

Three Things Which the Muslim Nation Does Not Have the Strength to Bear

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قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: يَا عَلِيُّ، ثَلَاثٌ لَا تُطِيقُهَا هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةُ: الْمَوَاسَاتُ لِلْأَخِ فِي مَالِهِ وَانْصَافُ النَّاسِ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ وَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ وَ لَيْسَ هُوَ: «سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ» وَلَكِنْ إِذَا وَرَدَ عَلَى مَا يَحْرُمُ عَلَيْهِ خَافَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِنْدَهُ وَ تَرَكَهُ

The Prophet Muhammad (S) has said, "O 'Ali! There are three things which this nation shall not be able to bear: equality with their brother in regards to their wealth; giving people their rights; and remembering Allah (SwT) in any state - and this does not mean saying "Glory be to Allah and all Praise belongs to Allah and there is no creature worthy of worship except for Allah." Rather, whenever they encounter something which they are prohibited from, they fear Allah, the Noble and Grand, in regards to that thing and refrain from it."

This is one of the well-known and very meaningful traditions from the Prophet (S). According to this tradition, there are three things which this nation (the Muslim nation) does not have the strength to bear - in other words, these are difficult things which not everyone will .be able to perform

"Equality" with their brother (or sister)" (1

A person may be able to help others by giving some of their wealth in the way of Allah (SwT); they may offer Sadaqah; they may give another person a loan, etc. however to show true equality means that a person divides his wealth with others, and this is definitely something difficult!

From this sentence we can deduce that sometimes a person should give out a portion of his wealth, food, and clothing to others around him in the way and for the pleasure of Allah (SwT). One must not be conceited and think that by giving to others, he has done something very great and important! Rather, even after giving we must still consider ourselves as being culpable since the station of "equality and fairness with our brother" is a much higher station and even higher than self-sacrifice («thar) which we have yet to reach to!

If we have not reached to the level of "equality with our brother/sister" then at least this theory should have some impact on us and whatever we are currently offering in help to others should

continue. However still after this, we should feel some sense of culpability. In addition, we must not expect anything in return since this form of help is the smallest action !we can do for another Muslim

The Self-Sacrifice for a Guest

The following tradition has been narrated in Majma' al-Bayan¹ that: "A person came to the Prophet (S) and said to him, 'I am hungry.' The Prophet (S) asked a companion to go to his house and bring the man some food. However, upon checking, those in the house of the Prophet (S) informed the person that there was no food in the Prophet's house. The Prophet (S) asked, 'Which of you will keep this man as a guest in his house (and thus, feed him)?' A man from amongst the Ansar (those who had welcomed the Prophet (S) and the companions into Madinah) stood up and said that he would take care of the man. Thus, the hungry man made his way to the companion's house. Upon arriving home, the companion realized that he too had no food except for a few paltry things that were only enough for his young children to eat. The companion asked his wife to bring him the food which they had reserved for their guest and to turn off the oil-lamp. The man quietly told his wife that, 'Keep the children busy with something until they go to sleep (keep their mind off of the food and thus, let them go to sleep without any food).' The woman and her husband then sat down on the floor with their guest and pretended to eat by moving their mouth, however, they actually did not eat any of the food! The guest thought that they too were eating (from what he could see and the sound of them chewing food) and thus, he ate whatever he needed and became satiated. The family went to bed hungry that night, however the next morning, the husband and wife came to the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) looked at them and without saying a word, smiled :(and read the following verse of the Qur'an (from Suratul Hashr, verse 80

وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

And they (the Ansar) prefer them (the Muhajirun) over themselves even if they are in an state of abject poverty!"²

Division of One's Wealth in the Islamic Narrations

:1. It has been narrated from Abu Dharr that he has said, "I heard the Prophet (S) say

إِنَّمَا هُمْ إِخْوَانُكُمْ فَكُفُّهُمْ مِمَّا تَكْسُونَ، وَ أَطْعِمُوهُمْ مِمَّا تُطْعَمُونَ، فَمَا رَوَى عَبْدُهُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا وَ رِدَائِهِ رِدَائُهُ،
وَإِزَارُهُ إِزَارُهُ، مِنْ غَيْرِ تَفَاوُتٍ

In the Tafsir of 'Ali b. Ibrahim we read a tradition in regards to verses 70 to 72 of Suratul .2
:(Nahl 16

لَا يَجُوزُ لِلرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَخْصَّ نَفْسَهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْمَأْكُولِ دُونَ عِيَالِهِ

*It is not permissible for a person to prefer some food for himself (and eat that) and not to feed”
the same thing to his family.”³*

Giving People their Rights (2

In our previous discussions, we had mentioned the fact that the Islamic society is one in which
rights are given to others, however they are not taken from others.
By this we mean that if a person owes another person money, then the one who has taken the
loan should go in search of the person whom he owes the money to (to pay him back). Anytime
he finds the person whom he owes something to, he should fulfill his obligation to that person
and thank Allah (SwT) that He has freed him from being under the obligation of another human
(being (through paying back the debt, he has cleared up his responsibility

The Dhikr of Allah (SwT) in All States (3

Of the things which all people are responsible for enacting, however not all are able to, is to
remember Allah (SwT) in all states. The remembering of Allah (SwT) should only be done for
one reason which is to remember Allah (SwT) and this act should have no other incentives
associated with it.

The word Dhikr has three meanings to it: verbal, spiritual and the applied or practical Dhikr.
The verbal Dhikr is something easy; the Dhikr in the heart which makes up the spiritual Dhikr is
somewhat more difficult; while the Dhikr which is manifest in one's actions is the most difficult
of all!

The Dhikr in one's actions means that in a person's actions in his life, he recognizes that Allah
(SwT) is present and watching - his actions truly show that he realizes that Allah (SwT) is
present all the time.

The Prophet (S) has then said, “And this Dhikr is not in the meaning of...”

Seeing as how this form of remembrance of Allah (SwT) is the most important verbal declaration mentioned in the various traditions and has been emphasized a great deal, the Prophet (S) has stated, "The Dhikr is not limited to only this (the verbal remembrance of Allah (SwT)). Rather, the reality of Dhikr is that when a person enters into a situation where he has the ability to perform a forbidden act, he fears Allah (SwT) to such an extent that he immediately refrains from performing the deed that would be transformed into a sin in his records."

Therefore, the Dhikr of Allah (SwT) is actually a very valuable treasure! No matter how much we speak about it, it is still not enough and in principle, the spirit of the Salat and worship is all contained within the Dhikr of Allah (SwT)!

By this we mean that in that amount that our attention and focus is in the Salat and in that amount that we have the presence of heart (hudhur al-qalb), only that amount is considered as the Salat while the rest of the prayers (where there is no presence of heart) is just like the skin of the fruit without the actual fruit!

The main purpose of all forms of worship ('Ibadat) is the remembrance of Allah (SwT) as this is the most important factor in protecting the person who is put face to face with sins. One who has soiled himself with crimes, transgressions and errors against his soul and brings disgrace onto himself (through these acts) is definitely not of those who remembers Allah (SwT).

Truthfully, if he was a person of remembrance of Allah (SwT), then at the time of coming face to face with a sin, he would fall into the remembrance of Allah (SwT). Through this remembrance, he would not become such a person of disgrace and he would not fall into such misfortunes and these states of dishonour would have been a lesson for him.

Therefore, if we wish to protect ourselves in the face of committing sins, then we must constantly be in a state of Dhikr of Allah (SwT) - we must be one who has developed the habit of ensuring that we do not forget Allah (SwT).

When one enters into a gathering, he must be sure to remember Allah (SwT) and this Dhikr of Allah (SwT) would actually be the source of tranquility and serenity of the person in this world :as

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

*Now surely with the remembrance (Dhikr) of Allah are the hearts put at rest and ease."*⁴

Short Discussion Regarding Dhikr

1. What is the Dhikr of Allah and how does it materialize?

Just as Raghīb has mentioned in his book, al-Mufradat, the word Dhikr may sometimes refer to or hifz "حفظ" memorizing some information and facts with this stark difference that the word (which is also used in the meaning of memorization) refers to the beginning period of or dhikr is used in reference to the "ذِكْرٌ" memorization of something while the word continuation of this act.

Sometimes, this word is used in the meaning of remembering something - either a verbal recollection or a remembrance in the heart.

:We read in the traditions⁵ that Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) has said

أَلَذِّكْرُ ذِكْرَانِ: ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِنْدَ الْمُصِيبَةِ وَأَفْضَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ عِنْدَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ فَيَكُونُ حَاجِزاً

*Dhikr is of two types: the remembrance of Allah, the Noble and Grand, at the time of "tribulations and even greater than this is the remembrance of Allah (SwT) in regards to that thing which Allah has made prohibited for you so then this (this form of Dhikr) acts as a barrier (between the person and that forbidden act)."*⁶

It is because of this reason that in some of the traditions the remembrance of Allah (SwT) is referred to as the shield and means of protection (from sins)!

In a tradition from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) we read that one day the Prophet (S) turned towards his companions and said

إِتَّخِذُوا جُنُوداً فَقَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَمِنْ عَدُوٌّ قَدْ أَظَلَّنَا؟ قَالَ لَا، وَلَكِنَّ مِنَ النَّارِ! قُولُوا سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

*Take a shield for yourselves." The companions said, "O' Messenger of Allah! (Should we take" up this shield) in the face of our enemies who have surrounded us and who are looking over us (to attack us at any time?)" The Prophet replied, "No. Rather, take this shield as a protection from the hell fire - say: 'Glory be to Allah and all praise belongs to Allah and there is no creature worthy of worship except for Allah and Allah is greater than can be described.'"*⁷

A Person who was Constantly in the Dhikr of Allah (SwT)

The following example of Prophet Musa (as) is one which we must pay extra careful attention

to, as he was one who was constantly in the remembrance of Allah (SwT). He had focused his entire attention on His Presence and called upon Him alone to remove all difficulties and challenges.

When this Prophet of Allah killed a Coptic man - which was an act referred to as a "Tark-e-Awla" (leaving a more preferable option) - we see that he immediately asked Allah (SwT) :forgiveness and pardon and said

قَالَ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي

*He (Musa) said: Surely I have wronged myself, so forgive me."*⁸
:In addition, when he was leaving Egypt, he stated

قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

*He (Musa) said: My Lord save me from the oppressive people."*⁹
:When he reached the city of Madyan, he said

قَالَ عَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

He (Musa) said: Perhaps my Lord may guide me to the straight path..."
When the sheep of (Prophet) Shu'aib (as) were fed, became satiated and made their way :towards the shade, Musa (as) he stated

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

*He (Musa) said: O' my Lord! I am in need of whatever goodness you can send to me."*¹⁰
Most notably in this last supplication which was read in one of the most critical junctions in the life of this Prophet, we see that with great reverence and manners, tempered with tranquility and serenity, he did not say "O' Allah! I am in need of You removing my difficulties..." Rather, all he asked Allah (SwT) was, "I am in need of Your goodness and kindness." [He did not ask for something in specific, rather, he left it to Allah (SwT) to fulfill whatever He destined for His servant.]

Of course, we should not assume that Prophet Musa (as) only remembered Allah (SwT) during

times of difficulty, as it has been mentioned in the Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalain¹¹ that, “Even when he lived in the palace of the Pharaoh and was surrounded by all of the material treasures and blessings, he still did not forget Allah (SwT).”

Thus, in the traditions we read that, “One day, Musa (as) sneezed while in the presence of the [أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ] 'Pharaoh and immediately said, 'All Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Universe رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ [.”

When the Pharaoh heard these words, he became extremely upset and slapped Musa (as)! Musa (as) grabbed the Pharaoh by his hair and pulled it at which time, the Pharaoh became even more upset and decided to kill him, however the wife of Pharaoh convinced Pharaoh that Musa (as) was only a young child and did not know what he was doing and thus, she was able to save him from death.¹²

Remembering Allah (SwT) in All States

Whenever the name of Allah (SwT) is taken, an entire universe of greatness, power, knowledge, and wisdom becomes manifest in the heart of the human being since He (SwT) is the holder of all of the most beautiful Names, the highest characteristics, the possessor of all of perfections and is free from any sort of defect or imperfection.

The constant focus and attention on such a reality (of Allah (SwT)) who possesses such characteristics and traits guides the soul of a person towards goodness and purity and helps him keep away from all despicable acts. In other words, His characteristics seek to become manifest within the life of the person.

Focusing one's attention on such a worthy Creator brings a sense of awareness of constantly being within His presence. With this feeling, the distance between a person and the sins and spiritual pollution is made great.

Remembering Him (SwT) is a remembrance of vigilance; remembering Him (SwT) is the remembrance of accountability and reward/retribution; remembering Him (SwT) is to remember His court of Justice, Paradise and Hell Fire and such a remembrance is what gives purity to the life and graces the soul with the Celestial Illumination of Allah (SwT) and existence.

It is due to this fact that within the Islamic traditions it has mentioned that everything has a limit to it - except the remembrance of Allah (SwT) as there is no limit to it!

According to the tradition mentioned in Usul al-Kafi, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) :has said

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا وَلَهُ حَدٌّ يُنْتَهَى إِلَيْهِ، إِلَّا الذِّكْرُ، فَلَيْسَ لَهُ حَدٌّ يُنْتَهَى إِلَيْهِ

There is not a single thing (in the faith of Islam) except that there is a limit set for it so then“ when that limit is met, then that act is complete except for the Dhikr (of Allah) since for this there is no limit and no end to it.”¹³

:The Imam then said

فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الْفَرَائِضَ، فَمَنْ أَدَّاهُنَّ فَهُوَ حَدُّهُنَّ، وَشَهْرُ رَمَازَانَ فَمَنْ صَامَهُ فَهُوَ حَدُّهُ، وَالْحَجُّ فَمَنْ حُجَّ حَدُّهُ، إِلَّا الذِّكْرَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يَرْضَ مِنْهُ بِالْقَلِيلِ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ حَدًّا يُنْتَهَى إِلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ تَلَا: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

Allah, the Glorious and Noble, has obligated the Salat, so then whoever fulfills this act has“ fulfilled it to its prescribed amount; the month of Ramazan too (has a limit) so then whoever fasts the month has fulfilled the limit; hajj too (has a limit) so then whoever performs the hajj has fulfilled its limit; however there is no limit set for the remembrance (dhikr) of Allah. Surely Allah, the Glorious and Noble, is not content with a small amount of Dhikr and has not set an end limit for it.” Then, the Imam (as) read the verse of the Qur’an which states, {O’ you who possess true faith! Remember Allah an abundantly remembrance (Dhikran Kathiran) and glorify Him in the morning and at night.}”¹⁴

In this same tradition, Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) narrates from his father, Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Baqir (as) that he (the 5th Imam) was one who performed much Dhikr of Allah (SwT) and that anytime he walked with him, he would be in the Dhikr of Allah (SwT); when he ate, he would remember Allah (SwT); even when he was speaking to people, he would not be negligent of the Dhikr of Allah (SwT)...

:The 6th Imam ends this tradition by stating the following very meaningful sentence

وَالْبَيْتُ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنَ، وَيَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَكْتُرُ بَرَكَتُهُ، وَتَحْضُرُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ، وَتَهْرُ مِنْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ، وَيُضِيءُ لِلْأَهْلِ السَّمَاءُ كَمَا يُضِيءُ الْكَوْكَبُ الدَّرِيءُ لِلْأَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ

The house in which the Qur’an is read and in which Allah, the Glorious and Noble, is“ remembered will have its blessings multiplied, the Angels will be present in that house, the Satans will flee from that house and that house will shine for the people of the heavens just as the stars sparkle for the people on Earth.”¹⁵

This issue is of such importance that in the tradition, the remembrance of Allah (SwT) has

been equated with the collection of all goodness of this life and the next life just as the Prophet
:of Allah (S) has stated

مَنْ أُعْطِيَ لِسَانًا ذَاكِرًا فَقَدْ أُعْطِيَ خَيْرَ الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ

*The person who has been given (by Allah) a remembering tongue (to extol His greatness) has“
been given goodness of both this life and the next.”¹⁶*

The traditions in regards to the importance of the remembrance of Allah (SwT) are such in number that if we wish to bring them all forth here in this discussion, it would call for an independent book to be written!

Thus, we close this part of the discussion with a short tradition from Imam Ja'far b. :Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) as narrated in Usul al-Kafi

مَنْ أَكْثَرَ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَحَبَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي جَنَّتِهِ

*The person who remembers Allah, the Glorious and Noble much, Allah will cover Him with the“
grace of His shadow in His Paradise.”¹⁷*

It goes without saying that all of the blessings and goodness which are accompanied by the remembrance of Allah (SwT) are not related to the mere verbal attestation and remembrance of Allah (SwT) and the empty movements of the tongue with no thought, pondering (upon what is being said) and action (to what is being said). Rather, the purpose of this remembrance should be to stir the springs of thought and contemplation - that same thought which would become manifest within the actions of the person. This has clearly been mentioned in the meaningful tradition (on this topic).¹⁸

The Stages to Traverse in the Dhikr of Allah (SwT)

In regards to the stages which one must traverse in the Dhikr of Allah (SwT), one of the commentators of the Qur'an¹⁹ has stated:

1. The first stage is the Dhikr of His name, just as has been mentioned in the Qur'an in the :verse of Suratul Muzammil

وَ اذْكُرْ إِسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَ تَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

*And remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself completely to Him."*²⁰

2. The second stage is that of remembering the Sacred Essence of Allah (SwT) in the heart,
just as we are told

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعاً وَخِيفَةً

*And remember your Lord within yourself humbly and fearing..."*²¹

3. The third stage - which is the ultimate level - is one in which a person ascends higher than just performing the Dhikr of Allah (SwT) and remembering the status of Lordship which He possesses. Rather, the person arrives at the state of the Dhikr of all of the characteristics of Beauty and Munificence of Allah (SwT) which are all present in His essence, just as we are told

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْراً كَثِيراً

*O' you who have true faith, remember Allah, a great deal of remembering..."*²²

Thus, we see that the Dhikr of Allah (SwT) continues, traversing one stage after the other and through this, the person performing this Dhikr of Allah (SwT) would reach to the pinnacles of perfection.²³

The Various Forms of Dhikr

Dhikr is divided up into the Dhikr of the tongue (verbal); Dhikr of the heart (spiritual); and the Dhikr through one's actions. Thus, whenever we speak about the Dhikr of Allah (SwT) - which is such a great act - we must never think that it simply refers to the Dhikr of the tongue (the verbal form).

Rather, in the Islamic narrations, it has been clearly mentioned that in addition to the verbal Dhikr, there is also the Dhikr in the heart and the Dhikr through one's actions. Thus, when a person is about to perform a forbidden act, he must fall into the remembrance of Allah (SwT) and through this, refrain from that act which he is not permitted to perform.

The ultimate purpose of what we have mentioned is that Allah (SwT) must be present in all aspects of a person's life and the Celestial Illumination of Allah (SwT) must take over and encompass a person's entire life; he must think and reason with this Celestial Illumination and must put into practice all of His commandments.

A gathering of remembering Allah (SwT) is not a gathering in which a group of unaware people sit around in a circle and go forth in a mode of pleasure and recreation while at the same time recite some made-up incantations and make such an innovation (Bid'ah) in gatherings famous and well-known (amongst the people). If we read in the traditions that the Prophet (S) said

بَادِرُوا إِلَى رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ

Make your way towards the gardens of Paradise."

:When he was asked

وَمَا رِيَاضُ الْجَنَّةِ؟

And what are the gardens of Paradise?"

:The Prophet (S) replied

حَلَقُ الذِّكْرِ

*Gatherings of the remembrance (of Allah)."*²⁴

His meaning of 'gatherings of remembrance (of Allah (SwT))' [lit. a gathering where people sit in a circle to remember Allah (SwT)] are those in which the teachings of Islam are kept alive and ones in which the instructive discussions and lessons of training (of the person) are mentioned and talked about in.

In such a gathering, a human is transformed into the true sense of the word a human and those people who are sinners are purified of their sins and are put back onto the path of Allah (SwT).²⁵

The Best Forms of Remembrance

1. The Dhikr of the Morning and Evening

In Tafsir Qurtubi²⁶ and the Tafsir of Abu'l Futuh Razi²⁷ in regards to verse 64 of Suratul Zumur, there is a tradition from the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib (as) in which he asked the Prophet (S) in regards to the meaning of "keys" mentioned in this verse to which the Prophet (S) replied

يَا عَلِيّ! لَقَدْ سَأَلْتَ عَنْ عَظِيمِ الْمَقَالِيدِ، هُوَ أَنْ تَقُولَ عَشْرًا إِذَا أَصْبَحْتَ، وَعَشْرًا إِذَا أَمْسَيْتَ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ (هُوَ) الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ (يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ) بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ. مَنْ كَرَّرَ هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَاتِ كُلَّ صَبَاحٍ وَ مَسَاءٍ عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ سِتًّا، أَحَدَهَا أَنْ يَحْفَظَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَ أَتْبَاعِهِ حَتَّى لَا يُسَلِّطَ عَلَيْهِ

O' 'Ali! Surely you have asked about the greatest of keys! This great key which you have asked" about is that even morning and evening you say the following ten times: 'There is no creature worthy of worship except for Allah; Allah is greater than anything which can describe him; all Glory belongs to Allah and all Praise belongs to Allah and I seek forgiveness from Allah and there is no power except with Allah and He is the First and the Last and the Apparent and the Hidden.

To Him is the Dominion and to Him belongs the Praise (He gives life and death) in His hands is all goodness and He has power over all things.' The Prophet continued and said, 'Whoever reads this every morning and night, Allah will grant this person six rewards, one of which is that Allah will protect him from Satan and the army of Satan so that he (Satan) is not able to rule over him."

It goes without saying that merely saying these words and paying lip service to them is not what will gain the reward. Rather, true faith in its contents and applying this sentence to one's life is necessary!

It is possible that this tradition may be a subtle reference to some of the words which make up the most beautiful names of Allah (SwT) and which make up the Sovereignty and Dominion of Allah (SwT) above the entire world of creation. [Pay attention to this point]**28**

2. "Ya Fattah" - The Dhikr of Allah [يَا فَتَّاحُ]

In some of the traditions, there has been emphasis placed on the remembrance through the recitation of "Ya Fattah" to alleviate difficulties. This great characteristic of Allah (SwT) which refers to the power of Allah (SwT) to remove any "فتح" is the 'exaggerative form' of the word difficulty and the ability of Allah (SwT) to remove the grief and sorrow which a person may have.

In addition, this name also conveys the power of Allah (SwT) to put forth the means through which victory and success are achieved.

of all closed (مفتاح) and the Key "الفتاح" In reality, there is no other who can be referred to as doors are in His hands and Power!

that: "فتح" Raghīb has mentioned the following in his work al-Mufradat in regards to the word

“Originally, this word meant to remove any sort of difficulty and tribulation and this is of two types: sometimes it refers to difficulties which are seen by the eyes such as opening a lock, and sometimes these difficulties are perceived by the mind such as opening (and alleviating) the difficulties of grief and sorrow or opening and discovering the secrets of various forms of science.

In addition, it refers to the arbitration between two individuals and removing the difficulties of strife and anger which may be between two individuals.”²⁹

Dhikr-e-Yunusiyyah (The Dhikr of Prophet Yunus (as)) .3

Prophet Yunus (as) became aware of the situation he was in very quickly and with his entire presence, turned towards the presence of Allah (SwT) and sought repentance and asked forgiveness from his “Tark-e-Awla”, in the presence of the Most Sacred. At this point, the well-known and meaningful dhikr from the mouth of Yunus (as) was stated which has been narrated in the Qur`an in Suratul Anbiya, Verse 87. Amongst the people of :“Irfan, it is well known as the 'Dhikr-e-Yunusiyyah

فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

So then he cried out in the darkness that 'There is no creature worthy of worship except for" You, glory be to You, surely I was of the oppressors and unjust to my own self."

This sincere confession tempered with his glorification, along with grief and remorse was :accepted and just as we read in verse 88 of Suratul Anbiya that

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*So then We answered him (Yunus) and We saved him from the grief and thus do We always" rescue the true believers."*³⁰

"The Dhikr of "There is no power or strength save with Allah .4 (لا حول و لا قوة إلا بالله)

In the Tafsir, Majma' al-Bayan³¹, it has been mentioned that the son one of the companions of the Prophet (S) - 'Awf b. Malik - was captured by the enemies of Islam. The companion went to see the Prophet (S) and informed him of what had happened and also of his abject state of poverty and destitution.

The Prophet (S) said to him, "Exhibit your Taqwa (consciousness of Allah (SwT)), be patient frequently." "لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ" and recite the Dhikr of

The companion did as he was told and one day, while he was sitting in his house, his son came to the door - surprising his father!

The son proceeded to tell his father how at one point, the enemies forgot about him and thus, he was able to make the best of the opportunity and run away - not only this, but he was even able to bring one of the camels of the enemy with him!³²

The Status of the Dhikr in the Words of Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as)

:Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (as) has stated the following in regards to Dhikr

مَنْ كَانَ ذَاكِرًا لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى عَلَى الْحَقِيقَةِ فَهُوَ مُطِيعٌ وَمَنْ كَانَ غَافِلًا عَنْهُ فَهُوَ عَاصٍ، وَ الطَّاعَةُ عَلَامَةُ الْهَدَايَةِ، وَ
الْمَعْصِيَةُ عَلَامَةُ الضَّلَالَةِ، وَ أَصْلُهُمَا مِنَ الذِّكْرِ وَ الْعِفْلَةِ

The person who remembers Allah, the Most High in the true sense (of the word), is (truly) His obedient servant and the one who is negligent of Him is a sinner. Obedience (to Allah) is a sign of guidance and disobedience (to Allah) is a sign of misguidance and the source of these two ((states) is the remembrance and negligence (of Allah

فَاجْعَلْ قَلْبَكَ قِبْلَةً لِسَانَكَ، لَا تُحَرِّكْهُ إِلَّا بِإِشَارَةِ الْقَلْبِ وَ مَوَافَقَةِ الْعَقْلِ وَ رَضَى الْإِيمَانَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَالِمٌ بِسِرِّكَ وَ
جَهْرِكَ وَكُنْ كَالنَّازِعِ رُوحَهُ أَوْ كَالوَاقِفِ فِي الْعَرْضِ الْأَكْبَرِ، غَيْرَ شَاغِلٍ نَفْسَكَ عَمَّا عَنَّاكَ مِمَّا كَلَّفَكَ بِهِ رَبُّكَ فِي أَمْرِهِ وَ
نَهْيِهِ وَ وَعْدِهِ وَ وَعِيدِهِ

So then make your heart the focus of your tongue - do not move it except at the suggestion of your heart and (do not move it except) with the approval of your intellect and that pleasure of your faith since surely Allah is the Knower of that which you hide and that which you manifest. Thus, be as the person who is on his death bed and one whose soul is about to come out of him or like the person who is waiting on the wide plains (of the Day of Resurrection) for the account of all of his deeds. Waver between what Allah the High has obligated you to perform from the commands and the prohibitions and the promises (of reward) and the warnings (of retribution

و لَا تَشْغَلْهَا بِدُونِ مَا كَلَّفَكَ، وَ اغْسُلْ قَلْبَكَ بِمَاءِ الْحُزْنِ، وَ اجْعَلْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَجْلِ ذِكْرِهِ لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ وَ هُوَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكَ

And do not busy yourselves with things other than what He has ordered you to perform and“ wash your heart with the (spiritual) water of grief and make the remembrance of Allah just like “His remembrance of you while He has no need for you

فَذِكْرُهُ لَكَ أَجَلٌ وَأَشْهَى وَأَنْتَ مِنْ ذِكْرِكَ لَهُ وَأَسْبَقُ، وَمَعْرِفَتِكَ بِذِكْرِهِ لَكَ يُورِثُكَ الْخُضُوعَ وَالْإِسْتِخْيَاءَ وَالْإِنْكِسَارَ،
وَيَتَوَلَّدُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ رُؤْيَاهُ كَرَمِهِ وَفَضْلِهِ السَّابِقِ، وَتَصْغُرُ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ طَاعَاتُكَ، وَإِنْ كَثُرَتْ فِي جَنْبِ مَنْبِهِ، فَتَخْلُصُ
لِوَجْهِهِ

Thus, His Dhikr of you is much more important, greater, more perfect, clearer and more“ needed for you than You remembering Him, and it also has a precedence to it. In addition, your cognizance of His remembrance of You would grant you humility, shame and humbleness. Through this knowledge, you would be able to see His previous greatness and magnitude over you and at this time, all of your worship of Him would seem trivial and insignificant in the face of the bounties and greatness of Him over you even if your obedience to Him (up until this “point) was great and even if your actions for Him (up until this point) were done with sincerity

وَرُؤْيَاكَ ذِكْرَكَ لَهُ ثَوْرَتُكَ: الرِّيَاءَ وَالْعُجْبَ وَالسَّفَهَ وَالْغُلْظَةَ فِي خَلْقِهِ، وَإِسْتِكْتَارَ الطَّاعَةِ، وَنِسْيَانُ فَضْلِهِ وَكَرَمِهِ، وَ
مَا يَزِدَادُ بِذَلِكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بُعْدًا وَلَا تَسْجُلُ بِهِ عَلَى مَضِيِّ الْأَيَّامِ إِلَّا وَحْصَةً

However as for your turning your attention to your Dhikr of Him (Allah), this will lead you to“ developing the traits of: pride, conceit, arrogance and harshness amongst His creations and you would consider (your) obedience to Him to be great in amount (even though it is nothing) and would lead you to forget His grace (over you) and His munificence upon you and this would not increase anything within you except for (spiritual) distancing from Allah and you “would not gain anything with the passing of time from this except the fear and terror

وَالذِّكْرُ ذِكْرَانِ: ذِكْرٌ خَالِصٌ يُؤَافِقُهُ الْقَلْبُ، وَذِكْرٌ صَارِفٌ لَكَ يَنْفَى ذِكْرَ غَيْرِهِ، كَمَا قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: إِنِّي لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً
عَلَيْكَ، أَنْتَ كَمَا أَنْتَنَيْتَ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ

The Dhikr is of two types: the sincere Dhikr of Allah the Most High which takes place through“ the approval of the heart and the Dhikr which flows from you which negates all other forms of Remembrance of other than Him, just as the Noble Messenger (S) has said that, 'I am not able to speak Your praise (in the way which You deserve), rather, You are praised just as You “Yourself have praised Yourself

فَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لِذِكْرِهِ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَقْدَاراً، عِنْدَ عِلْمِهِ بِحَقِيقَةِ سَابِقَةِ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ ذِكْرِهِ لَهُ،
فَمِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلَى، فَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَذْكُرَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى فَلْيَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ عَالِمٌ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهُ الْعَبْدَ بِالتَّوْفِيقِ لِذِكْرِهِ، لَا يَقْدِرُ الْعَبْدُ عَلَى
ذِكْرِهِ

*So then the Messenger of Allah (S) did not think that his sincere Dhikr of Allah was of any“
worth due to his knowledge of the past reality of the remembrance of Allah, the Noble and
Grand, for him (the Prophet) which took form before his (the Prophet's) remembrance of Him
(Allah (SwT)). Therefore, in those areas where the Messenger of Allah has negated his own
Dhikr of Allah and confirms the Dhikr which has been carried out by Allah, he is referring to
supremacy of the Dhikr.*

*Thus, whosoever then desires to remember Allah, the Most High, should truly know that Surely
He is the All-Knowing and that Allah remembers the servants through the Divinely granted
success of them remembering Him and had it not been for this, the servant would never have
been able to remember Him.”33*

Explanation: The person who has been in the state of remembrance of Allah (SwT) and who, in
his day to day affairs, does not forget Allah (SwT), will gradually, become firm and unwavering
on the path of true guidance, obedience and servitude of Allah (SwT) and will keep away from
going against the laws of Allah (SwT).

The minimum level which this remembrance will take form is that the person's tongue will
move and recite the name of Allah (SwT); at the second stage of the Dhikr of Allah (SwT), the
person would protect his tongue and without the permission of his heart, intellect and faith,
.would not speak anything

ذکر حق پاکست و چون پاکی رسید رخت بر بندد برون آید پلید
می گریزد ضدّها از ضدّها شب گریزد چون بر افروزد ضیاء

The Reality of Dhikr

The true meaning of Dhikr is to remember Allah (SwT) and in one's steps, movements and
actions, to endlessly be in a state of remembrance of Allah (SwT). The eventual outcome of
this form of Dhikr is obedience to the Lord and to not digress from the path of the intellect and
faith.

Another effect is that one fulfills the Divine Responsibilities which rest upon himself in relation
to the commanded and prohibited actions. The peson also keeps in mind the promises and

punishments, the rewards and chastisements of Allah (SwT). Such a person would also keep away from sinning and taking the path of rebellion against Allah (SwT)!

Yes, the responsibility of the person who is spiritually travelling towards Allah (SwT) is that he must always be aware of his mistakes, transgressions, bad acts and all of the things which result in his own spiritual weakness and shortcomings. In summary, this can be accomplished

through the two following ways:

One: By paying attention to the particularities and distinctiveness of one's actions and deeds in the presence of Allah (SwT) and by paying attention to one's responsibilities. If this is enacted, then the person would see that all of his actions are actually deficient and imperfect when compared to the perfect qualities of Allah (SwT).

Two: By paying attention to the grace, kindness, generosity, love, compassion, blessing and forgiveness of Allah (SwT) since in the face of these never-ending traits, we see that whatever we bring forth and perform is still imperfect and with little to no value to it.

و اندرین صورت شماری بس حقیر طاعت خود گر چه بنماید کثیر
کی بود لایق زما کار حسندر بر الطاف و فضل ذو المنن

Yes, it is through a person being mindful of these two ways that his humility, love, modesty, servitude, cognizance, shame, and humbleness would all increase.

The meaning of Allah, the Most High speaking the praise refers to His Divine Lordship over the Universe and thus the Dhikr - whether it be the Divine Lordship over the Universe, a verbal declaration and verbal praise and other than this, fall into this same category (His Divine Lordship over the Universe).

Thus, praise which Allah (SwT) makes refers to the: creation, maintenance, organization, regulation, mercy and all of His other actions - each of which is a perfect denotation of His great status and of which the verbal praise of His servants can never reach to.

لا) (Thus, in this sentence, the Noble Prophet (S) has even negated his own Dhikr of Allah (SwT) which is a pure and sincere remembrance! He only believes in the worth and value (أحصى ثناء) and truthfulness of the remembrance which Allah (SwT) Himself performs (أثبتت على نفسك).

Yes, even though this form of remembrance, at the first stage is manifest in the Divine Lordship of Allah (SwT) over the entire Universe and this is the most complete form of remembrance which comes forth from Allah, the Most High which He himself has introduced as taking shape through His characteristics of His actions, however at the next level (of this Dhikr), it is one in which the servants of Allah (SwT) realize the station which He has and

develop knowledge of this. Thus, this then takes on the form of the remembrance of the heart and by turning their inner focus to Him and His actions or through the verbal attestation.³⁴

Notes

1. As narrated in Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 9, pg. 260
2. Ibid., vol. 23, pg. 519
3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 9, pg. 221
4. Surat al-Rad (13), verse 28
5. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, pg. 484
6. Ibid.
7. Tafsir-e-Namuna (Summarized), vol. 1, pg. 216-217
8. Surat al-Qasas (28), verse 16
9. Ibid., verse 21
10. Ibid., verse 24
11. vol. 4, pg. 117
12. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 16, pg. 61 to 62
13. Vol. 2, Book of Supplication, Section on the Dhikr of Allah.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 82, pg. 145
17. Ibid., vol. 66, pg. 324
18. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 18, pg. 355 to 358
19. Fakhrud Din al-Razi, vol. 3, pg. 177
20. Surat al-Muzammil (73), verse 8
21. Surat al-Araf (7), verse 205
22. Surat al-Ahzab (33), verse 41
23. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 25, pg. 177 to 188
24. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 1, pg. 486
25. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 17, pg. 266 to 267
26. Ibid., vol. 8, pg. 571
27. Ibid., vol. 9, pg. 417
28. Ibid., vol. 19, pg. 424 to 425
29. Ibid., vol. 18, pg. 85
30. Ibid., vol. 19, pg. 156 to 157

31. Ibid., vol. 10, pg. 306
32. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 24, pg. 237
33. Mustadrak al-Wasaaf1il, vol. 5, pg. 397, no. 43
34. Misbahul Shariah wa Miftahul haqiqah, (The Lantern on the Path), pp. 20 to 25