* and during hidden and open *dhikr*, is never due to bad luck, rather it is a result of his own sins. Therefore, it has become necessary for him that, checking all his words and works, habits and manners minutely, he should repent for all venial and mortal sins and should correct and reform every bad habit.

Now let us deliberate how the practical state and reality of *giryah-ū zārī* sets up a great reformatory revolution in the heart and mind of man and how every intention, word and work of man becomes rectified through control of its efficacy. We should know that when man comes into existence in this world his heart and mind stick to the original and natural state strictly so long as he lives a life of infancy and innocence. As the Prophet says: “Every baby is born according to the nature of natural religion – Islam”. But later on as he grows up gradually, then partly because of the wrong impressions of others and partly because of his carnal desires his original state is gradually concealed under a cover and ultimately the heart and mind of man are concealed under numerous covers of rust and turbidness. Now there is no remedy for this except that he should repent for his sins in *giryah-u zārī* and yearn for the *dīdār-i ilāhī* (divine vision) so that the covers will be removed gradually and the original and natural cleanliness and splendour and brilliance of the mirror of heart will appear.

When a *mu'min* servant is doing *giryah-ū zārī* in the presence of God repenting or yearning for luminous vision (*nūrānī didār*) with absorption and eagerness, and is praying imploringly, then the divine mercy embraces him, and by doing this every day his heart and soul become purified, and he progresses spiritually. It is worthy of thinking and understanding that were it not for the soul to be dirty, rusty and filthy, God would never have said: “Truly he succeeds that purifies it (the soul) and he fails that corrupts it.” (XCI:9-10). The wisdom of this blessed verse through its meaningful example rouses a *mu'min's* sense of the honour towards his faith (*ghayrat-i imānī*) that his soul is buried under the heap of sins; therefore, it should be taken out as soon as possible and cleansed. This most difficult work can be accomplished only through *giryah-ū zārī*, repentance and humility and *dhikr-ū 'ibādat*.

Any intelligent person who understands that, in reality, he has still not matured in the path of spiritualism but is only a suckling babe, then he should continue doing *giryah-ū zārī* for his spiritual upbringing and inner growth and development, so that the nurse of divine light may have mercy upon him and start miraculously upbringing and fostering him.

When those true *mu'mins* who are progressing in spiritualism apply themselves in meditation upon the luminous *'ibādat (nūrānī 'ibādat)* late at night after having taken part in *giryah-ū zārī* and prayers in the form of *munājāt* (supplication to God), *manqabat* (eulogy of the Prophet and Imams) and *ginān*, then thereby their holy *dhikr* becomes luminous and miraculous, and the ocean of true love rises in waves in their hearts. In following this successful principle, every day manifests a new lustrous spring in their garden of spiritualism.

It is doubtless that *giryah-ū zārī* contains within itself not only the meaning of repenting for mistakes and sins, and of seeking forgiveness, but therein lies also the passionate and acceptable prayer for the progress and firmness of faith and certainty and protection from future dangers and calamities.

The *Qur'an* has prohibited weeping even at the occasions of greatest losses and severest difficulties and calamities, and has ordered man to bear every difficulty and calamity with patience and stability. Contrariwise, the *giryah-ū zārī* of the Prophets, Imams and the first-grade *mu'mins* undertaken for the sake of spiritual progress and *dīdār-i ilāhī* has highly been praised.

Another specific characteristic of the true *mu'mins* mentioned in the *Qur'an* is that when they weep out of the ardour of faith (*jadhbah-i īmānī*), they used to fall in prostration on their chins i.e. faces (XVII:109). Certainly this is the extreme limit of humility according to God and consequently, the Lord of the World showers His infinite mercies and blessings upon them.

Another wisdom of *giryah-ū zārī* is that when man is yet a suckling babe, he cannot utter anything. That is to say that he is apparently mute and speechless. But in fact, he is not so. For man, despite being a baby (infant), is the cream of creation (*ashraf al-makhlūqāt*). Therefore the Lord of the world endows the child with the faculty and capacity of weeping so that he could weep if he needed anything. And this same weeping of the child implies the asking for something whatever it may be, which the kind mother discerns easily, thus looking after him and bringing him with all (available) means.

In short, owing to *giryah-ū zārī* in the presence of the Lord of the universe, carnal desires and false notions are obliterated altogether for the time being; the essence of *dhikr-ū ʿibādat* shines; and through the persistent practice of this, the *mu'min* benefits to his entire satisfaction.

### Dhikr and Prayers (Duʿāʾ)

In connection with the subject of *dhikr* it seems pertinent to mention some basic and essential points about prayer, such as:

What is importance and benefit of prayer?  
Which times and occasions are appropriate for it?  
What should be its procedure? etc.

Thus it should be understood that prayer is one of the most valuable capacities of a *mu'min* and is indeed his best faculty. This is not common to all human beings, but applies particularly to *mu'mins*. The study of the *Qur'anic* verses pertaining to the Prayer shows that prayer is very essential for the people of faith and they benefit from it at all times and on all occasions, particularly, when they are confronted with hardship and difficult tasks. At the beginning of every work one should pray in the presence of God with *giryah-ū zārī*, humility and indigence, for the prayer of a true *mu'min* is not in vain. It is certain that sooner or later the *mu'min* will achieve the purpose for which he prays. Otherwise, if this purpose, is not in favour of the *mu'min* according to God, then the benefit and fruit of the prayer is achieved in other forms, such as forgiveness of sin, release from carnal desires, good favour (*ḥusn-i tawfiq*), liberation from bad habits, eagerness for *ʿibādat*, cleanliness of heart, sharpness in understanding and comprehension, forbearance and humility, seriousness in conversation, patience and peace, enthusiasm for knowledge, interest in religion, salvation in hereafter, etc. etc.

Thus fortunate are those *mu'mins* who are used to praying in all their good deeds for the spiritual and unseen help of God. For instance, when they lay themselves down on the bed at night after their business and *ʿibādat-ū bandagī*, they pray that may God protect and guard them from every evil and calamity during their sleep, and may He avail them to wake up on time to achieve the felicity of the luminous *ʿibādat*. When they wake up on time they thank God with extreme pleasure and happiness and pray

that may their entire day pass in the *dhikr-i ilāhī* and in good deeds. When they prepare for *dhikr*, they engage in *munājāt*, i.e. they converse with God in their own tongue and in their own language and then they engage in *giryah-ū zārī*, conceiving on one side the immense mercy and grace of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful, and on the other side their extreme spiritual indigence, poverty, pauperism, backwardness, sinfulness, negligence, laziness, ignorance etc. and in the state of *giryah-ū zārī* and contrition and self-consuming (*sūz-ū gudāz*) they place the forehead of supplication (*jabin-i niyāz*) before God and implore that may He, the Omnipotent, help and support them miraculously.

It should be borne in mind that a *mu'min* can, apart from his personal prayer, benefit from the prayers of others too, such as the prayer of the Prophet, the prayer of the holder of (divine) authority, i.e. the Imam and from the individual and collective prayers of other *mu'mins*. But it is impossible for a *mu'min* to benefit without the fulfillment of the conditions of prayer which are that a *mu'min* should have the attributes of righteousness and faithfulness. In other words, only a practical *mu'min* can benefit from all aspects of prayer. Or, in short, in order to benefit from all kinds of prayer there is one condition, and that is obedience (to God, the Prophet and the Imam of time), and in the case of disobedience no prayer can be beneficial.

Regarding the consequences of disobedience, let us ponder upon the story of the Prophet Noah in the *Qur'an*. He had interceded before God with regards to his disobedient son with a very strong desire. Was not the spirit of prayer (*du'ā*) hidden in such a desire, while prayer implies a desire? But despite the fact that Noah was a great prophet, his intercession and prayer was not accepted, for prayer is acceptable only if its conditions are fulfilled. On the other hand, Noah cursed the unbelievers of his time and they drowned and perished, since the conditions for his curse against these unbelievers had been fulfilled, and thus his curse was effective.

To sum up, a prayer, our own or others, can be beneficial only if its conditions are fulfilled. In short, not to use all those numerous capacities and faculties with which God has endowed a *mu'min* in the most comprehensive way; and to consider others responsible for one's own duty, to form a habit of indolence and slothfulness and laziness and idleness, and to escape from one's entrusted duties (*farāid manṣabī*) is indicative of great ingratitude, and is a great sin.

## Knowledge for a united humanity

### Dhikr and Diet

Any *mu'min* who wants to reach to the spiritual treasures of *dhikr-i ilāhī* has to be very careful about manners related to it. Among these manners is that he has to see that the things which he eats and drinks are lawful and permissible in accordance with the Muhammadan law. A *mu'min* never eats unlawful things. He always eats only lawful things, and even in lawful things he is very careful. That is to say he does not fill his stomach with food, lest laziness, inattentiveness and sleep gain the upper hand during *dhikr-ū 'ibādat*. He must keep this in mind particularly in the evening, so that he may arise in the night on time for the *dhikr-i ilāhī* and is able to continue the chain of *dhikr* peacefully. Otherwise, numerous obstacles and obstructions come to pass during the *dhikr*.

## Dhikr and Sleep

As it is utterly necessary for a *mu'min-i dhākir* engaging in *dhikr* to be cautious and moderate in his eating and drinking habits, so does he have to be careful with regard to sleeping, for, owing to lying down for a long time in the state of sleep, the spirit of faith (*īmānī rūḥ*) becomes very weak, because sleep is a kind of death, in which neither the angelic faculties nor the *rūḥ al-īmān* can stay. This is why in the *Qur'an*, praising *mu'mins* it is said: "They are in the habit of sleeping but little of the night". (LI:17). There is a great divine wisdom even in this short sleep, for to a great extent the heart and the mind of man becomes estranged from worldly ideas and thoughts of the whole day; at the same time fatigue and tiredness are removed and the temperament becomes fresh. Therefore, one should sleep for some time peacefully, lying down, and if there is no compulsion to engage in any special work, one should sleep on time at night and should wake up at the fixed time without any delay. But it is a different matter if occasionally the assembly of *dhikr-ū 'ibādat* continues from evening until morning, which is alluded to in the *Qur'an* in verse (LXXVI:26).

If it was asked that: "Is it not better that a *mu'min*, instead of getting up late at night (i.e. very early before dawn) and praying, should perform the same amount of *'ibādat* before going to bed, and then wake up later in the morning? The answer to this is that such is not correct for several reasons. First, God does not command so. Secondly, as mentioned above, by sleeping all night long, the spirit of the *mu'min* becomes weak. Thirdly, the *'ibādat* engaged in after sleeping for a while, is far better than that which is conducted during the evening, since during sleep, a great part of the worldly notions and thoughts occupying the *mu'min* during the whole day are erased from his heart and mind. It is for this reason that in the chapter *muzammil* (LXXIII) the *mu'min* is commanded to sleep for a while and then to get up for *bandagī*. And this is why seeking forgiveness, in the early hours of dawn, is regarded as the sign of righteousness (LI:18).

## Dhikr and Knowledge

*Dhikr* is like travelling and knowledge and guidance are like light and sight. Thus if in accordance with the command of "Travel therein", one wants to travel in the spiritual world of his own self, walking through it with *dhikr*, then he needs not only the eye of religious guidance but also the light of *'ilm al-yaqīn* (knowledge of certitude). For when a person wants to travel through a country, then he can travel easily and pleasantly only if it is light without which he cannot walk, in darkness, and even if he walks in the darkness to some extent, he can neither enjoy the natural scenes on the way nor can he derive as much happiness from such a journey as he would in the light, nor can he perceive the signs of his destination, nor can he acquire any experiences and information from such a journey.

Further, it is necessary to know the reality that the perfect certitude (*yaqīn-i kāmil*) which is the highest *ma'rifat* (gnosis) is in three stages. The first is the stage of *'ilm al-yaqīn*, the second of *'ayn al-yaqīn*, and the highest is the stage of *ḥaqq al-yaqīn*. This proves that it is not possible to reach *'ayn al-yaqīn* without reaching *'ilm al-yaqīn*, which is the place of spiritual observations. Again it is impossible to reach *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* without reaching the stage of *'ayn al-yaqīn*. Thus it is evident that without special guidance and religious knowledge there can be no progress in *dhikr*.

## Dhikr and Time

In the holy *Qur'an*, it has been ordered in various verses to remember God abundantly. That is to say that at all times of the day and night God should be remembered and worshipped as much as possible. On the other hand night-time is more appropriate and more suitable for *dhikr* (LXXIII:6), and the reason for this has also been explained; that by day there is prolonged occupation with ordinary duties (LXXIII:7). By pondering on both holy verses, we come to the conclusion that what God says, to remember Him abundantly day and night implies *dhikr-i kathīr* (the abundant remembrance) which is easy and general; and that what He emphatically orders, to remember (Him) in the early hours of the morning, implies *dhikr-i khafī* (the hidden remembrance) and the *dhikr-i qalbī*, (remembrance with heart) which is difficult and special. But when it is said to the Prophet that “Lo! Thou hast by day a chain of business” (LXXIII:7), this never means that the Prophet had no time during the day for *dhikr-ū ‘ibādat*, for he himself was the embodiment of *dhikr* i.e. *nūrāni dhikr* (the luminous remembrance) was remembering itself in his forehead. Rather, this verse, by this allusion, means that the *dhikr* conducted during the day is considered as the *dhikr-i ‘ām* (general remembrance) and *dhikr* at night as the *dhikr-i khāṣ* (special remembrance) so that the *mu’mins* who belong to different walks of life, remember God easily according to their capacity and simultaneously perform their duties at the special time of the night and they should engage in the special *dhikr* with peace of mind and full attention. Further the general *‘ibādat* conducted during the day should strengthen and back up the special *‘ibādat* at night, in order to establish a centre of *dhikr-ū ‘ibādat* which the *mu’mins* should continue to look after for spiritual and luminous results.

A noble and righteous merchant is busy at his business. His business is flourishing. There is a big crowd of customers in his shop and a respected friend is sitting besides him. The merchant is conversing peacefully and gently sometimes with his friend and sometimes with the customers. When he turns his attention to a customer or to something else, his friend does not feel anger or pain that he discontinued the conversation with him and distracted his attention from him. For they have mutually deep friendship and profound confidence in each other. Therefore, the respected friend is happy that the entire work of his friend is perfect and his shop is thriving with business. This is an example of the fact that a true *mu’min* along with his worldly business can remember God with any name and if such a general remembrance discontinues, it does not matter.

## Dhikr and Occasion

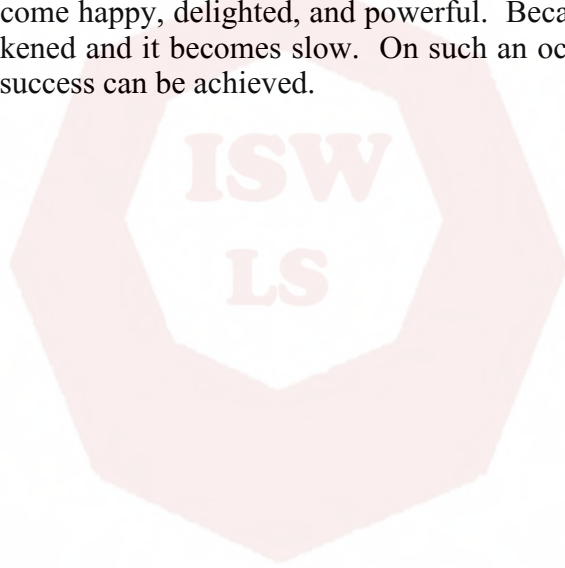
A true *mu’min* should also know that in addition to fixed special and general times, sometimes there are special occasions wherein it is important to increase the *dhikr* further. Thus when God wants to try a *mu’min* servant causing him to suffer in a calamity, then the wise *mu’min* is availed with a special opportunity which he should not lose. For according to *Qur’anic* guidance there are three things hidden in every calamity, which are: benediction, mercy and guidance from God and which are available to those patients who say: “Lo! we belong to God and to Him we are returning”. (II:155-7).

It is known to every one that the most powerful and cunning enemy of religion is his own carnal soul, which continues to create numerous obstacles in every good deed, particularly in *dhikr-ū ‘ibādat* and which never tires from hostility, enmity and evil



attempts at which it mostly succeeds. But there are certain special occasions, during which a *mu'min* may easily subjugate his carnal soul. These occasions are the occasions of calamities and afflictions, in which the carnal soul becomes despondent and helpless and remains behind. Thus on such occasions, subjugating and trampling upon the carnal soul through *dhikr-ū 'ibādat*, one may cause *dhikr* to reach a further stage.

Another golden occasion for the defeat of the carnal soul is that listening to conversation about the true knowledge and divine love, in which the *mu'min's rūḥ al-īmān* and intellect become happy, delighted, and powerful. Because of this the carnal soul's control is weakened and it becomes slow. On such an occasion by continuing *dhikr* for some time, success can be achieved.



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## CHAPTER SIXTH

### THE METHOD OR PROCEDURE OF DHIKR

It is certain that nothing whether it is religious or worldly, external or internal, exoteric or esoteric, spiritual or internal or mental or physical, can be accomplished without a method or procedure. Therefore, in this chapter, essential points and useful information are being provided about *dhikr* so that they may help the *dhākirīn* (rememberers).

#### Regularity in Dhikr

It is in accordance with natural law that in order to achieve an object, hardship and toil should be endured regularly. Thus regarding *dhikr*, the main and correct exercise is the regular performance of *dhikr*. There should be a restriction of time and it should be done at fixed times without escaping from any difficulty. As God says: “And those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths, and verily God is with those who do right.” (XXIX:69). It is known to all that the path of God, the true religion (*dīn-i haqq*), is only one. Thus in the verse mentioned here, that “We surely guide them to Our paths” means that although the path of God is one, it has different forms, such as faith, certitude, righteousness, fear of God, knowledge, deeds, sincerity, justice, favor, humility, love, obedience, patience, thanksgiving, worship, submission, contentment, etc. All these attributes of righteousness and faithfulness are such that each of them represents some form of the right path, because all of these are mutually connected and joined, and in the depth of spiritualism all these are as one reality. It is for this reason that in different subjects of the *Qur’an* the excellence of each of these attributes of faithfulness has been described in such a way as to make that particular attribute everything. This is true, and there is great wisdom in this, for internally all other attributes are also attached to it. This means that when a *mu’min* is accustomed to performing *dhikr* and spiritual exercises with devotion, then God, through His infinite mercy, will grant him all the attributes of faithfulness (*mu’minī*) and will be revealed to him the spiritualism and luminousness (*rūḥāniyyat awr nūrāniyyat*) of all those attributes. This is the meaning of God showing His paths.

#### Internal Senses (*hawās-i bātini*) for a united humanity

In the chapter “the Cow” in the *Qur’an*, censuring ingratitude and rejection, and their consequences, it is said: “They are deaf, dumb and blind and they do not return (to their origin)” (II:18). Also in the same chapter it is said about infidels: “They are deaf, dumb and blind and they have no reason (i.e. internal senses)”. (II:171). Thus this command of God, in which the fate of the infidels is viewed with despondency by the internal senses, there is also the indication of hope for (divine) mercy for the believers; and attention has been directed in the commandment to the distinction between the believers and the unbelievers. That is to say that they can perform *dhikr-ū ‘ibādat* with the tongue of the heart; they can listen to guidance with the ear of their hearts and they can observe the divine wonders with the eyes of the heart, the purpose of which is to acquire intelligence and understanding and knowledge and wisdom, the purpose of which is in turn to return towards God.

## The Ears of The Heart

It is necessary to recognize the ears of the heart in the preliminary stage so a novice *dhākir* should remain sitting calmly for some time in a place where there is no voice at all. Directing his attention towards the heart and the mind he should then try not to say anything in his heart in addition to remaining silent with his tongue. Thus when he is silent internally and externally, then all of sudden, unconsciously dispersed thoughts will begin to occur in his mind. These are the insinuations of the carnal soul, which are also called *ḥadīth-i nafsī*. To hear these things is not only a proof of the existence of the ears of heart, but also indicates that just as the voice of evil occurs in the heart, so in the same way the voice of good can also occur therein.

Although the voice of the carnal soul is next to nothing, despite that it nonetheless interferes in this experiment of silence, which the ears of the heart heard in a state of extreme calm. These same insinuations of the carnal soul continue to obstruct during *dhikr-ū ʿibādat* at the hearing of which the *mu'min* feels greatly perplexed and anxious. But he should not be disappointed, for after advancing further ahead the conversations of the intellect and of love can also be heard in the same way.

## The Tongue of the Heart

Before starting any exercise of *dhikr-i qalbī* it is essential to be aware of the tongue of the heart and its voice, and unless this is done it is extremely difficult to perform *dhikr-i ilāhī* with the heart. Thus one way of understanding the state and reality of the voice of the heart or the conscience is that the novice should continue to recite a small chapter, or a verse of the *Qur'an*, or any of the names of God, in the heart for some time; holding his (external) tongue. Simultaneously, he should continue listening to the voice of the tongue of the heart with the ear of the heart and he will ascertain that whatever he was reciting in this experiment was not by the external tongue, but rather, by the internal tongue. That is to say this was the voice of the tongue of the heart which he was hearing through the ears of the heart. This means there is a tongue in the heart also, which is different from the external tongue and therewith the *dhikr-i qalbī* is performed.

## The Eye of the Heart

In connection with spiritual progress, it is also necessary to search for and experience the existence of the eye of the heart, for in the case of the absence of the recognition of internal senses the state of the denial of spiritualism begins to take root, let alone its progress. Thus the search for and experience of the eye of the heart should be made by the beginner *dhākir* by sitting on the special seat of *dhikr*, free from care and thoughts, and for some time closing his eyes, and then directing his attention towards the world of imagination (*ʿālam-i khayāl*) (i.e. his inner world). He should then choose five of the names of God and conceive the writing of each one. That is to say that he should see the written forms of these names and read them. If he is illiterate, then he should conceive that somebody is reading the holy *Qur'an* in front of him and he should try to see who that person is, what his clothes are like. Further, he should conceive some other people and see whether the face which he wants to see comes in front of him. Or he should conceive some fruits or flowers, and so on. There is no doubt that he will be able to conceive many things in this way. This is to say that whatever he wants he will be able to bring it into his imagination and observe it spiritually. But in the beginning the spiritual light and sight of the heart, or insight,

will be very dim, rather, next to nothing. Anyhow from this it can be estimated that this is the preliminary form of seeing with the eye of heart, and which on the one hand proves the existence of the eye of the heart and on the other hand gives evidence of the world of spiritualism.

### Dhikr and Fear of God

If there is the fear of God in the heart of a believing *dhākir* (*mu'min-i dhākir*), then the *dhikr* becomes very easy. It should be known that the fear of God is artificial as well as real. Artificial fear is that the *dhākir*, according to his understanding, should create an artificial fear of God, which is useful to some extent, but is not lasting. The real fear of God is *taqwā*, i.e. the righteousness. If the *dhākir* is righteous then the state of the miraculous fear of God will be spread over him from the beginning of *dhikr-i ilāhī*. Then the question of the occurrence of numerous thoughts and of recurring discontinuity in the chain of *dhikr* will be resolved for the divine aid and help (*tā'īd-ū nuṣrat*) is hidden in the form of the true fear of God, by virtue of which the chain of *dhikr* continues smoothly and thoroughly in the grip of the tongue and the ear of the heart.

When the *mu'min* obeys God in every thought, imagination, word and action and fears from disobedience, then necessarily during the *dhikr* too, profiting from the state of fearing God, he can easily advance the chain of *dhikr* safely and soundly. As the *Qur'an* says: "Allah has revealed the best Word in the form of a Book, equivocal and repeated. (From its remembrance) doth creep the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts do soften to Allah's *dhikr*". (XXXIX:23). If this 'best Word' is the *Qur'an* on one hand, on the other hand it is the *ism-i a'zam*. Since *ism-i a'zam* is the spiritualism and luminousness of the *Qur'an* itself and since it holds various realities and gnoses, therefore, it is equivocal (*mutashābah*). Further, since it is repeated in *dhikr*, therefore it is called "repeated (*mathānī*)". The reason why only the skins of righteous people creep from its *dhikr* is that those billions cellular souls which are sleeping in their bodies have this capacity to wake up all of a sudden, from the voice of *dhikr-i ilāhī*, which is commonly called "the creeps". But those who are not righteous no such state occurs to them. However, their skins do creep from worldly and material fear certainly.

It is clear that the potentiality of *dhikr* is actualized due to righteousness and the fear of God, for by virtue of this, the *dhikr* attached to the tongue of the heart, keeps on moving smoothly and in the ear of the heart its echo is felt as being very melodious. For the true meaning of the fear of God means to remain always pure from the impurity of sins, and in the case of remaining pure the miracle of the fear of God continues to guide.

### Dhikr and Hope

One faculty (power) of faith of a believing *dhākir* (*mu'min-i dhākir*) is hidden in that he should hope for divine mercy and should not be disappointed, for despondency regarding the mercy of God is blasphemy. For as there is betterment and virtue for the people of faith in the fear of God, so there is their well-being and success in the hope of (His) mercy. Thus various *Qur'anic* verses imply that a faithful servant (of God) should have hope and yearning in his heart for divine mercy, and he should consistently work hard.

## Dhikr and Humility

To create the state and attribute of humility in himself, not only before and after *dhikr* but for ever, is the greatest wisdom of *mu'min-i dhākir*. For humility is the preliminary form of real love and its prelude. Only in humility is there a guarantee of escaping from pride; without which divine help, guidance and mercy do not even come close. Therefore, it is necessary that the *dhākir* should adopt seriousness and humility to the extreme so that there may be created miraculous attraction and appeal in the voice of *dhikr* and light before the spiritual eye (*didah-i bāṭin*).

It has always been a condition of the natural (divine) law that it nullifies that person who considers himself something, and aggrandizes that person who considers himself nothing. Thus the *bandah-i dhākir* should know that the secret of his success lies in humility and submission.

## Dhikr and Love

It is only Divine Love which is that stage of spiritualism in which the *mu'min-i dhākir*, rids himself of the numerous insinuations and false thoughts of the carnal soul, as indeed he ought for divine love is such a fire which abounds in wisdom and which burns out all thoughts and notions except *dhikr-i ilāhī*. True love is the original and practical form of the divine love itself, in which the true lover becomes the embodiment of *dhikr* from the top to the bottom. Why not, since love is a kind of extremely sweet pain of the heart, and, the suffering of the entire body in any pain of the heart is but natural. For love is called that state of the heart and the mind in which *dhikr* of the beloved and yearning for union is on the level of perfection. And it is obvious that it is that heart and the mind which govern and rule on the external and internal planes of the body. In short, at the stage of divine love, in addition to the soul, the body also participates in a way.

It may be asked how love which is just a state of mind and heart, can affect, compel and subjugate the entire body. The answer is that the anger of a man is also a mental state, but man flies into a passion because of it and starts shivering. Similarly, when he is suffering from the extreme feeling of shame among the people, all of sudden his face becomes pale with shame and owing to shame he trembles and perspires dripping with sweat. If the man is happy, then his face glitters from happiness, and if he is sad, he shrinks, being dejected. All these are nothing but states of the mind and the heart. But the main point is, as we mentioned above, that the entire body of man is ruled or governed by the heart and the mind. In other words, the human body is under the influence of the animal soul; the animal soul under that of the rational soul; and the rational under that of the intellect. This proves that the conscious state which occurs within the heart and the mind of man, sends its waves (currents) through the entire body. Thus at the stage of love, the way the state of the body of the lower *dhākir* changes by virtue of realization (consciousness) of divine love, and the way the lover becomes the embodiment of *dhikr* from the top to the bottom, is a reality. Thus *bandah-i mu'min* should, in all the difficulties of *dhikr*, have recourse to true love. Its permanent method is that the true love (*ishq-i haqīqī*) should be given paramount importance among the manners and conditions of *dhikr-i ilāhī* and among all attributes of righteousness and faithfulness.

## Dhikr and Attention

Regarding attention towards *dhikr* we have already explained some important points before this. Yet, some more points are going to be explained here. As mentioned earlier, there are three special faculties (powers) of the heart – ear, tongue and eye – and without these three powers of the heart, it is difficult to give complete attention towards *dhikr*. Thus by placing the tongue of the heart under pressure one should continue *dhikr*, and by making the ear of the heart attentive, one should listen to *dhikr* and compel the eye of the heart to continue looking at the spiritual writing of *dhikr*; and the eye should not neglect this duty even for a second. This is paying perfect attention towards *dhikr*. Now one should create more and more the state of humility in one's heart through the exercise of will-power. That is to say that in one's heart of hearts, one must weep and pray before God that His spiritual help may embrace one so that the attention of the three powers may stand firm towards *dhikr*, and that the clouds of negligence and oblivion may disperse. Thus one remains hopeful and does not become disappointed, for success is achieved due to the continual exercise of this practice.

## Speed of Dhikr

Here a very important question arises about the speed of *dhikr*. What should be the speed of the *dhikr* of heart? Can it be estimated? This is an important question which no wise *dhākir* can afford to neglect. It should be understood that according to an allusion in the chapter “Luqman” the speed of the *dhikr* should be of moderate type, i.e. neither very fast nor very slow, as that of a traveller walking to a destination with a moderate speed. But, verily when the traveller is facing a danger in the way, such as the possibility of dacoity, rain, the falling of stones from mountains, being chased by a powerful enemy or if the darkness of night is close, then he must necessarily increase his walking speed. The same is the condition of a traveller along the path of spiritualism. If the chain of *dhikr* discontinues, or if thoughts of various types occur, or if there is drowsiness or laziness, or if there is the domination of Satan and of the carnal soul, then he should increase the speed of *dhikr*, pressing down upon the carnal soul through will power. An estimate of this speed is that if the *ism-i a'zam* consists of four letters, then in one hour it should be repeated approximately ten thousand times. This means that in three minutes forty five seconds such a name should be repeated approximately six hundred times. This is an estimate for a quadrilateral word.

## Chain of Dhikr

If you want to perform the *dhikr* of the heart at the fixed time with the importance due to it, then it should be consistent and consecutive (linked together), for which the correct pronunciation is very necessary. And correct pronunciation of the word of *dhikr* is possible if it is continually recited within the grip of the tongue of the heart, and is listened to with the ear of the heart. But if the word is not pronounced properly and is not listened to with total and perfect attention with the ear of the heart, then the chain of *dhikr* becomes discontinuous. For instance, in external speech the tongue slips only when the grip of the speaker over his attention is loosened. That is to say that, when any of the speaking and hearing powers become lazy, then the slip occurs in speech and in conversation. It is only through the hearing faculty that one may detect whether there occurred a slip of speech, or not, or whether such and such words were pronounced properly, or not.

Thus it is the duty of the eye and the ear of the heart to keep the chain of *dhikr* continuous and to protect (guard) it from the slips of forgetting it from moment to moment. That is to say that the tongue should pronounce each link, i.e. word of the chain of *dhikr* clearly, and the ear should listen to it with great attention. In fact, attention should be paid to it even with the eye of the heart, so that there should not be any discontinuity in the chain of *dhikr-i ilāhī*.

If a *mu'min's* chain of *dhikr* of the heart discontinues again and again, despite the efforts made. Then the reason for this is either a sin has been committed or ignorance. Therefore, he should cure both diseases. That is to say, along with repentance and righteousness, he should also obtain the necessary knowledge pertaining to *dhikr*, so that he will succeed in making his *dhikr* consistent and consecutive.

### Dhikr and Effacement

When the real *mu'min* starts performing *dhikr* after accomplishing all related manners, then the state of unrelatedness (*lā ta'alluqī kī kayfiyyat*) occurs in his mind, that is neither the state of dream, nor that of wakefulness, which is also called *bay-khudī* (selflessness). In this state everything – external as well internal – is effaced from the mind and consciousness of the *dhākir*, except *dhikr*, which remains and continues. In this state the *mu'min-i dhākir* also forgets himself altogether. He does not even know where he sits, nor which place it is, whether it is home or not. He does not feel whether his body exists or not, or whether it is lost. If such a state pervades through the beginner, then he should be sure that he is progressing in spiritualism. If not so, then it should be understood that this failure is because of his own deficiencies and mistakes and not for any other reason.

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