



REMEMBRANCE OF GOD

MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

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Foreword



Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (d. 1977) interpreted this verse of the Quran (2:152) “So remember Me, I will remember you,” as follows:

“Abu Bakr Jassas Raazi (d. 370) took the meaning of “remembrance” as signs of God and thinking about God’s majesty and power. And he regarded this form of worship as superior to other types of remembrance (such as saying God’s name while counting the beads on the rosary).” (*Ahkamul Quran*, vol. 1, p. 114)

The reality is that, remembrance does not mean verbal repetition of God’s name. Remembrance means contemplation on God’s creation to discover God’s greatness through the wisdom and perfection of His works. This is remembrance, and through it, one can achieve a higher level of realization of God.

It is a fact that we cannot observe God’s Being, yet, we can definitely see glimpses of God in His creation. This contemplation on God’s creation is another name for remembrance of God, and through it one is able to achieve that high level of firm faith which



is called realization of God. Remembrance of God or divine realization is the most desirable thing, which is achieved through contemplation and deep thinking.

This remembrance of God is what is most desired of a human being. Therefore, the Quran adjures us to remember God very frequently (33:41).

Wahiduddin Khan

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What is Remembrance?



Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi (d. 1977) interpreted this verse of the Quran (2:152) “So remember Me, I will remember you,” as follows:

“Abu Bakr Jassas Raazi (d. 370) took the meaning of “remembrance” as signs of God and thinking about God’s majesty and power. And he regarded this form of worship as superior to other types of remembrance (such as saying God’s name while counting the beads on the rosary).” (*Ahkamul Quran*, vol. 1, p. 114)

The fact is that we understand the being of God only through those phenomena or attributes of God which are scattered everywhere in our own existence and across the universe. We achieve the realization and discovery of God through contemplation on these phenomena of nature.

The reality is that, remembrance does not mean verbal repetition of God’s name. Remembrance means contemplation on God’s creation to discover God’s greatness through the wisdom and perfection of His works. This is remembrance, and through it, one can achieve a higher level of realization of God.

It is a fact that we cannot observe God’s Being, yet, we can definitely see glimpses of God in His creation.



This contemplation on God's creation is another name for remembrance of God, and through it one is able to achieve that high level of firm faith which is called realization of God.

Trying to observe God's Being leads one either to ecstasy or to confusion, and both of these are actually undesirable. In this case, the most desirable thing is divine realization, which is achieved through contemplation and deep thinking. There is no other way to reach this goal.

Remembrance of God



The Quran states: "Remembrance of God is surely the greatest thing." (29:45) In other words, it means that, for a person, remembrance of God is the greatest form of worship.

This remembrance of God is what is most desired of a human being. Therefore, the Quran adjures us to remember God very frequently (33:41).

What is meant by remembrance of God? It does not mean any numerical or statistical exercise but rather it is one's mental condition. According to a tradition, Ayesha, the Prophet's wife, said: "The Prophet Muhammad used to remember God on every occasion." (*Sahih Muslim*,

Hadith No. 373) One can understand the meaning of remembrance of God from this tradition.

Abundantly remembering God means that whatever a person sees or whatever he experiences, he should make it a point of reference for the remembrance of God.

Everything should remind him of God. Every experience should become a reason for strengthening his faith. Every study and observation should bring him nearer to God.

Point of Reference for Prayer



In chapter 4 of the Quran, there is a verse about the law of inheritance which is as follows: “If other relatives, orphans or needy people are present at the time of the division, then provide for them out of it, and speak kindly to them.” (4:8)

It means that, at the time of the division of a legacy, if certain family members are present who do not have a share, provide for them out of it. Do not send them away empty-handed. Apparently this is a verse about inheritance, but there is an important point of reference in it for prayer. When a believer reads this verse, he will be so moved that, he will say: “O God! This is my case in relation to Paradise. I have not done



such deeds as make me worthy of Paradise. But in this verse of the Quran You have set forth the principle that if some people come at the time of division and are not entitled to get a share in accordance with the law, even then, out of compassion some things should be given to them out of the goods of inheritance.”

In this verse of the Quran there is great solace for a believer. A person can say in connection with this verse: “O God! I am an entirely undeserving person. But this Quranic verse tells us that Your mercy is so vast that it also reaches out to the unworthy. O God! Your mercy is a ray of hope for me. Referring to Your own principle, I would ask that despite of my being undeserving, You let me share in Your mercy. You can give a place in Paradise even to an undeserving candidate such as me, although Paradise has been created just for deserving candidates. I admit that, according to the Shariah law, I do not deserve Paradise, but according to the law of Mercy, please grant me a place in Your Paradise.”

Helplessness and Power



In chapter 35 of the Quran there is a verse which says: “O men! It is you who stand in need of God—God is self-sufficient, and praiseworthy.” (35:15) The same thing is mentioned in a hadith: “O my servants! All of you have strayed, except for those whom I will show

the way. You ask Me for guidance, I will guide you. O my servants, you are all hungry, except those whom I feed. You ask me for food, I will give you food.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2577)

God certainly gave a human being a perfect existence, but he does not have any personal choice. Human beings are completely helpless creatures. This helplessness is compensated for by God in this world. This helplessness is compensated for only according to need. This has been mentioned thus in the Quran: “He has given you all that you asked of Him.” (14:34) In Paradise in the Hereafter, this helplessness will be compensated for according to one’s desire: “Therein you shall have all that your souls desire.”(41:31)

The discovery of this truth is the greatest realization, discovering one’s total helplessness in comparison to the Omnipotence of God Almighty is the beginning of realization of truth. The door of realization does not open to any person without this discovery. Paradise is for the realized soul, not for the unrealized soul.

Divine Prayer



The Quran tells the story of how Adam made the mistake of eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, and was suddenly deprived of God’s mercy. He subsequently, felt very perturbed and prayed to God for forgiveness.



In the words of the Quran: “Then Adam received some words [of prayer] from his Lord and He accepted his repentance. He is the Forgiving one, the Merciful.” (2:37)

The word *talaqqa* used in this verse, literally means ‘to receive’. It means that Adam received some words from his Lord, then accordingly, he prayed to God, and then God accepted his supplication. Here, the question arises as to what the form of this *talaqqa* was. It does not mean that God called to Adam, or that an angel came and inculcated in him these words. It would not be correct to make such an assumption here.

The fact is that it was a matter of inspiration. There is a hadith to this effect: “This is a light which is put in the heart of the believer.” (*Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah*, Hadith No. 34315) When an intense feeling of having erred builds up in a person, he turns towards God with grief and repentance and in total surrender to his Creator. At that time, he experiences spiritual feelings at the psychological level. This feeling becomes converted into certain particular words. This is called *rabbani* prayer. This kind of divine prayer is advance news of the acceptance of prayer itself.

Who will receive the blessings of this kind of divine prayer?

Only one graced with such prayer as can bring himself on to a level of total servitude, who can discover the full reality of the fact that he is the taker and God is the giver. When such feelings are experienced by a person, they give rise to moments when he establishes a special

relationship with God. At that time divine words of supplication and remembrance of God start pouring out of his lips. The name of such inspired divine words of prayer is *rabbani* prayer.

Gratefulness in the State of Ungratefulness



The Quran tells the story of Adam and Iblis in detail. It explains how Iblis was deprived of God's blessings because of his refusal to bow to Adam. At that time Iblis said to God: "Because you have put me in the wrong, I will lie in ambush for them on Your straight path: then I will surely come upon them from before them and from behind them and from their right and from their left, and then You will find most of them ungrateful." (7:16-17)

In this verse, his being put in the wrong implies his being put to the test. What Iblis wanted to say was that under normal conditions, he was able to follow divine commands but the command of bowing to Adam was too hard a test for him to pass and, as a result he was distanced from God's mercy. Then he expressed his intention of doing the same to all human beings until the majority failed in the test and took to the path of ungratefulness.



We learn from the Quran that Iblis has no power over man (15:42). Then the question arises as to how he will make man ungrateful.

Actually, there are always reasons for being ungrateful in the life of this world. To lead a life of gratefulness it is necessary to learn the art of being grateful, even where there are reasons for ungratefulness.

This is the point where Iblis finds an opportunity to mislead man into becoming an ungrateful servant of God. As a result, he fails to turn ingratitude into gratitude. Every incident of ungratefulness is made a pretext for becoming ungrateful, and finally a person is forever deprived of whatever blessings gratefulness would bring him.

Remembrance is a Thinking Process



Of the admonitions given in the language of commands in the Quran, one is of that for which the expression ‘remembrance of God’ has been used. This command appears in several verses of the Quran. One of the verses exhorts believers to “remember God often.” (33:41)

Remembering (*zīkr*) is a meaningful reality, not just a turn of phrase. It is a fact though that when a person remembers someone, he remembers him first by words. For instance, when Zaid has to be remembered, the word

Zaid will first come to mind. But in terms of memory, the position of the word is not real but relative. Just as when you remember Zaid, a man will come to your mind, when you remember God, the Lord of the worlds, He will naturally come to your mind as the Owner and Lord of the universe; One whose blessings are so many that they cannot be counted. Contemplation or deep thinking is automatically involved in remembering.

A tradition has been mentioned in different books of Hadith. Ayesha said: “The Prophet Muhammad used to remember God on every occasion.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 373) According to this tradition, frequent remembrance of God means that every experience and observation should create God-oriented thinking to the point where the whole world of nature will become a reminder of God for a person. Remembrance is not just the repetition of some words. The natural way of remembrance is the awakening of man’s mind to such an extent that throughout the different circumstances of his life, he begins to experience God in everything. Everything becomes a means of reminding him of God.

Sincere Repentance



Chapter 66 of the Quran, tells us what sincere repentance (*taubah*) is. Verse 8 says: “Believers, turn to God in sincere repentance. Your Lord may well forgive



your bad deeds and admit you into gardens watered by running streams, on a Day when God will not abase the Prophet and those who have believed with him. Their light will shine out ahead of them and on their right, and they will say: ‘Lord perfect our light for us, and forgive us; You have power over all things.’” (66:8)

Sincere repentance means pure repentance or true repentance. The commentator al-Qurtubi wrote that, scholars have given the word “repentance” twenty three meanings. (*Tafsir al-Qurtubi*, vol. 18, p. 197) But the fact is that it does not have 23 different meanings, it has rather different aspects of pure repentance. These aspects are not limited to just 23. They number more than that.

If a person commits a sin, he later realizes his mistake. He must sincerely repent in his heart and if he returns to God with strong commitment, this is called pure repentance.

If the person truly repents, his whole life will change. At first, if his way of thinking was ungodly, now his thinking will be godly. If he was not sincere earlier, now he will become sincere. If at first he led an irresponsible life, he will now start to live a responsible life. If at first he misused his freedom he will now be strictly bound by divine principles. Earlier, if he had no fear of the Hereafter, he will now start living in the fear of the Hereafter. Repentance changes a human being and such repentance is called true repentance.

The Importance of Gratitude



The very first verse of the Quran reads: “All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Universe.” (1:2)

This verse shows the importance of gratitude. The truth is that of all the acts of Islam, gratitude is the only act which a person can perform in its highest ideal form. But for various reasons in other spheres such as worship, ethics, social dealings, and so on, man’s performance falls short of the ideal. The performance of the ‘worship’ of gratitude relates, however, to the heart and mind, and as such, it is possible for a person to perform it in its ideal form. In gratitude, he can offer all his best feelings, all his best thoughts to God. Such perfection can be expressed solely as a matter of gratitude.

What is gratitude? Gratitude is, in fact, another name for acknowledgement. What is called acknowledgement in human matters is called gratefulness in the matter of God. It is essential for every person to awaken his or her consciousness to such a high level that everything he or she possesses should be seen as God’s gift in the full sense. One may then in total gratitude utter the words: “Praise be to God.” With full consciousness of God’s blessings and mercy, one may utter the words: “Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.”



This is true thanksgiving and there is no doubt about it that thanksgiving is the noblest form of worship.

In the present world, what is called life support system exists on a large scale. Here everything is created in such a way that in the total sense, it is favourable to a human being. The whole world is a custom-made world. Given this situation, when a person is free to live in this world, and utilize its resources, he should be filled with feelings of gratefulness and acknowledgement: a person, it should be borne in mind, has received all the precious things of this world free of cost.

True thankfulness is the price we have to pay for all these things. Those who do not pay this price are like usurpers in this world. Living in this world without this feeling of gratefulness is an unpardonable sin, for both men and women.

The Extended Meaning of the Quran



The Quran is a universal book. Its message is an eternal one. As well as having a primary meaning, the verses of the Quran have an extended meaning. To understand this deeper meaning of the Quran, it is very important to understand this fact.

For example, there is a verse in the Quran about the dawn prayer (*fajr*): "... the recitation at dawn is indeed

witnessed.” (17:78) This means that the time of the dawn prayer is a time of tranquillity and solitude. That is why the recitation at dawn is given special mention.

This verse can have the extended meaning that the believer should say the morning prayer at the appointed time, and then go to a park to walk, or go to a place where there is greenery of nature. In the morning there is an angelic environment at such a place. In such an environment, a person should look at the signs of God. He should recite the verses of the Quran. He has to discover God in His creation. One scenario is that after saying the morning prayer, people should go to such a place together where they remember God collectively in that natural environment and talk about God. They remember the perfection of God in scenes of nature. They endeavour to get spiritual food for themselves in an atmosphere of spirituality. This is remembrance at dawn, which is an extended form of recitation of the Quran at the fajr prayer. Such a course of action is actually a way to increase faith, whether individually or collectively.

This is true of each verse of the Quran. One meaning of a verse of the Quran is that which is known through its particular cause of revelation. This is the initial or primary meaning of the verse. In addition to this, each verse of the Quran has an extended meaning. By taking into account these extended meanings it will be possible for the faithful to keep discovering new meanings in the Quran.



The Book of Recitation or The Book of Obedience



There was a property dispute between Mr. A and Mr. B, both of whom were Muslims. Both claimed ownership of a particular piece of property. Mr. A said to Mr. B: “If you take the Quran in hand and say that this property is mine, then I will withdraw my claim and accept your right to the property.” Mr. B asked, “What is the connection between the Quran and this issue?”

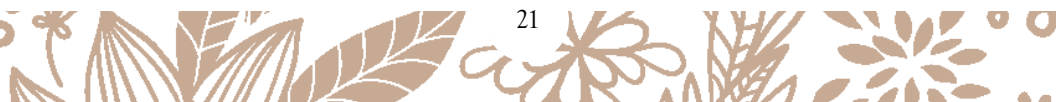
If Mr. B was a Muslim, why did he ask such a question? The reason is that the present day Muslims have given up the book of God. They have shown their disregard for it, as mentioned in the Quran (25:30). The truth is that, for present-day Muslims, the Quran has become a book of recitation and not a book of guidance or obedience. This mindset has become common in Muslims today. The above-mentioned event is an example of that very mindset. I asked many people who were running institutions and movements in the name of Islam, whether they had read the Quran again and again before starting their work to ascertain what work, according to the Quran, they should be doing. But hardly anyone answered in the affirmative. There will be some people who will read commentaries of the

Quran, or who will try to learn the Arabic language, so that they may understand the Quran directly. But such individuals will be hard to find, who have made the Quran a guide book for their words and deeds. This is the greatest negligence on the part of the present-day Muslims. Not until Muslims make the Quran their personal guide book, will their affairs be set properly in order.

The Importance of the Study of the Quran



Abdullah ibn Abbas, a senior Companion of the Prophet, once observed that one who recited the Quran would never become decrepit in his old age. (*Mustadrak al-Hakim*, Athar No. 3952) Here, reciting the Quran means making a study of the Quran. One who makes a thorough study of the Quran will continue deriving intellectual food from it, and in this way he will continue to have his energy boosted. As a result, he will not become decrepit in his old age. His mind will forever be active. His body may age but his mind will not. Research tells us that there is a difference between mind and body. Purely physiologically, our body grows old, but our brain does not. If one saves oneself from negative thinking and becomes a positive thinker in the



full sense, his mind will never age. Anyone making a thorough study of the Quran will continue to receive intellectual food for creative thinking from the Quran on a daily basis. He will never suffer from intellectual starvation. His mind will always be active and full of creativity.

Just as material food gives energy to the body, in a similar way intellectual discoveries also are sources of energy. The most thrilling experience for a person is the experience of discovery. Those who study the Quran in depth continually have such experiences. It is this creative experience which acts as a deterrent to the brain becoming old and ineffective in old age.

The Morning Recitation of the Quran



The Quran says that the recitation of the Quran at the dawn prayer “is indeed witnessed.” (17:78) “Witnessed” here means validated by the angels.

We learn from a tradition that the early morning is a time especially favourable to God-realization, when in peace and solitude the angels in great numbers become witnesses to the recitation of the believer. There is nothing mysterious about this. It is the special task of the angels to engender spiritual feelings within a person and the peaceful time of the morning is propitious for this angelic action.



There is another dimension to this. For instance, you say your dawn (*fajr*) prayer at the prayer time and hear the long recitation of the Quran from the lips of the Imam. Afterwards, moved by the recitation of the Quran, you leave the mosque and go to some open place where in the environment of nature, with all its greenery, you reflect upon nature, then you feel that your Quranic thinking and the external environment have become one. In silent language the scenes of nature bear witness to your Quranic thinking being indeed a universal reality, and that the universe is also functioning on the same pattern.

When, in the morning, a person reflects upon the messages of God in the peaceful environment of nature, he starts feeling the presence of God. Then he has that state induced in him which has been thus expressed in an injunction in a hadith: “Worship God as if you are seeing Him.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 50) This state cannot be arrived at on one’s own. It is produced undoubtedly with the help of the angels. This is to testify to inner thinking of the believer. This is a superior form of worship. And such an experience is not possible without the support of the angels.



Pondering over the Quran



Chapter 38 of the Quran tells us the purpose of the revelation of the Quran: “This is a blessed book which we sent down to you (Muhammad) for people to ponder over its messages, and for those with understanding to take heed.” (38:29)

Pondering does not just mean recitation of the Quran and understand its meaning. This method is also without doubt beneficial, but to reach the higher meaning of the Quran in this way is not sufficient.

There are two basic aspects of pondering upon the Quran—contemplation and dua (supplication). What is contemplation? I came to understand it from one particular incident. A Muslim writer with whom I often spent some time used to say, “I am a lover of Ghalib.” Ghalib was a great 19th century Urdu poet, and my acquaintance went on to explain the deeper meaning of the couplets of Ghalib. He said that he not only read the poems of Ghalib, but rather lived in them. As he put it, “The couplets of Ghalib are always in my mind. I am always thinking about them.”

This is the real meaning of pondering. It does not just mean trying to understand the meaning of the Quran while reciting it. It means that it should dominate your thinking. The verses of the Quran should stay in your



conscious mind at all times. You have to sleep with the Quranic verses and wake up with them. Pondering upon the Quran is the development of an intellectual relationship with the divine revelation.

The second necessary condition is that one should keep praying to God. Prayer (*dua*) does not just mean that one should keep repeating such words as: “O My Lord increase me in knowledge.” (*The Quran*, 20:114) Prayer begins with the discovery of one’s helplessness. A person who cannot recognize his helplessness in this way is not properly equipped to do *dua* or supplication to God.

Stirring Up of a Revolution in the Human Personality



The Quran has this to say about its recitation: “True believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe at the mention of God, and whose faith grows stronger as they listen to His revelations. They are those who put their trust in their Lord.” (8:2) At another place the Quran has this to say: “When they listen to what has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears, because of the Truth they recognize. They say, ‘Our Lord we believe, so count us among those who bear witness.’” (5:83)



The Quran directly conveys God's words. It has divine majesty. It intensifies feelings of servitude. It has that divine light which, if it goes within one, brightens up one's entire inner existence. It has that light of truth which, when it enters the heart, it can cause it to fall to pieces, just as Mount Tur fell to pieces where God's light fell upon it. Recitation of the Quran is not just the mouthing of words. Its impact is such that both the heart and the mind are set on fire. This is why, reciting the Quran again and again is a means of stirring up a revolution in the human personality.

The recitation of the Quran is not like the recitation of books in any simple sense. It is the study of the word of God. It is as if indirectly entering into conversation with God. This being so, the recitation of the Quran should induce that state of which it is deserving. If this state is not aroused within one by these extraordinary Words of God, it will mean that he has not given due attention to the recitation of the Quran. He has been negligent. He has not recited the Quran with keen awareness.

While reciting the Quran a person should have within him a feeling of awe before God. He should feel that he has come near to God. Reciting the Quran should become like a living introduction to God. On the one hand, he finds servitude in recitation and, on the other hand, he finds the Glory and Majesty of God.

Pondering on the Quran



Chapter 38 of the Quran tells us: “This is a blessed Book which We sent down to you (Muhammad), for people to ponder over its messages, and for those with understanding to take heed.” (38:29)

Pondering, in this verse, means deep thinking. Such thinking in actual fact is a special way of using one’s mind. This means that the Quran has to be read with an open mind, for one can find intellectual food through contemplation rather than by mere recitation.

The right method of studying the Quran is to read the Quran by using one’s mind and not just by recitation. Similarly, when one reads a portion of the Quran in prayer one should do so with an open mind.

When a person reads the Quran in this way, it will repeatedly happen that he will be struck by some word or verse of the Quran. On such occasions, he should pause and reflect on this. In this way, he will receive intellectual food from the Quran.

For instance, when you read the Quran, you will come across this verse: “And for their words God will reward them with Gardens through which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide forever. That is the reward of those who do good.” (5:85)



When you read this verse you will be reminded of this hadith: “Whoever said there is no god but God will enter heaven.” (*Musnad al-Bazzar*, Hadith No. 10080)

This will make you think about what the relation is between the two. Then, upon reflection, this point will become clear to you that the “words” mentioned in the hadith have been explained in the Quran. That is, the “words” for which one has been promised Paradise, means words of deep realization of the truth and not just the utterance of a particular word. This is called contemplation.

The Verse of God's Throne



There is a verse in chapter 2 of the Quran, commonly called the verse of God's throne, or *Ayat al-Kursi*, which states: “God: there is no deity save Him, the Living, the Eternal one. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belong whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows all that is before them and all that is behind them. They can grasp only that part of His knowledge which He wills. His throne extends over the heavens and the earth; and their upholding does not weary Him. He is the Sublime, the Almighty One!” (2:255)

Some statements are axiomatic, that is, they are self-evident truths. They need no further explanation or reasoning to uphold them. For example, there is a mathematical principle that if two lines are parallel they can never meet. This needs no proof. While parallel lines are examples of entities in the material world which are measureable and can be reasoned about, there are immeasurable, intangible things in the spiritual world which are palpably true and need no further explanation. The attributes and powers of God as are given above in the *Ayat al-Kursi* are just such examples. The statement made in this verse needs no additions of details. To subject them to any such interpretation would be to lessen their strength and diminish their glory.

First Favour, Second Favour



Addressing the Prophet Moses, God says: “Indeed, We showed Our favour to you before also.” (*The Quran*, 20:37) The background of this verse is that the Prophet Moses was born into an Israelite family in ancient Egypt. Pharaoh, the king in those days, wanted to exterminate the Israelites and, to this end, had ordered the killing of any male child born into an Israelite home. Moses would have met the same fate, if God had not saved him by divine intervention.



This was God's first favour to Moses. Later when Moses was granted prophethood, and he asked God to give him Aaron as his helper, God answered his prayer as an exceptional gift for Moses. This meant that, at his request, God had assigned another Prophet to help him. These favours are recorded in the Quran. The first was that of God saving Moses from being killed in childhood. And the second favour was, at his request, an ordinary person being made a Prophet for his support.

One aspect of the Quran is that there is a primary application of its verses and along with it there is the secondary application. This incident of the Prophet Moses is also of the kind where, in everyone's life, some special event takes place in which one is saved from being harmed by the special succour of God. A person has to discover this first favour of God to him, so that with that reference he may request for a second favour from God. "We showed Our favour to you before also" alludes to this.

If an individual is able to discover the first favour, then there will be a deep feeling engendered within him and with reference to the first favour, he will be able to request God for the second favour. This is a great point of reference for human beings which is found in the lives of all men and women, provided, they are able, on deep reflection to discover this reference.

There was once an individual who suffered great harm from some accident in his youth, and he became very depressed. Finally he decided to commit suicide. God helped him in time and he was saved from committing suicide. In his later years, after much study, or when he

came to know of the realities of life, he remembered that incident in his youth and in his prayers to God he said that had he killed himself by committing suicide, today he would have found himself in the fire of Hell: “It was by Your favour that I was saved for the first time from Hell fire. After death, again I shall have to face the same situation. Then I request You to save me from Hell fire once again. You did me this favour the first time. Now you can do the same favour a second time and complete Your blessing upon me.”

The most effective prayer is one which is made with some point of reference. Some point of reference is always there in everyone’s life which renders the prayer very effective. But usually people do not give any thought to this and that is why they remain deprived of this precious reference. Due to this unawareness they only know the minimal form of prayer. And in the name of prayers, they learn some words by rote and keep repeating them.

This is without doubt a great deprivation. When a person knows a superior form of prayer and yet he keeps repeating this inferior form of prayer, that is a greater deprivation than anything else.

Learning the words of prayer by rote is without doubt a diminution of prayer. The superior form of prayer is to ask for another blessing with reference to a previous blessing.



Convert Loss into Gain



Chapter 12 of the Quran tells the story of Prophet Joseph and how because of the misdeeds of his step brothers, his father, Prophet Jacob was deprived of his two beloved sons. At the time of this incident, he uttered this prayer: “I only complain of my anguish and my sorrow to God.” (12:86)

These words of Prophet Jacob tell us an important truth: that when the believer faces any difficult situation or experiences anguish, he does not fall to complaining like an ordinary person, but rather, mindful of his faith, turns his grief into prayer. He bows down to God and prays to Him to change his loss into gain.

When someone faces the experience of grief and loss, there are two ways in which he can react. One is to look at the relevant human element in his affliction and the other is to turn to God. Those who only look at the human aspect of things, never cease to complain about human beings. But one who starts remembering God after an untoward experience he will make the giver his central focus instead of the one who has caused him to suffer. His mind will become hopeful instead of remaining plunged in despair. Prayer has the greatest power to be of support to the believer in difficult times.



Prayer is the source of this trust that no loss is final in this world: in every loss there is hidden gain.

There are moments in every person's life when he feels helpless. At such moments, prayer to God brings a person comfort and peace. For any individual, prayer is the best source of crisis management.

Discovery of Total Absence of One's Power



Chapter 90 of the Quran has this to say: “We have created man into a life of toil and trial. Does he think then that no one has power over him?” (90:4-5)

Here “man” denotes the whole human race. And toil (*kabad*) means suffering. In this verse “power” has been mentioned along with *kabad* (suffering). This tells us about the reason for suffering. God created man with extraordinary capacity. But along with that he was placed in such circumstances as were always fraught with some problem, such as suffering.

Even those who have got everything they have ever striven for are not free from suffering. This has been done so that a person may discover his total lack of power. Although apparently a human being seems to have power, he still has his share of suffering. Suffering is a timely reminder of God's absolute power.



Looked at from this point of view, suffering is, in fact, a blessing in disguise. God, in spite of being the greatest reality, remains unseen. By means of compulsory suffering, God wants a person to experience His presence.

Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 110 AH) once observed: “Suffering comes so that man may pray from his heart.” (*Al-Shukr*, Ibn Abi al-Dunya, Athar No. 133) This does not refer to just the words of prayer. This means that a person’s mind is awakened and noble feelings are engendered within him. He starts discovering God’s attributes in different forms. And when this happens, he utters such words of prayer as befit extraordinary circumstances.

Constant Complaining



The Quran describes how Satan became angry when God asked him to bow to Adam. He said to God that if he were given the chance, he would cause Adam’s whole race to go astray. At the time of throwing down this challenge, he said, “Most of them You will not find grateful.” (7:17)

There are countless blessings given by God to human beings. Yet man, instead of acknowledging these blessings, becomes ungrateful. The reason for this lies in the character of Satan, or *Iblis*, who was a jinn

(18:50). God heaped countless blessings on the jinn, who were invisible. He gave them existence, freedom of choice, and extraordinary options. He gave them a long life. For their survival in this world, God provided them with every necessity. Despite this, why was *Iblis* so ungrateful to God? The reason was that he was so full of resentment that he forgot all of God's blessings. Instead, he fell to constant complaining. He exaggerated his grudges so much that he could not think of anything but complaining.

In his uniquely evil way, Satan warps human nature in such a manner that, human beings come to make every event a matter of complaint and ignore all other good things. He so overemphasizes the negative side of things that all the other positive aspects of things would simply disappear. In spite of having all the objects deserving of gratitude, the individual becomes ungrateful. Those who find themselves beset by such state of feelings should understand that they are being influenced by Satan. Such people should introspect and immediately repent, otherwise they will suffer the chastisement of God.

The Increase in Blessings



The Quran states: “And remember also the time when your Lord declared: if you are grateful, I will surely



bestow more favours on you; but if you are ungrateful, then know that My punishment is severe indeed.” (14:7)

In this verse of the Quran, the increase in blessings (more favours) applies to one who, grateful for the blessings of God in this world, will receive his reward in the form of Paradise in the Hereafter. Actually, gratitude is the other name for acknowledgement. Acknowledgement of blessing on receiving a reward is the greatest form of worship. And this worship is something which will make a person worthy of Paradise.

What is meant by blessing? Blessing, actually, is the sense of enjoyment. If something can give us joy, it is because we have the sense of enjoyment. Where there is no sense of enjoyment, nothing can be a source of pleasure.

Human beings are the only creatures in the universe who have this sense of enjoyment. Human beings have been settled temporarily in the present world so that they may feel the pleasure of it and give thanks to God for it. One who shows his gratitude in this world will be settled in Paradise in the next world, where he will have perfect comfort and the fulfilment of his desires.

The present world is the place of temporary gratitude. This temporary gratitude is that which makes a person deserving of entry into eternal Paradise.

Remembrance and Prayer



As has been recorded in different books of Hadith Ayesha said: “The Prophet Muhammad used to remember God on every occasion.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 373)

This tradition does not relate to worship. Certain people describe it in the sense of the repetition of such words as *Bismillah*, *Alhamdulillah*, *Inshallah*, *Mashallah*, et alia. But this interpretation does not describe the real meaning of this tradition.

The fact is that remembrance and prayer are the expressions of the soul which has discovered and realized God. A person has to face different types of occasions in his life. If he has the thinking and learning ability, he will find that there is some aspect of remembrance of God on all occasions. By making these occasions points of reference he can transform them into a high level of remembrance and prayer. Ayesha found this very phenomenon in the life of the Prophet of Islam. She saw that the Prophet Muhammad remembered God by making every occasion a point of reference.

The truth is that remembrance and prayer are not just the repetition of some standard words. Remembrance and prayer stem from different occasions and different circumstances which remind a person of God. In



every experience he can see aspects of God's greatness. According to this heightened consciousness, the words that come spontaneously to the lips of such a person are called remembrance and prayer.

Prayer is Worship



There is a tradition which states that prayer (*dua*) is the real essence of worship (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3371) rather prayer is worship (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2969). This same truth has been set forth in the Quran as well as in the Hadith. It is natural for prayer to be real worship. Indeed, when a believer discovers God with His perfect attributes, he also discovers his total worthlessness in comparison to God.

God is the Lord, I am His servant. God is the Giver, I am the taker. God is the All-Powerful and I am submissive and helpless. This feeling immediately makes the suppliant capable of prayer to God. Prayer is that greatest of relationships through which a believer comes close to God. Prayer is the source of connection between God and the believer. A person receives everything through prayer. All the forms of worship make a person capable of praying to God, so that he may become the receiver. For example, in the Quran, after giving the command to fast in the month of Ramadan, the following verse says: "When My servants ask you

about Me, say that I am near. I respond to the call of one who calls, whenever he calls to Me: let them, then, respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may be rightly guided.” (2:186)

The same adjuration was expressed by Jesus Christ: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7-8)

Prayer is not just a few words: it is the greatest of actions just as a good deed is never fruitless, so also is true prayer never fruitless.

When a person prays sincerely, it means that he is placing himself in God’s hands and when this happens, there is no one who can prevent his prayer from being fulfilled.

The Need for the Renewal of Faith



According to a hadith, the Prophet of Islam once observed: “Renew your faith.” When asked how to do so, the Prophet replied, “renew your faith by the *kalimah* ‘*la ilaha illallah*’ (there is no god but one God).” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 8710) From this tradition we learn that the *kalimah* is not something which should



be recited only once in a lifetime, thinking that it would suffice for one's whole life. No indeed. Its renewal is necessary. The renewal of the *kalimah* means awakening the consciousness of faith again and again, so that a person does not become forgetful and lose his sensitivity to it. A person should always have a living active faith.

There is another aspect to this tradition that we learn from another tradition, and it is that Islam does away with all the things of the past. (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 121) One aspect of it relates to that time when an individual recited the *kalimah* and became a believer. Another aspect pertains to later life. After bringing faith, it repeatedly happens that the individual makes mistakes. He feels then that he has become distanced from the mercy of God. At that time what the believer has to do is to have full faith in God being ever present and, in the presence of God, he should again recite the *kalimah* in solitude, with keen awareness. He should say, "I witness that there is no God but the one God and I witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger." In addition to saying this, he should pray to God in this way, "O God, forgive my sins and envelope me with Your mercy once again. I have accepted Islam once again, so that I may join the body of the believers, and the virtuous. O God, I had digressed from the right path, so give me a new life of faith and Islam once again."

Those who do so with keen awareness will keep receiving new faith. As a result of this renewed faith they will become, in the words of a tradition, like a newborn child. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 1521)

The Reality of the World



According to Abu Hurayra: “The Prophet Muhammad said, the world is accursed and whatever is in the world, all are accursed, except remembrance of God and those things which are near to Him, and scholars and the seekers of knowledge.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2322)

The world and remembrance of God are interrelated. To make this world a point of reference for remembrance of God is what has been called remembrance of God in this tradition. If this remembrance is in the name of God, it is direct remembrance of God. If someone remembers God without His name then it is indirect remembrance. Indeed the scholars and the seekers of knowledge desired by God are those who make their knowledge a source of remembrance of God.

God is the Creator of the world and also of the worldly things. That is why the world cannot be accursed. Actually, it is proper use or misuse of the world which makes it a boon or a curse. For one who forgets God after getting the world, this world is accursed and for one who gets the world as a source of remembrance of God, the world will prove to be a thing of mercy and a blessing for him.



The truth is that, the present world has been made as a testing ground. All the things in the world have the status of test papers. This is so because the failures and the successful can be separated from each other. One who takes worldly things to be food for the remembrance of God, succeeds in the test. On the contrary, one for whom worldly things distance him from God, fails in the test. In this way, depending upon whether we make proper use of the world or misuse it, determines whether the world is a curse or a blessing.

Small Thankfulness, Big Thankfulness



According to one tradition, the Prophet of Islam observed: “One who is not thankful for getting small things will not be thankful for getting greater things.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 18449)

This hadith of the Prophet tells of a law of nature. The law of nature is that by remembering a lesser event, events of greater importance are recalled.

Psychological studies tell us that there are many separate files in the human mind. For instance, the file of love, the file of hate, the file of acknowledgement, the file of oppression, etc. Data about all those things which are part of one’s experience are constantly being filed away separately in the mind. When a person is impacted by some event, his mind is stimulated and the



file on that subject is then immediately opened up and all the events of that nature get classified anew in the human mind.

This law of nature is of great importance in the matter of thankfulness and acknowledgement. For instance today you received a mobile, you spoke to someone some distance away, then you thought that earlier I was faced with such difficulty in making contact with someone who was far away, then with deep emotion, you thank God. At that point, your mind will be jogged. Then the file in the mind will be opened up in which all the items warranting thankfulness and acknowledgement that you have received throughout your entire life have been preserved. By this law of nature, it happens that even the small occasions for thankfulness become reminders of greater events when thankfulness was appropriate. In this way, smaller incidents of thankfulness become pointers to a greater degree of thankfulness, to the point where finally a spring of thankfulness overflows in a person's heart. This feeling of gratitude increases our attachment with God and ultimately causes us to reach the highest levels of realization.

A Life of Security



Abdullah ibn Umar reports this tradition of the Prophet: “When the door of *dua* (prayer) is opened



to anyone of you, it is as if all the doors of divine mercy have been opened. The best *dua* in the eyes of God is pertaining to health and security (*aafiah*).” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3548)

Dua in actual fact is an expression of one’s helplessness vis-à-vis God. The truest expression of helplessness is produced only by complete acknowledgement of the greatness of God. As a result of the discovery of God’s greatness, the feeling of total helplessness is born within one. Performing a *dua* is, in actual fact, a way of expressing one’s feeling of helplessness.

Aafiah means a life of freedom from illness and a peaceful life in the world. In worldly life health and peace are undoubtedly the greatest blessings of God. To excel in anything one needs this kind of *aafiah*. Finding a life of health and security is not a human achievement; it is bestowed on an individual by God. It is because of this importance of *aafiah* that a person should keep praying to God for it.

Aafiah (well being) has nothing to do with wealth or material sources of comfort. *Aafiah* relates entirely to mental peace. This mental peace is granted to a person by special divine blessing. A person can truly engage in the remembrance of God, *dua*, worship and God-realization only when he is blessed with a life of peace and security. In this case, it would be right to say that the greatest thing that we should ask of God is *aafiah*, rather than wealth or material comforts.

Closeness to God in Every Situation



According to one of the traditions of the Prophet of Islam, “God offered to turn the whole valley of Makkah into gold for me. I said, ‘No, O My Lord! I rather want that one day I should have my fill and another day I should go hungry. And when I go hungry I entreat You and remember You and the day I have my fill, I praise You and am thankful to You.’” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 22190)

The truth is that states of faith relate to circumstances. In life, whenever any situation arises, it accordingly provides a believer with some “food” for his faith. All states of faith ensue from particular situations. Man has been placed in the present world in order to put him to the test, that is why all kinds of situations are faced by every man and woman. This happens so that it may be seen who has passed the test and who has not.

In this world, states of comfort and pain and pleasure are relative. Regardless of the state, what is actually important is whether those involved gave the desired response; whether the response they gave was positive or negative. So it is one’s response rather than that of the force of circumstances which is of significance. Once this reality is clear to people, their focus will be on the response to the coming situation, rather



than on the comfort or the problems arising from it. That is, whether their response was one of gratitude or ingratitude, one of patience or impatience. An individual must introspect in every situation, rather than complain about external circumstances.

Conscious Worship



Abdullah ibn Umar narrates that the Prophet once observed: “Man apparently performs *namaz*, fasting, *zakat*, *hajj*, and *umra*.” The Prophet went on to mention all the good acts, then he said, “But on the Day of Judgement he will be rewarded in accordance with his reason or understanding (*aql*).” (*Shu‘ab al-Iman*, al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 4316)

In this hadith, the word *aql* is used in the sense of understanding. In this tradition *aql* means what we may call consciousness. And the hadith means that if a person engages in the remembrance of God and His worship, he will be rewarded for his acts not by measuring the quantity but by gauging the quality. The reward for all these acts will be given as is commensurate with their spirit. One who has worshipped with full consciousness will be fittingly rewarded.

For instance, a person performs some form of worship but that worship according to the Quran is done in a state of absent-mindedness. So, apparently,



he is engaged in acts of worship but, so far as mental awareness is concerned, his focus is elsewhere. Such a person does the worship which is not desirable. The requisite form of worship is one in which a person is in a state which has been expressed thus in the Quran: "The true believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe at the mention of God" (8:2) and "their worship causes the skins of those in awe of their Lord to creep." (39:23) Such a believer worships with full consciousness. All the great rewards will be given by God to those who have performed worship with full consciousness.

To attain this high state of worship, an individual must refrain from distracting himself with irrelevant things and must always keep praying to God for the progress of his faith.

Invoking God's Mercy



Prayer is no simple matter, prayer is to invoke God, calling upon Him to exert His powers. Without doubt, we can say that when a true prayer comes out of the lips of a helpless person, it is akin to a challenge to God's honour. When a helpless person becomes a true seeker and raises his hand in prayer before God, he makes his problem God's own problem. At that time, it is not possible for God to send him away empty-



handed. This is the reality which has been expressed in one particular tradition of the Prophet. (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3556)

One way of praying is to learn some words of prayer by rote and keep repeating them as a ritual in order to ask God to grant us the best of this world and the best of the next world. Another more effective way of praying is to make some event the point of reference of the prayer. For instance, during the British era, there was a Collector in Lucknow, by the name of Siddique Hasan (ICS). He once arrested a dacoit called Sukhwa and locked him up in a room in his large bungalow, where he himself was staying. It was a very severe winter. At night, Siddique Hasan went out to take a roun, when Sukhwa saw him. He said: "Sir, your Sukhwa is getting very cold." On hearing this, Siddique Hasan went to his room, picked up his own blanket and gave it to Sukhwa.

Sukhwa was a criminal but he was a helpless person when he was arrested. The Collector seeing his helplessness separated his criminality from his helplessness and treated him sympathetically. If some servant of God makes a supplication such as: "O God may You also treat me similarly sympathetically in spite of my having committed many wrongs. O God, ignore those errors of mine and deal mercifully with me, a helpless person." For one who prays in such a manner, it is quite possible that God will accept his entreaties and forgive him.

The Safeguarding of the Feeling of Gratitude



The Prophet of Islam once observed: “Look only to those who are less great than you; do not look to those who are greater than you, because in this way you will not undervalue God’s blessings upon you.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 10246)

This hadith is explained by another hadith. “The Prophet once said that God will accept him as His thankful and patient servant who possesses two particular qualities. One is the capacity, in the matters of this world, to look to those who are inferior to him and then be thankful to God for the blessings that God has given him. The other is the capacity in matters of religion, to look to those who are superior to him and then to follow them. But one who in matters of religion looks to those who are inferior to him while one who in matters of this world looks to those who are greater than him and then he is sorrowful about what he is lacking in, will neither be a thankful servant, nor a patient servant in the eyes of God.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2512)

Gratitude is the greatest form of worship. What is most required of a person is that he should discover



God as the greatest Benefactor. Then his heart and mind should be filled with the awareness of God's blessings. He must recognize God as a Being, who is raining down His countless blessings upon him. This consciousness should be so strong that in no way should the feelings of gratefulness to God be absent from his heart.

But this is no simple matter. To keep oneself brimming with feelings of thankfulness, it is essential that a person's consciousness should be fully alive. He should take special care to perpetuate his gratefulness. He should not give any place in his heart to such sentiments as may be harmful to his feeling of thanksgiving. He may tolerate anything except the erosion of feelings of thankfulness.

It is natural that in the present world it happens inevitably that there are people who are not equal in everything. As such, a person feels that in material matters, some have less and some have more. But if a person compares himself with someone who has apparently more than him, he will develop an inferiority complex and his feeling of thankfulness will get eroded. Therefore one should not compare himself or herself with those who are apparently, materially, better placed than him or her. What a person should do rather is compare himself with those who are materially less well off than he is. In this way, his feeling of thanksgiving will remain alive. His heart will never be bereft of the awareness of God's blessings.

In the present world it is inevitable that there should be inequality. Some have more and some have less,

some are left behind, some forge ahead, and some have more power while some are weak. All these differences are due to the exigencies of people being put to the test. The process of testing requires that a person should be faced with different kinds of circumstances, but without allowing himself to be influenced by those circumstances, he should keep the consciousness of his faith alive.

In spite of adverse circumstances, his feeling of thankfulness should not be lessened. He should pass through untoward situations without losing the virtue of acknowledgement. This should be so, even when he is having such experiences as produce negative feelings. He should even then keep himself thinking positively. Thanksgiving is a human being's most precious offering to his Lord. Wise is he who does not allow his feelings of thankfulness to be eroded even in the most unfavourable of situations.

The Greatest Prayer



The greatest prayer is one which is said with a genuine point of reference: death is the greatest such point of reference. One who is aware of this can sincerely take the great name of God in prayer. What is death? Death is not the end of life. It is rather the end of one's stay on our present earth. Here, everything is provided



for one's survival. When death comes, what happens is that all of a sudden the dying person is deprived of the present planet earth. But what he received on the planet earth, was, in reality, not the result of his striving, but rather an unconditional gift from God. Man takes everything for granted, therefore, he remains unaware of this reality. But if a person realizes that all the things in this world are divine gifts, this discovery will become a great point of reference for him in his prayer.

One who consciously discovers this reality will call out: "O God, even when I was totally helpless, You, out of your boundless mercy, gave me everything without my having deserved them. Again after death I will find myself totally helpless. O God, in the way You compensated for my helplessness before death, may You compensate fully for my helplessness in the life after death also, and give me in greater measure all the things You previously gave me in the life before death."

Praying for salvation in the afterlife is, without doubt, to invoke the greatness of God. Fortunate are those who are able to pray in such a manner for that is what is acceptable to God.

Discover the Reasons for Thankfulness



If you eat tasty food and then you say *Alhamdulillah* (praise be to God), this is a very low level of thanksgiving,



for it is based on observation and taste, and is not on a high plane of thanksgiving.

The high level of thanksgiving which befits man is when food is placed before him, he is reminded of the entire creative system. He thinks that all these food items were formerly raw materials. By a very superior process God converted these into food. In this way, through a universal process, all these food items came into existence.

Then he starts thinking that all these food items, in their initial form, could not be a source of energy for himself. Therefore, God went further and created a very complex digestive system. This is an automatic system of digestion. Whenever you eat anything, this digestive system miraculously converts these food items into living cells; these living things are then converted into flesh and blood in the body. On thinking like this, such an ocean of thanksgiving wells up within you that you fail to find words to express your intense feelings.

From this example, one can understand what is a lower level of thanksgiving (*shukr*) and what is a higher level of thanksgiving. If you give thanks on a basic level, you will always live in ungratefulness. For a high level of gratitude you need to give thanks on a noble human level. But these are the things which are least found in the world (*The Quran*, 34:13). The kind of gratitude God desires from a human being is always on a higher level. A lower level of thanksgiving is not acceptable from humans.



Thanksgiving is an Act of Sacrifice



Thanksgiving is the greatest form of worship. Indeed the price of Paradise is gratitude. Without gratitude, faith cannot be depended upon. Without gratitude, there is no true worship. Without gratitude man cannot experience those noble feelings which have been described in the Quran as “being devoted servants of God.” (3:79) The truth is that the genuine spirit of religiosity is thanksgiving. Without thanksgiving, or gratitude, religiosity is just like the outer peel of a fruit.

But just uttering some words of thanksgiving is not all there is to gratitude. Gratitude is an act of sacrifice—rather the greatest sacrifice. Only those who are ready to make that great sacrifice can experience the thanksgiving as desired by God.

The truth is that, in the present world, a person in some way or the other, is a prey to the feeling of deprivation. Every person has some negative feelings about this in his heart. Every man and woman starts living a life of hatred and complaint for various reasons. This is the state of affairs which makes gratitude the most difficult thing for an individual. A person may utter words of gratitude, but his heart is totally free from the true feelings of thanksgiving.

In such a situation only that person can engage in the act of thanksgiving whose consciousness is so awakened that in spite of feeling he has reasons for

ungratefulness, is nevertheless grateful. He is one who, living in a jungle of negative thoughts, still lives with positive feelings. He should rid himself of all the things which are obstacles to thanksgiving, and should create within himself the real feelings of gratitude.

Thanksgiving is the kind of worship which is desirable in every situation. One who thinks that thanksgiving is only for when he has got something which he wanted and that the things he received were in accordance with his desire, can never be a true thanksgiver. True thanksgiving to God can be done only by those who learn the secret of thanksgiving in spite of having complaints.

The Great Prayer



Prayer literally means to call upon, that is, the servant with the full sense of his servitude to his Lord, calls upon his Lord. This prayer is of two kinds. The general kind of prayer is to repeat the set words of prayers and call upon God in terms of those words.

Another kind of *dua* is what is called the great prayer. This prayer expresses those deep feelings of servitude in a person that he starts calling upon God in such words as invoke God's mercy.

For instance, there is a prayer which is set forth thus in the Quran: "Our Lord, grant us good in this world



as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the fire.” (2:201) When you recite this prayer a deep sense of servitude will be awakened in you. Then you will remember all those blessings of God which He has given you in the present world. Then with a trembling heart, you will say, “O God, You have not deprived me of the good things of this world, then give me the good things of the Hereafter as well, or do not deprive me of the good things of the Hereafter as well.”

Similarly, when you study the sacred hadith in which God says: “I am with My servant’s expectations, so the servant ought to have good expectations with Me.” (*Dhakhirah al-Huffaz*, Ibn al-Qaisrani, Hadith No. 6541)

On reading this hadith, you will remember those blessings which God has given you in this world. You will be moved and these words will come to your lips, “O God, in this world, You have given me the best in every respect, so in the Hereafter also give me the best in every respect”—this is an example of great prayer. Blessed are those who are granted this great prayer.

Prayer

Verbal Form of Spiritual Experience



Prayer is a discovery. When a person discovers his helplessness and the power of prayer, he is so greatly



moved that the words that spontaneously spring to his lips is prayer. Prayer gives verbal shape to spiritual experiences, and, thus, internal feelings find external expression. The effect of prayer relates not to words but to one who prays and to his internal feelings. For instance, prayer happens spontaneously when a person ponders upon or thinks about God's blessings and that God in giving him the whole life support system, has acted unilaterally.

On thinking of these things, he remembers the period after death since what he has received in this world has been given to him in order to put him to the test. What will happen in the phase after death is entirely in the hands of God. On the one hand, he discovers his helplessness and on the other, he discovers God's power. Then, thinking about all these things he becomes agitated and these words come to his lips, "O God, by Your grace, extend Your blessings from this world to the next world."

There is prayer and then there is what goes before prayer. The real prayer is uttered when there has been a prior spiritual experience. Man thinks of his Creator, of his Lord. As a result of this deep thinking, spiritual activity is engendered within his heart and mind. His inner state, entering a revolutionary phase, becomes excited and he starts experiencing spiritual realities. He starts feeling that, at an internal level, contact with higher realities has been established and when this non-verbal feeling in his inner self finds expression in words, that is prayer or *dua*.



Experience and Prayer



Once heard a story related by an announcer on All India Radio. It was about a man in London, who was looking for a job. He applied to several companies and institutions but failed to get a job. Finally, he thought of a unique strategy. He wrote on a placard ‘Please give me a job’, and holding this placard aloft, he stood out on a street in London. It started raining, but he just kept standing there. That evening, a timber merchant of London who was passing along that street read the words on the placard. He got out of his car, came up to the man and gave him his card. He said, “Come to my office tomorrow, and I’ll give you a job.” And the very next day the man got a job.

When I heard the story on the radio I felt a great unease. I was reminded of death, of the Hereafter, and of Paradise. Then I prayed to God: “Please give me a seat in Paradise.”

This is a simple example of how an experience can be turned into a point of reference. It is a fact that while leading our lives in the present world, we have different kinds of experiences, almost on a daily basis. If our mind is awakened and we have attained realization of God, all these experiences or events can become points of reference for us. As a result of these



experiences and events, the realized soul, the believer will remember God. Prayers full of devotion will keep coming to his lips. He may be living in the material world, but it is this material world which will become a source of spiritual provision for him.

Living Prayer



Once on an international journey, I had to stay at Frankfurt airport, where I was told by a lady officer that since I did not have a German visa, they could not arrange my stay in some hotel in the city. Anyway, she took me to a part of the airport where I could lie down. Then she brought food on a tray and also gave me a blanket. She told me I could rest there. And in the morning, she added, she would come and take me to my next flight. After eating the food, I lay down and wrapped myself up in the blanket. Then, in the morning when that lady came back again, I wanted to give the blanket back to her, but she said there was no need to give it back. When I remember this event, it becomes a point of reference for me. I say, “O God, in my life in this world, You have given me everything. Will You deprive me of everything in the life after death? Please, in the life after death, continue to show me the mercy which I received in the life before death. In the life before death, You saved me from all deprivations.



Please, also in the life after death, save me from all deprivation. When a human being does not want to take back the things that he has given one, then how can You, the Creator of man, take back what You have given me in this world?"

When one thinks in this way in a keen state of awareness, every event of this life will become a point of reference for God's remembrance and prayer. By referring to every event he starts remembering God. Every event will become such a point of reference as will inspire him to find new words for prayer. This is true remembrance of God. When a person can have such feelings, he becomes like a tree whose greenery never dries up, and which keeps giving a yield of flowers and fruits for all eternity.

A Point of Reference



The greatest prayer (*dua*) is one which is said with a point of reference, that is to say on the basis of an experience which causes you to remember God. At that moment, a spiritual storm is brought about within you, and with this, some words of prayer (*dua*) come to your lips. This prayer to God has great significance and as such is very important. This is the prayer which is described in the Hadith as being said in the great name of God.

For instance, on a very hot day in summer, you visit someone's house. When you arrive, he ushers you into his home with honour and brings cold water in a glass. You drink the water, then your parched throat is moistened, and your thirst is quenched.

After this experience you have another spiritual storm within you. You exclaim, "O God! Similarly, one day I have to come to You. When I met a person (in the world) created by You he offered me a glass of cold water. Then would You, the Creator, ask Your angel to bring boiling water for me to drink (in the Hereafter)?"

The genuine prayer is not a mere repetition of certain words. In a real prayer the words are only symbolic. The real prayer is one which is said with God-realization. The real prayer is one in which the words come to your lips after a discovery of God. This real prayer is a superior form of worship.

The real prayer is one which brings God's servant closer to his Creator. The servant's whole existence finds expression in the words of his prayer.

The Discovery of One's Helplessness



Man is totally a helpless creature: that is how he was created. But due to the exigencies of his being put to the test, his helplessness is, apparently,



covered with a veil of power. What man has to do is to tear asunder this cover, even when ostensibly in possession of power. In that way he will discover his own helplessness. This discovery is without doubt the greatest discovery he can make. It is in this discovery that the secret of all blessings is hidden.

The discovery of helplessness is the greatest discovery for a human being. This greatest of discoveries affords man a unique opportunity for remembrance of God, or prayer to God. Moreover, this discovery gives a person the occasion to say to God, “O God! You have created me in a state of utter helplessness. On the one hand, is your Omnipotence and, on the other hand, is man’s total helplessness. This being so, You cannot remain indifferent to man’s predicament. It would not befit Your Majesty and Your divine Glory to have a relationship between You and man of total human helplessness and indifference on Your part. Between God and man there must be such a bond as exists between a deprived one and the Giver. Such a relationship befits the Glory and Majesty of God.”

This is the prayer which has been described in a tradition as a prayer taking the great name of God. When a servant of God says with sincerity: “O God! You have created man in total helplessness, so now you cannot remain indifferent to man’s situation,” God’s mercy comes faster than the speed of light.

How to Overcome Tension



Faith in God gives a person the greatest support in this world. Belief in God is the greatest source of strength. A Persian poet once said,

Dushman agar qawi ast, nigahban qawi tar ast (If the problem is great, the problem solver is greater).

The present world is fraught with problems. Here every man and woman has to live with problems. Repeatedly they are confronted with such situations as cause them to feel helpless.

During life's journey, a person repeatedly feels that the road ahead is closed. Repeatedly he is beset by negative feelings. He feels that he has exhausted all his means and resources; that he cannot solve his problems on his own. This is a delicate situation and that is when he calls upon his Lord. At that moment, the Lord answers his prayers and raises him up out of his state of helplessness.

On such occasions, one who does not believe in God falls victim to despair. He becomes disheartened. He loses the courage to go ahead in life. Reaching an impasse, one starts living in a state of tension. And tension is at the root of all diseases. The truth is that there is no problem greater for an individual than this.



But one who has full faith in God, never falls a prey to frustration. In all situations, he is convinced that God will certainly come to his rescue. Such a person remains fully convinced that God will certainly come to his aid even when everyone else has deserted him.

Learning Lessons from Loss



When I performed my Hajj in 1982, I was accompanied on the journey by an Arab professor. Our plane landed at Jeddah airport and then both of us left for Makkah. On reaching Makkah, my Arab companion realized all of a sudden that he had forgotten his handbag which contained 20,000 Saudi Riyals at the Jeddah airport. Leaving me at Makkah, he immediately went back to look for his handbag. After he had left, I said two units of prayer. When I raised my hands in prayer, these words came to my lips: “O God, turn this incident into a lesson for us. Do not make it a loss for us.”

Man ought, of course, to make every effort to avoid making mistakes or incurring losses. But, when he has already suffered a loss, the most important thing for him to do is to refrain from grieving over it. Once an error has been made, it is like an arrow shot from a bow, never to return. Instead of weeping and wailing over the loss, one should pray to God to save one from its evil consequences.

Not making any mistakes is good. But making a mistake can also be good when the consciousness of having made a mistake causes one to turn towards God. Such a mistake becomes a cause for worship and the one in error begins praying to God. According to a tradition of the Prophet, “Prayer is worship.” (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2969)

Grieving over a loss is like living in the loss. But turning to God after a loss is like seeking compensation for it. And undoubtedly God has the power to turn losses into greater gains.

There are two aspects of every loss. One is the loss itself and the other is the learning of a lesson from it. In the case of any loss, one should do just that—learn a lesson from it. In this way, loss will turn into gain.

Universal Thanksgiving



You may have often heard people say, “I am thankful to God that I have my own house in the city and I am thankful to God that He has given me children. I am thankful to God that I have my own business. I am thankful to God that I have two cars, and so on.” This kind of thanksgiving is minimal. This kind of gratitude cannot become like a river which flows on and on, whereas that gratitude which God wants



should continue flowing in your hearts like rivers and oceans.

When such great thanksgiving is done, it is produced when you have that feeling of extended gratitude, indicating that you are not just focusing on your own self but are rather able to associate yourself with other human beings. When you think in this way, only then is that high quality of gratitude engendered which may be called universal thanksgiving.

When a son makes very good progress, his father is very happy to see this, because in his son's progress he sees his own progress. If the son is in America and making great progress and the father is in India, even despite such a great distance between them he is still happy to hear the news of his son's progress.

Moreover, if you want great gratitude to well up in your heart you shall have to associate with all of humanity. In such a situation, the progress of other human beings will start appearing as if it is your own progress. When regarding personal blessings, you feel a minor degree of gratitude, if you associate yourself with the whole of humanity then a billion, trillion degrees of thankfulness will arise within you. If formerly, there was just a drop of thanksgiving in your heart, you will now start feeling that a whole sea of gratitude is flowing within your heart.

The Discovery of Divine Blessings



Man has been granted numerous blessings from God. The greatest form of worship for man is to acknowledge these blessings. Thanksgiving is in fact such an acknowledgement. Thanksgiving is without doubt the greatest religious act, whereas not thanking God is quite the reverse. It is irreligious.

Nothing announces all these divine blessings as such. For instance, the global supply of oxygen is perpetual. But man has never had this announced to him. There are many such divine blessings as are received by man at all times. But this whole process goes on without mention.

In such a situation, how should a person express his gratitude or acknowledgement as an act of worship? There is only one way of doing so. That is, one should continue to discover God's blessings through contemplation.

Thanksgiving follows on naturally after discovering one's blessings. One who never makes such a discovery will certainly never be able to show any gratitude.

That is why such great importance is attached to reflection in the Traditions. According to one tradition: "There is no worship equal to reflection." (*Shu'ab al-*



Iman, al-Bayhaqi, Hadith No. 4326) Contemplation means serious thinking. The act of thinking takes place in the mind, and is the source of all our actions. The more one thinks, the deeper the meaning which will be discovered by him. The same is true of thanksgiving. It is only by thinking that anyone discovers God's limitless blessings.

With this discovery one's heart and mind brim over with gratitude. The greater the sense of discovery the greater the degree of thanksgiving. It is contemplation that leads one to discovery and to elevated levels of thanksgiving.

How to Find Spiritual Food



One professor gave me the good news that the tenure of his service period had expired so he was going to retire, but since the university had given him two year extension, his service would continue for two more years.

When I heard the news of his extension, it became for me a point of reference for saying a prayer. I said, "O God, You have created me and unilaterally have given me all the things I needed for life support. Death will put an end to all these blessings but, if You desire, You can grant me a further extension. Man may grant only a limited period of extension, but You are the Lord of

the World. If you so desire, You can grant an unlimited period of extension. You may cause this extension to last for all eternity.”

A person leads his life in the midst of all sorts of happenings and experiences. If he ponders upon things and keeps his mind awakened, every event and every experience will become a source of spiritual food for him. He will find some point of reference in every event, in every experience by referring to which he may engage in remembrance of God and may utter such words of heartfelt prayer as may be acceptable to God.

Just as the study of books is a source of spiritual food for a person, similarly incidents and experiences also provide sources of spiritual food. One who develops the ability to derive lessons from them, will find that his life’s journey will become a source of such spiritual development as lasts right till his death.

True Action and True Prayer



After spending a short time on earth, everyone born into this world is going to die. Subsequently, all men and women shall have to appear before God. Then God will decide upon everyone’s eternal future, which will be either Paradise or Hell.

Salvation will be attainable by those who have pleased God by living their lives in a principled way,



having engaged in right action and true prayer. The criterion of right action is that it is performed purely for the sake of God. And the criterion of true prayer is that it is said with the consciousness of being totally helpless.

Spiritually ennobled are those whose lives are graced by righteousness. The same can be said of those who can rid themselves of hypocrisy and never have double standards. The deeds of those who can save themselves from being morally weak are a reflection of their entire personalities. Their good conduct stems from right thinking. There is no discrepancy between intention and action. Moreover, those who have developed their consciousness to such a degree that, vis-à-vis the total power of God they acknowledge their state of helplessness, are granted the blessings of true prayer.

The truth is that true prayer and right action are not separate from each other. Good deeds are closely linked with true prayer. Psychologically, no distinction can be made between true prayer and right action.

Thanksgiving as Opposed to Arrogance



If, when you find something good, some blessing from God, and you consider it to be the result of your own struggle, of your own hard work or of your innate



ability, you will become consumed by arrogance. But if you think that the blessings you have received are from God, you will have a sense of gratefulness. The former state or feeling results from deviation from the straight path, while the latter feeling results from the acceptance of true guidance.

The present world has been created for the purpose of putting a human being to the test. All events, without doubt take place at the Lord's behest. But all of these events have been shrouded in a veil of cause and effect. A person will pass the divine test only if he is able to tear asunder the apparent veil of cause and effect, for it is only then that he will arrive at true faith in God.

When you have a desire for something, you make an effort to find it. Your efforts pass through various stages. Sometimes you apply your mind, sometimes you use your physical abilities, and sometimes you spend your wealth on it. Apparently, you reach your goal by passing through various stages of cause and effect.

Now if you view things, only by looking at appearances, you will regard success as a result of your own efforts. But if you have such insight as enables you to see things in depth, you will know all events come about through the instrumentality of God: they are not your own personal feats. It is this point on which an individual is being tested. Now it is incumbent upon a person that he tears asunder the apparent veil and goes deeper into the reality. Apparently, it would be, at his instance that things were happening, but he has to recognize that, in fact, everything happened at the behest of God.



Those who develop such insight have attained God-realization. Whereas those who do not prove to be men of insight will never attain God-realization.

The Reason behind Negative Mentality



In daily conversation, people regularly fall to complaining. When you talk to anyone, everyone will speak in the language of complaint. Everyone will talk in the most negative terms. The most common complaints are targeted at some person or some nation or some human group. This happens with people everywhere—this is the attitude which has made people turn away from any feeling of gratitude to God.

Indeed, all those incidents which people refer to in their grouses are man-made. But they form even less than 1% of the entire human life. Other events which can be called God-made, add up to more than 99%.

Keeping in view this difference, if you think deeply, you will find that those incidents which account for less than 1% are the main subject of conversation, but it is on that small percentage that people form their opinions. It is extraordinary that the divine bounties or blessings which a person has received and is continually receiving and which account for more than 99% of the happenings in his life, are not the subject of talk.

When people do not think about these things, how are they to acknowledge them?

This is the real reason for the people's negative mentality. People take note only of human events and that is why they talk in negative terms. On the contrary, if they were aware of divine events, they would find that human events would become unworthy of any mention at all. If this were to happen, people would certainly forget about human complaints. They would be so enthralled by thinking of divine blessings that they would not even remember that someone had done something worthy of complaint. This is the kind of thinking which creates the true spirit in which we spontaneously say Alhamdulillah (Praise be to God).

Love for Humanity



Everyone knows that the greatest credit goes to his parents in the building of his life. In this respect everyone keeps praising his parents. But such men and women are hard to find who know that the whole of humanity has played a part in the building of their lives. In this matter if parents play just one percent part, the general humanity plays 99% part. But no one knows this reality, no one acknowledges it.

For instance when you eat bread, your parent's role in this is less than 1%, while the role of the humanity



in general is that of 99%. For, over a long civilizational process spanning thousands of years, it has become possible that a person may discover bread, as we know it today, and make it as his food. The same is the case of other things, for instance, clothes, houses, transport, machines, industries, etc.

The truth is that the things one possesses, one part of it is the direct gift, while the other part is the indirect gift. If the direct gift is akin to the tip of the iceberg then the indirect gift is akin to the iceberg. The indirect gift, apparently, is not visible but in its quantity it is much more than the direct gift. People know only the direct gift, that is why they are able to give very little thanks, they are not able to acknowledge as is due. Had they known the benefit of the indirect gift, their gratitude and acknowledgement will increase. They will start loving the whole humanity just like they love their parents.

The greatest form of worship for a person is to offer abundant gratefulness and abundant acknowledgement, but the person who is unaware of this reality will remain deprived of the worship of abundant thanksgiving and abundant acknowledgement.

Gratitude towards Others



A seminar held in the Mir Taqi Mir Hall at Jamia Millia Islamia on September 17, 2008, on the subject of ‘Muslim Problems’ was attended by educated Muslims, both religious and secular (including myself). Throughout the entire programme, which was conducted in English, all the speakers, had something or the other negative to say about the state of the Muslims and, without exception, all of them represented Muslims as a community subjected to persecution. One even said that Indian Muslims were ‘under siege’.

It made me very sad to hear all this. I was reminded of my first visit to Delhi in 1943, when I came to see Jamia for the first time and met the Vice Chancellor, Dr. Zakir Husain (d. 1969). At that time Jamia had the appearance of an ordinary college. Being unrecognized, its degree had no value in the job market. Today, after a period of 75 years, we find a full-fledged, central university by the name of Jamia Millia Islamia. All this progress has been made in post-independence India.

The seminar was held in a large, modern hall, equipped with all the latest cutting edge facilities. In such an environment, the speakers should rather have stressed on the fact that the tremendous progress

made by Jamia symbolized the continuous progress that Muslims were making in this country. This is a state of affairs which should elicit gratitude. Then why is it that the participants sounded so ungrateful even when they were speaking in such a highly developed Muslim institution? My thinking was that people were not afraid of God, otherwise, according to a tradition of the Prophet, they ought to fear that if feelings of gratefulness to others were lacking in them, they would also be deprived of feelings of gratefulness towards God. And without doubt the deprivation of feelings of gratitude to God is the greatest possible deprivation.

This reality has been expressed in the following tradition of the Prophet: “One who is not thankful to man, cannot be thankful to God either.” (*Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith No. 11280)

Acknowledgement of God’s Glory



The first phase of Islam witnessed an extraordinary expansion of the Islamic Caliphate, but despite the vastness of its area, up to the time of the Umayyads, the centre of the Caliphate was only one, and that was Damascus. After the Abbasid revolution, a separate Sultanate was established in Andalusia. Thus, there came into existence two centres of the Muslim empire. Soon thereafter an independent political centre was

established in Morocco. Then followed an independent rule in Egypt. In this way, one after another, independent Muslim states came into existence. A vast empire was divided into smaller Muslim kingdoms. One of these Muslim Sultanates is known as the Samanids. The Samanid Sultanate was established in Iran and lasted for about 150 years.

Nasr ibn Ahmad ibn Saman (d. 892) was a Samanid ruler. It is said that when he conquered Nishapur he arranged for a big celebration. When he sat on his throne, he asked a certain *Alim* (religious scholar) to recite some verses from the Quran on the occasion of his coronation. The *Alim* recited the appropriate verses from chapter 40, one of which was as follows: "To whom shall the kingdom belong that Day? It shall belong to God, the One, the All Powerful." (40:16)

When the *Alim* recited this verse, Sultan Nasr ibn Ahmad trembled with fear of God. He came down from his throne, took off his crown and prostrated himself before God. He said: "O my Lord, undoubtedly the kingdom is Yours, not mine."

The superior qualities of prayer or the high quality of remembrance of God has nothing to do with mere recitation of words, but has rather to do with the inner states of the suppliant. According to a hadith, "One who humbles himself is the one who is held by God to be deserving of honour." (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 2588) He is the person who is able, by the grace of God, to remember God and pray to Him in such a way as to invoke His mercy and blessing, and it is as if one who is blessed with such prayer has attained Paradise on this earth itself.



Remembering God in Solitude



Prayer means calling upon God. Such prayer is a great form of worship. According to a hadith, prayer is worship. (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2969; *Sunan Ibn Majah*, Hadith No. 3828). According to another hadith, prayer is the kernel of worship (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3771)

Prayer is an act of a very personal nature. Everyone has to pray for himself on his own, just as everyone performs his own worship. No one tells another person to pray in his stead.

According to chapter 32 of the Quran, this is one of the virtues of believers: “They forsake their beds, calling upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and spend out of what We have provided them with.” (32:16) That is, they call upon their Lord in fear and hope. Calling upon God in this way is an extremely personal thing. Such prayer emerges from the deepest recesses of one’s heart. This kind of prayer has to be done by the individual himself. He cannot ask someone to fear God for him or to trust in God for him. Prayer is a criterion of a person’s servitude. One who believes in God must experience such moments in his life when his soul is moved greatly by the remembrance of God; when his heart and mind experience great convulsions

in reflecting upon the concept of God. It is then that with this heightened spiritual state of mind he begins to entreat God, to pray with heartfelt words.

One in whom this feeling does not arise will not, as regards his faith in God, be held to be reliable in the eyes of God. According to a hadith: "One who does not beseech God, invites the wrath of God." (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 3373)

Prayer is an act of great delicacy which takes place between God and man. During this act, no third person exists. It is a fact that the best prayer is that in which one pours out one's heart in solitude. According to a tradition, "One virtue of such a believer is that of remembering God in solitude and then his eyes filling with tears." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Hadith No. 660)

When looked at in the light of the Quran and Hadith, we learn that prayer is a sublime act of a very personal nature. For every believer, it is an expression of his godly feelings. It is only when you keep this reality before you that you realize that prayer is not something that a senior person should be asked to do for you. Such a request would produce an invalid form of prayer. It is like going to man instead of to God. Similarly, praying on a loud speaker is also lacking in seriousness. Such prayer is not true prayer. Learning some words by rote and keeping on repeating them is also not prayer. Prayer, in reality, is an act which moves your heart intensely: It is not the recitation of a combination of some ritual words.

In *Sahih al Bukhari*, there is a maxim which reads: "Your prayer is your faith." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, Kitab al-



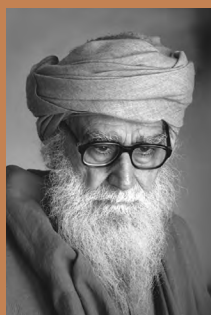
Iman, ch. 1) This means that just as your faith is, so will your prayer be. Prayer is a criterion by which to judge your faith.

If a person achieves a deeper level of faith, his prayer will also come out of the deeper recesses of his heart, and will have a very spiritual colour to it. When one prays in this manner, his whole existence will become a part of his prayer. Prayer for him will become a meeting point with God. It will be like conversing in whispers with God. (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 551). On the contrary, for one whose faith has not become a part of his heart, prayer will be nothing but verbal repetition of certain words. It will amount to reiterating certain words ritualistically and this has nothing to do with the feelings of the heart. Such prayer will only be the utterance of mere words and not an expression of spiritual states.

The Quran states: “Remembrance of God is surely the greatest thing.” (29:45) In other words it means that, for a person, remembrance of God is the greatest form of worship.

What is meant by remembrance of God? It does not mean any numerical or statistical exercise but rather it is one’s mental condition. According to a tradition, Ayesha, the Prophet’s wife, said: “The Prophet Muhammad used to remember God on every occasion.” (*Sahih Muslim*, Hadith No. 373) One can understand the meaning of remembrance of God from this tradition.

Abundantly remembering God means that whatever a person sees or whatever he experiences, he should make it a point of reference for the remembrance of God. Everything should remind him of God. Every experience should become a reason for strengthening his faith. Every study and observation should bring him nearer to God.



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925-2021) was an Islamic scholar, spiritual leader and peace activist. Having founded *Centre for Peace and Spirituality International*, he was internationally recognized for his contributions to world peace. He authored over 200 books dealing with Islam’s spiritual wisdom, the Prophet’s non-violent approach, religion’s relation with modernity and other contemporary issues. His English translation of the Quran is popular because its language is simple, contemporary and easily understandable.

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