

# Removing Negligence from the Heart



by Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā  
**Muhammad Saleem Dhorat** *dāmat barakātuhum*

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BY SHAYKHUL-ḤADĪTH ḤAḌRAT MAWLĀNĀ MUHAMMAD SALEEM DHORAT

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Dhikr (Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ) is of utmost importance for a mu'min. Dhikr is light for the heart and ghaflah (negligence of the Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ) is darkness. The more dhikr one carries out, 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, if we light a second candle then the darkness will decrease more. The more candles we light, the more the darkness will decrease, and if we fill the whole room with candles, 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 light of dhikrullāh and the darkness of negligence is completely removed.

### **The Consequences of Ghaflah**

This is important because through ghaflah, one will disobey Allāh ﷻ. When the heart becomes ghāfil (negligent), it forgets Allāh ﷻ, His Qudrah (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. Sometimes we are aware that Allāh ﷻ is watching us, but our heart is negligent of the Power and Greatness 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 even a shadow of darkness will not remain. Similarly, if we enlighten our hearts with the tube lights of dhikrullāh, the darkness of negligence will go away. Thereafter, at all times we will feel that Allāh ﷻ is watching us and He is the All-Powerful, Who can cause us harm and can give us benefit. Therefore, 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 light 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 has favoured him and 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 Mashā’ikh to guide us onto the straight path; He has preserved the Qur’ān and will continue to preserve it until the Day of Qiyāmah; He has preserved the Aḥādīth; He gives us food, drink and fulfills 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 ﷺ did not fall for the trap of Shayṭān and nafs or Zulaykhā because his heart was dhākir. Allāh ﷻ states in the Glorious Qur’ān,

وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِي بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْأَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

*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)*

Because 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 of Baytul-Maqdis, it was Allāh ﷻ Who sent a trading caravan and made them thirsty so that they would come to the well for water. In this manner, Allāh ﷻ took me out of the well of Baytul-Maqdis. 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 wrongdoer and those who do wrong 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 can never acquire falāḥ.’

## For Whom is Falāh?

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

Allāh ﷻ says,

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

*And fear (the Displeasure of) Allāh so that you become successful.  
(3:200)*

And regarding those who possess all of these qualities, Allāh ﷻ further says,

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

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

But for a person to remain on the straight path and abstain from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ his heart needs to be dhākir. 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 towards disobedience to Allāh ﷻ because they are constantly in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. As a result, they will acquire falāh. 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 Milkwoman

One night, Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was walking in the streets of Madīnah Munawwarah. The pious khulafā of the past had so much concern for the wellbeing 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 heard a lady saying to her daughter before the break of dawn, ‘O my daughter! Wake up and mix some water with the milk.’ She was a milkwoman; she had some goats which she would milk and then sell the milk to people. Mixing water into the milk would increase its volume and would allow her to earn more money. However, it is impermissible as it involves cheating. She was telling her daughter to mix some water with the milk 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 dhākir. Thus, she said, ‘O my mother! Amīrul-Mu’minīn has prohibited us from this.’ As the mother was not dhākir, she said, ‘Leave Amīrul-Mu’minīn aside, he is not watching you.’ Through the barakah of dhikr, the young girl answered:

إِنْ كَانَ عُمَرُ لَا يَرَانِي فَإِنَّ رَبَّ عُمَرَ يَرَانِي

*‘Umar is not watching me but the Rabb of ‘Umar is certainly watching me!*

The mother was prepared to disobey Allāh ﷻ because she did not have the light of the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ in her heart; she was stumbling in the darkness of negligence. Whilst at the same time, the young girl had the light of the Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ in her heart, thus she was alert and aware of the fact that ‘My Allāh ﷻ Who is 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 ﷺ was once travelling when he came across a shepherd. He said to the shepherd, ‘Can you sell us a goat so that we can slaughter it (and consume it). We will also feed you from its meat and pay you for it?’ The shepherd replied, ‘It is not mine; it belongs to my master.’ In order to test him Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ said, ‘What if you tell him that a wolf ate it?’ The shepherd was a dhākir, hence he said,

فَأَيْنَ اللَّهِ؟

*Then what about Allāh?*

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

Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ 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.<sup>1</sup>

### **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

1 Şifatuş-Şafwah, part 1 p.402

best form of dhikrullāh. Similarly, let us complete the tasbīḥāt 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. during the free time we have 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...<sup>2</sup>*

When we are busy doing other things like talking to somebody, we can make dhikr of Allāh ﷻ in 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 negligent.

2 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَات chapter: فضل الذِّكْر ما جاء في فضل الذِّكْر Ḥadīth: 3659; Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: الذِّكْر chapter: فضل الذِّكْر Ḥadīth: 3819

Similarly, we should try our utmost to refrain from those things which make our hearts and minds negligent such as using social media unnecessarily; surfing the internet unnecessarily; reading magazines, novels and newspapers unnecessarily; talking about politics and worldly affairs unnecessarily; 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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