

# Removing Negligence From the Heart

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at-tazkiyah

Dhikr (Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ) is of utmost importance for a believer as it is nūr (light) for the heart. Similarly, it is of utmost importance to save oneself from ghaflah (negligence) as it is darkness for the heart. The more dhikr one engages in, the less ghaflah there will be in his heart. It is like a room full of darkness; if we light a candle in that room, the darkness will decrease, and if we light a second candle, the darkness will decrease more. The more candles we light, the less darkness there will be, and if we light candles in the whole room, then no darkness will remain. Similarly, our hearts are like a room which is engulfed in the darkness of ghaflah, and in order to remove this darkness, we need to light candles of dhikrullāh. The more candles of dhikrullāh we light, the more the ghaflah will disappear. Therefore, we must make it our goal to remember Allāh ﷻ so much that our hearts are filled with the nūr of dhikrullāh and the darkness of ghaflah is completely removed.

### **The Consequences of Ghaflah**

This is important because due to ghaflah, one disobeys Allāh ﷻ. When the heart becomes ghāfil (negligent), it

forgets Allāh ﷻ, His Power and His favours. Consequently, the mind forgets Allāh ﷻ too because the heart is like a computer and the mind is like its monitor; the monitor only projects what the computer transmits to it. Therefore, when ghaflah is in the heart, it will be in the mind too.

Sometimes, we completely forget that Allāh ﷻ is watching us, and sometimes, we are aware that Allāh ﷻ is watching us, but our hearts are negligent of the Power and Might of Allāh ﷻ. The first scenario is complete negligence as a person does not remember Allāh ﷻ at all; whilst the second scenario is partial negligence as a person does remember that Allāh ﷻ is watching him, hearing him and aware of what he is doing, but his heart and mind is negligent of the Power of Allāh ﷻ, due to which the fear of the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ does not enter his heart.

### **The Benefits of Dhikrullāh**

As mentioned previously, the heart is like a room. If multiple tube lights are placed in a dark room, then not even a shadow of darkness will remain. Similarly, if we enlighten our hearts with the tube lights of dhikrullāh, the darkness of negligence will go away. Thereafter, we will remain conscious at all times that Allāh ﷻ, Who is the All-

Powerful and Who can cause us harm and give us benefit, is watching us. If we obey Him, He will give us benefit, and if we disobey Him, He will punish us.

When the heart is filled with the nūr of dhikr and no trace of the darkness of ghaflah remains in it, then a person does not only fear the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ, but he loves Allāh ﷻ too. Since he is not negligent anymore, he is aware that Allāh ﷻ created him and that it is Allāh ﷻ Who has given him all the bounties that he enjoys in this world. He is always mindful of the fact that Allāh ﷻ is his Greatest Benefactor Who created him and granted him all the resources for his physical and spiritual existence: He sent Ambiyā ﷺ; He sent our Beloved Nabī ﷺ; He continues to provide ‘Ulamā and Mashāyikh to guide us onto the straight path; He has preserved the Qur’ān and the Aḥādīth and will continue to do so until the Day of Qiyāmah; He gives us food, drink and fulfils all our needs. He is our Greatest Benefactor and the person who becomes ungrateful to his benefactor by disobeying him is a ḡālim (wrongdoer) who can never become successful.

### **How Dhikr Saved Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ from Slipping**

As a result of dhikr, a person will realise this fact and remain aware of it, just as Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ did when he was seduced by Zulaykhā (the wife of the Governor of Egypt).

He was very handsome and Zulaykhā was very beautiful. But Sayyidunā Yūsuf عليه السلام did not fall for the trap of Shayṭān, his nafs or Zulaykhā because his heart was dhākir. Allāh سبحانه states in the Glorious Qurʾān,

وَرَأَوْتَهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَ  
 قَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ قَال مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ إِنَّهُ  
 لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

*And she, in whose house he was, seduced him towards herself, and locked the doors, and said, 'Come on!' He said, 'I seek refuge in Allāh. Indeed, He is my Rabb. He has given me a good abode. Indeed, the wrongdoers do not succeed.'* (12:23)

As his heart was dhākir, when she tried to seduce him, he said,

مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ

*...I seek refuge in Allāh...*

Then he said,

إِنَّهُ رَبِّي

*...He is my Rabb...*

He is the One Who has created me and He is the One Who has granted me all the resources for my physical and spiritual existence. He further said,

أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ

*...He has made my abode good...*

When my brothers threw me into the well, it was Allāh ﷻ Who sent a trading caravan and made them thirsty, so they would come to the well for water. In this manner, Allāh ﷻ took me out of the well. It was Allāh ﷻ Who then brought me to Egypt. It is Allāh ﷻ Who gave me an abode in the palace of Egypt.

إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ

*...Indeed, the wrongdoers do not succeed. (12:23)*

If I disobey the One Who has given me everything, I will become a *ẓālim* (wrongdoer) and a *ẓālim* can not acquire *falāḥ* (the success of this world and the Hereafter).

Thus, when the opportunity arises to disobey Allāh ﷻ, a person who is *dhākir* will reflect, 'Allāh ﷻ is my Greatest Benefactor; He has given me everything; He is watching me; how can I disobey Him? If I disobey Him, I will be doing wrong and a wrongdoer (*ẓālim*) can never acquire *falāḥ*.'

## For Whom is Falāḥ?

Falāḥ is for the muttaqīn - those who abstain from disobeying Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh ﷻ says,

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

*And fear (disobedience to) Allāh so that you become successful. (3:200)*

And in another verse, Allāh ﷻ says regarding the muttaqīn,

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

*They are upon correct guidance from their Rabb and they are the successful ones. (2:5)*

However, for a person to remain on the straight path and abstain from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, his heart needs to be dhākīr. It is for this reason Allāh ﷻ very affectionately guides us by saying,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾

*O you who believe! Remember Allāh in abundance. (33:41)*

The remembrance of Allāh ﷻ will be firmly embedded in the hearts and minds of those who remember Allāh ﷻ in abundance. Once this happens, Shayṭān and nafs will not be able to misguide them and lead them to disobedience to Allāh ﷻ because they are constantly in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. As a result, they will acquire falāḥ. Allāh ﷻ says,

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

*And remember Allāh in abundance so that you become successful. (8:45)*

## **The Story of the Milk-Woman**

One night, Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ was walking in the streets of Madīnah Munawwarah. The pious khulafā of the past had so much concern for the well-being of their citizens that they would go out during the darkness of the night and see what is happening: Who is suffering? Who is being oppressed? Who is doing wrong?

Whilst patrolling the streets of Madīnah Munawwarah, he passed by a house where a milk-woman resided. It was her habit to mix water into the milk so that its volume would increase, allowing her to earn more money. Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ heard her saying to her daughter before the break of dawn, ‘O my daughter! Wake up and



mix water with the milk.’ This was impermissible as it is a form of cheating. Despite this, she was telling her daughter to engage in this impermissible act because she was negligent and not dhākir. The daughter on the other hand, despite having just woken up, was alert and aware of Allāh ﷻ because her heart was fully dhākir. Thus, she said, ‘O my mother! Amīrul-Mu’minīn has prohibited us from this.’ As the mother was not dhākir, she said, ‘Mix water with the milk because everyone does it; Amīrul-Mu’minīn will not come to know of it.’ Through the barakah of dhikr, the young girl answered:

إِنْ كَانَ عُمَرُ لَا يَعْلَمُ فَإِنَّهُ عُمَرُ يَعْلَمُ

*‘Umar may not be aware, but the ilāh (deity) of ‘Umar is aware! (Sīratu ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdil ‘Azīz)*

The mother was prepared to disobey Allāh ﷻ because her heart was void of the nūr of dhikr; she was stumbling in the darkness of negligence. Whilst at the same time, her young daughter’s heart was filled with the nūr of dhikr, thus she was alert and aware of the fact that ‘My Allāh ﷻ Who is the All-Powerful and Who has favoured me with so many blessings is watching me; how can I disobey Him?’

## The Story of the Shepherd

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was once travelling when he came across a shepherd who was grazing goats. He said to the shepherd, ‘Will you sell us a goat? We will pay you for it and also feed you from its meat.’ The shepherd replied, ‘The goats are not mine; they belong to my master.’ In order to test him, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, ‘You can tell your master that a wolf devoured it.’ Again, the shepherd’s heart was filled with the nūr of dhikr, so he said,

فَأَيْنَ اللَّهِ؟

*Then where is Allāh?*

He was trying to say that if I do what you are telling me to do, then is Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ not watching us?

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه became so pleased with this answer that he bought the shepherd and the goats from the master and thereafter freed the shepherd and gifted all the goats to him. (Şifatuş-Şafwah)

## What to Do

What we need to do is to make our hearts dhākir by engaging in abundance of dhikr. Let us recite the Qur’ān

daily as this is the best form of dhikrullāh. Similarly, let us complete the tasbiḥāt and dhikr that have been stipulated for us on a daily basis. Come what may, we should complete our daily ma‘mūlāt (prescribed practices).

Furthermore, we must learn as many masnūn supplications as possible - before eating, during eating, after eating, entering the masjid, leaving the masjid, etc. - and thereafter we should read them at their appropriate times.

Other than the masnūn supplications, recitation of the Qur’ān and the dhikr that has been stipulated for us, we should remain engaged in istighfār, ṣalāt ‘alan-Nabī ﷺ, kalimah ṭayyibah, third kalimah, سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ, etc. in abundance whenever possible, e.g. when we are going to the shop, coming back from the shop, walking to school or work, when we are doing nothing etc. Nabī ﷺ said,

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

*Your tongue should remain moist with the dhikr of Allāh,  
Most Honoured and Exalted He is... (At-Tirmidhī)*

When we are busy doing other things like talking to somebody, we can remember Allāh ﷻ with the heart and

mind by contemplating that Allāh ﷻ is watching us.

Along with this, we should sit in the company of the dhākirīn, i.e. those whose hearts are more dhākir than ours, and we should stay away from the company of the ghāfilīn i.e. those who are negligent of dhikr.

Similarly, we should try our utmost to refrain from those things which make our hearts and minds negligent e.g. unnecessarily using social media; surfing the internet; reading magazines, novels and newspapers; talking about politics and worldly affairs; being obsessed with sports. These are engagements which take us away from the dhikr of Allāh ﷻ and make us negligent.

If we adhere to these few advices then, inshā'allāh, our hearts will soon become dhākir and once our hearts become dhākir, we will be able to obey Allāh ﷻ.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the tawfīq to achieve this great goal. Āmīn.

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