Remembrance of Allah
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Acknowledgement

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*And whoever does good of his own accord – surely Allah is Appreciative (of his good deeds), Bountiful in rewarding, All Knowing.* (H.Q. 2:158).

Imam Kalamazad Mohammed

Prepared by: Imam Kalamazad Mohammed
Freeport/Uquire Muslim Association
REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH

The Holy Quran commands us in 33:41: "O you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance" and gives us a promise in 2:152: "Fadh-kuruni adhkurkum wash-kuru li wa la takfurun." "Therefore remember Me, and I will remember you, and give thanks to Me and be not ungrateful to Me."

The word dhakara means: to remember or to preserve in memory, but this is not limited to a mere mental function, for, as we read in 2:63, the Jews were told to hold on fast to the covenant Allah made with them, wadh kuru ma fihi, that is, according to Lane, "And study ye what is in it, and forget it not; or think ye upon what is in it; or do ye what is in it." (Page 968, Vol. 1). The word also has the following connotations: to remember with reverence, to glorify, to put (Allah) first in our affairs and dhikrun (inf. noun) (remembrance) which comes from dhakara bears several meanings, some of which are: the praise and glorification of God; the celebration, or declaration of His remoteness or freedom from every impurity or imperfection, or from everything derogatory to His glory or the saying of:

Subhanal-Lahi: Glory be to Allah and free is He from all imperfections, etc.

Al Hamdu lil-Lahi: Praise be to Allah

Allahu Akbar: Allah is the Greatest

La ilaha illal-Lahu: There is no god besides Allah.

It also means a reading or recitation of the Holy Quran; thanking God, obedience to Him, supplication or Du'a; praise; fame, renown, eminence, nobility, honour (Lane); an exhortation, admonition, or warning, reminder. So when we make remembrance of Allah (dhikr),
we perform some or all of the above, the underlying idea being to live continuously in the presence of Allah or to feel the presence of Allah within us.

We must bear in mind that this remembrance must reach such a stage where it is no longer forced on us through adverse circumstances, (which makes us call for help), but must become natural like the physical acts of eating, drinking, sleeping, breathing etc., or as Mirza Sahib explains:

"Allah, Most High has imposed on man two kinds of obligations – firstly, the duties we owe to Allah and secondly, those that are due to His servants, and these have been explained at great length in the Holy Quran. In a certain verse, Allah commands us: "Fadhkurul-Laha ka dhikrikum aba'akum au ashadda dhikra." (2:200). In this there are two secrets:

Remembrance of Allah is compared with the remembrance of one's fathers. The secret is this – love for one's father is a personal and innate one. For example, even when a mother beats her child he still continues crying out lovingly to her: "Ma! Ma!" Thus, Allah is teaching man in this verse to create in his heart a relationship with Allah based on natural love for Him. If we develop a love like that, then obedience to the commands of Allah becomes automatic. This is the true station of divine knowledge to which man ought to aspire i.e. to develop a personal and natural love for Allah." Malfuzat Vol. VIII, page 248.

We shall now examine briefly some of the ways given to us by Allah and His Apostle to help us achieve that goal, bearing in mind the following pre-requisites to spiritual excellence – the first step is to avoid what Allah has prohibited, the second is to have reverent obedience for His commands and the third is to engage in voluntary acts of devotion as the following Hadith elucidates:

*Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as stating that God has said, "If anyone is hostile to a friend of mine, I have declared war against him. No one draws near to me with anything dearer to me than what I have made obligatory for him. If my servant keeps drawing near to me with supereroga-
tory acts I shall love him, and when I love him, I shall be his
hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his
hand with which he grasps and his foot with which he walks.
If he asks from me I shall certainly give him and if he seeks
refuge in me I shall certainly give him refuge. I have not
hesitated about anything I do as I hesitate about taking the
soul of a believer who dislikes death, for I dislike grieving him,
but he cannot escape it."

The most important means for remembering our Maker is Prayer
(Salah), as the Holy Quran tells us in 20:14: "Innani Anal-Lahu la
ilaha illa Ana fabuduni wa aqimis-salata li dhikri," that is,
"Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, so obey Me with humility and
keep up prayer regularly," and reasons for this are also given.
According to Maulana Muhammad Ali, prayer is a means of purifi-
cation of the heart, of attaining moral greatness and a means also of
realizing the Divine in us as the Holy Quran tells us:

"Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book and
keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from inde-
cency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the
greatest (force). And Allah knows what you do." (29:45).
"And keep up prayer at the two ends of the day and in the first
hours of the night. Surely good deeds take away evil deeds.
This is a reminder for the mindful." (11:114).

Our Holy Prophet also advises us that prayer is the best of all
actions and that we should follow people when they do good. Mirza
Sahib has written that there is nothing like prayer to bring a person
close to Allah. In fact, he emphasized that reading Salah can create
in our hearts love for Allah and an appreciation of His greatness to
such an extent that nothing can be compared with this injunction.

But to achieve this union with Allah, our prayer must not be mere
lip profession and physical movements but it must be performed
with humility, sincerity and a melting of the heart. The Holy Quran
points the way when it says in 23:1-3:

"Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their
prayers, and who shun what is vain,"
and asks rhetorically in 57:16:

"Has not the time come for the believers that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that is revealed.....?"

Our Holy Prophet (OWBP), has given a wonderful guideline on how to achieve this humility, singlemindedness of purpose and concentration in prayer when he instructed us to read **Salah** as if we are seeing Allah and if we cannot see Him then we should always bear in mind that He is seeing us.

Two words used in the Holy Quran give us a clear indication of the manner in which this humility can be achieved. Firstly, **khushu'** from **khashi'a** which means to be lowly, humble, or submissive as regards the eyes and the voice; and **khada'a** which means the same but refers to humility that is expressed through the neck or through bodily positions. (Lane).

An excellent illustration of the above (**khushu'** and **khudu'**), is found in Mirza Sahib's **Malfuzat** Vol. II, page 145: "Just as a beggar humbles himself and excites the feeling of mercy in others either by giving the impression (eg. through the bodily posture) that he is in great need or by the tone of his voice, we, too, should be totally humble and then beseech Allah for the fulfilment of our needs. Unless a man humbles himself during prayer and unless he makes prayer a form of **Du'a**, prayer cannot be enjoyed to its fullest extent."

In another place he said that what we must aim at is to transcend the stage of **yuqimunas-salata** (they keep up prayer) in which distractions cause the prayer "to fall down" every now and then, and instead, we should try to attain the highest stage of prayer, that is, **nafsul mutma 'innah** (the soul at rest). Here, there is no loss of concentration and a person is free from anxiety, fear, grief, restlessness of the heart and there reigns within him a feeling of perfect union with Allah and himself: the world and all its attractions are considered as dead insects and, deep in the fountain of the Oneness of God, man annihilates his ego in the embrace of Allah and is totally sustained by Him.

But not only are regular prayers ordained (five times a day), but
for further remembrance of Allah, extra prayers are recommended, the most important and beneficial of which is the **Tahajjud** or after midnight prayer. The Holy Quran makes mention of this in 17:78-79:

"Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun till the darkness of the night, and the recital of the Quran at dawn. Surely the recital of the Quran at dawn is witnessed. And during a part of the night, keep awake by it, beyond what is incumbent on thee; maybe thy Lord will raise thee to a position of great glory."

"O thou covering thyself up! Rise to pray by night except a little, half of it, or lessen it a little, or add to it, and recite the Quran in a leisurely manner. Surely We shall charge thee with a weighty word. The rising by night is surely the firmest way to tread and most effective in speech." (73:1-6).

And,

"They forsake (their) beds, calling upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and spend out of what We have given them." (32:16).

Our Holy Prophet (OWBP) not only paid special regard to this prayer that it is recorded: Al-Mughira said that the Prophet got up at night to such an extent that his feet became swollen. On being asked why he did this when his former and latter sins had been forgiven him, he replied, "Should I not be grateful servant?" **Mishkat al-Masabih**, Robson, Vol. 1, page 255; but he also recommended it to his ummah: Abu Umama reported God's messenger as saying, "Make a practice of getting up at night, for it was the custom of the pious before you. It is a means of bringing you near to your Lord, an atonement for evil deeds and a preventative of sin." *Ibid*, page 256.

And once when asked by a companion which supplication was dearest to Allah, he replied that it was one that was offered "in the latter part of the depth of the night and after the prescribed prayers." (Tirmidhi).

However, that is not the end of the matter, a mere means of personal development and *fints*. Bear in mind that the purpose of prayer is to remember Allah so that we may be purified, strengthened
and guided towards living in His presence at all times and so, we must lead the type of life that will be of the greatest benefit to mankind as the Holy Quran tells us in 59:9:

.... and (they) find in their hearts no need of what they are given and prefer (others) before themselves even though poverty may afflict them," and "..... whatever is of benefit to mankind taries in the earth." (13:17).

Our objective is to become as selfless in the service of Allah and of mankind to the limit of our capacity. The Holy Quran again indicates this ideal:

And they give food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive. We feed you, for Allah's pleasure only - We desire from you neither reward nor thanks." (76:8-9)

Therefore, even after the prescribed prayers we are exhorted to remember Allah in order to reinforce our struggle towards achieving the above goal: "Wa minal laili fasab-bihhu wa adbaras-sujud" (50:40) "And glorify Him in the night and after prostration."

Our Holy Prophet (OWBP), as with everything else, followed this injunction to the limit and some of his favourite words of remembrance (dhikr) are recorded in the Hadith, for example, the Ayatul Kursi: "Allah - there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Slumber overtakes Him not, nor sleep. To Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them. And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Great." (2:255).

Others include the following:-
1. Repetition of Subhanal-Lahi (33 times), Al Hamdu Lil-Lahi (33 times) and Allahu Akbar (34 times).
2. "Allahumma Antas Salam wa minkas salam wa ilaika yarji'us salam. Hayyina Rabbana bis-salami wa-adkhilna daras'salam. Tabarakta Rabbana wa ta'alaita ya zaljalal
wal ikram." - "O Allah, Thou art the Author of Peace and from Thee comes Peace. And Peace is inclined towards Thee. O Allah, keep us alive in Peace and admit us to the Abode of Peace (Heaven). Blessed art Thou, the Most High, O Lord of Glory and Honour."

3. "Astaghfirul-Laha Rabbi min kulli dhanbin w-wa atubu ilaihi." - I seek the protection of Allah, my Lord, from every fault and turn to Him.

4. "Allahu-mma anta-s-Salamu wa min-ka-s-salamu, tabarakta ya dha-l-jalali wal-ikrami." - O Allah! Thou art the Author of peace, and from Thee comes peace; blessed art Thou, O Lord of Glory and Honour!"

5. "La ilaha illal-Lahu wahda Hu la sharika la-Hu, la-Hu-l-mulku wal-hamdu wa Huwa 'ala kulli shai'in qadri; Allahu-mma la mani'a li-ma a 'taita wa la mu 'tiya li-ma mana 'ta wa la yanfa 'u dha-l-jaddi min-ka-l-jaddu." - "Nothing deserves to be worshipped except Allah. He is One and has no associate; His is the kingdom and for Him is praise, and He has power over all things. O Allah! there is none who can withhold what Thou grantest, and there is none who can give what Thou withholdest, and greatness does not benefit any possessor of greatness as against Thee."

As a matter of fact, not only are we to remember Allah in Salah and just after Salah, but also in every situation of life, every vicissitude, every second even, as we learn from the Holy Quran,

"Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth ...."" (3:190).

This, of course, has literal application – that is, we must remember Allah in prayer and out of prayer (Salah), in any posture depending upon our physical requirement and condition at the time. But some of the commentators of the Holy Quran have given a deeper meaning to this – that we should remember Allah if we are enjoying good fortune (standing) or if things are in-between, neither too good nor too bad (sitting) and also when it appears as if we are down and
out (lying on our sides). Every situation should make us more thankful, thoughtful, cautious, repentant or resourceful, as the occasion demands.

A saying of the Holy Prophet (OWBP) reinforces the above: "Excellent is the affair of the believer. His affair, all of it, is good for him; and that is not the case with anyone except with the believer. If prosperity attends him, he is thankful (to Allah) and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he is patient and it is good for him." – Mishkat, page 123, (Translator: Fazlul Karim).

Another powerful medium for remembering Allah is Du'a (supplication), which can be made on any occasion. Allah, Most High, has warned us in the Holy Quran, "Gul ma yabau bikum Rabbi lau la du'a 'ukum," (25:77); that is, "Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your supplications (du'a)."

Yabau come from aba'a which means: to pack up (goods), to put them one upon the other, to prepare, set in order, etc., but here, according to some commentators of the Holy Quran, the sentence (25:77) means: "What will your Lord do with you?" or I do not care for, mind, regard him; or I do not receive with approbation anything from him, nor anything of his discourse; or I do not hold him to be of any weight or estimation; or what weight have you in the estimation of my Lord? Lane, page 1993.

The Holy Quran also tells us how to call upon our Lord:

"Call on your Lord humbly and in secret. Surely He loves not the transgressors. And make not mischief in the earth after its reformation, and call on Him, fearing and hoping. Surely the mercy of Allah is nigh to the doers of good." (7:55-56)

He gives us the assurance that no supplication of ours is disregarded by Him. He hears everything and responds accordingly:

"And when My servants ask thee concerning Me, surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way." (2:186)

Further advice on how to "call" upon our Lord is given to us in the
Hadith: Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying, "A servant is granted an answer provided he does not ask for anything sinful or for breaking ties of relationship, and provided he does not demand an answer quickly." On being asked what demanding an answer quickly meant, God's messenger replied, "It is when he says he has prayed and prayed and does not think he will be answered, so he grows weary in such circumstances and gives up supplication."


Mirza Sahib has written extensively on the benefit and power of Du'a which is made in the proper manner. One condition when making Du'a is that our hearts must melt and our souls must flow like water at the threshold of God's Oneness and fear and trepidation must arise in our hearts. And what do we get from such a Du'a? He answers in Malfuzat, (Vol. 1, page 291): "If there was nothing like Du'a then no person could reach the point of certainty concerning the existence of Allah. Through Du'a we speak to Allah. When a man makes Du'a with sincerity, oneness, love, truth and purity he dies a sort of death - his ego is extinguished and that living God Who is hidden from (other) people makes Himself (known) to him."

Paradoxically, man's inherent weakness provides innumerable opportunities for remembrance of Allah. Man, we all know, has been created weak and because of this innate weakness he is apt to fall into error time after time and thus opportunities are always present for him to turn to Allah in humility, remorse, penitence, seeking forgiveness, protection, learning and reform. In the very beginning, our ancestors made a mistake by disobeying a command of Allah after the Devil had incited them and caused them to "fall" by deceit. After the reflex action of covering themselves with the leaves of the Garden, (rationalization? flimsy anxiety-removing excuses?), they left an example for all their children to imitate as they turned to Allah in penitence and received from Him forgiveness, words of mercy and a promise of continued guidance. Verses 22 and 23 of Chapter 7 tell us in part of this "fall" and the aftermath, and Verses 37-39 of Chapter 2 relate another aspect of the story:

"Thus he (Satan) caused them to fall by deceit. So when they had
tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden. And their Lord called to them: Did I not forbid you that tree, and say to you that the devil is surely your open enemy? They said: Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers." (7:22-23)

"Then Adam received revealed words from his Lord, and He turned to him (mercifully). Surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful. We said: Go forth from this state all. Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in and reject Our messages, they are the companions of the Fire; in it they will abide." (2:37-39)

Chapter 66 Verse 8 mentions the blessing of those who turn to Allah in utter humility and repentance:

"O you who believe, turn to Allah with sincere repentance. It may be your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens wherein flow rivers, on the day on which Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him."

And in 3:134, we read of an essential attribute of the muttaqi:

"And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins. And who forgives sins but Allah? And they persist not knowingly in what they do."

Again, in 11:90, we are given specific guidance whenever we stumble or fall into error:

"And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him. Surely my Lord is Merciful, Loving-kind."

As regards Taubah and Istighfar, our Holy Prophet (OWBP) has given us advice in profusion. The following are a few pieces:

1. Al-Agharr al-Muzani reported God's messenger as saying, "Turn, you, in repentance to God, for I turn in repentance to Him a hundred times a day." (Muslim) Mishkat Al-Masabih, Vol. 1,
2. Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying, "By Him in Whose hand my soul is, if you had not sinned God would have removed you and brought a people who sin, then ask God's pardon and are forgiven." (Muslim) *Ibid.* page 494.

3. Abu Musa reported God's messenger as saying, "God stretches out His hand at night that those who have done evil during the day may repent and stretches out His hand in the daytime that those who have done evil during the night may repent, until (the time when) the sun rises in the West." (Muslim) *Ibid.*

4. Aisha reported God's messenger as saying, "When a servant acknowledges his sin and repents, God forgives him." (Bukhari and Muslim) *Ibid.*

5. Anas reported God's messenger as saying, "God is more pleased with the repentance of His servant when he turns penitently towards Him than one of you would be if his riding-beast which was carrying his food and drink escaped from him in a waterless desert and he is despairing of recovering it, went and lay down in the shade of a tree, then suddenly saw it standing beside him and, seizing its halter, said from excess of joy, "O God, Thou art my servant and I am Thy Lord,' making a mistake from excess of joy." (Muslim) *Ibid.* page 494-495.

6. Anas reported God's messenger as stating that God had said, "Son of Adam, as long as you supplicate Me and hope in Me, I will pardon you in spite of what you have done, and I do not care. Son of Adam, if your sins were so numerous as to reach the lofty regions of the sky, then you asked My forgiveness, I would forgive you, and I do not care. Son of Adam, if you were to meet Me with enough sins to fill the earth, then meet Me not associating anything with Me, I would bring you as much pardon as would fill the earth." (Tirmidhi) *Ibid.* page 496.

Anas reported God's messenger as saying, "All the sons of Adam are sinners, but the best of sinners are those who are given to repentance." (Tirmidhi) *Ibid.*

Mirza Sahib, too, has elaborated on the merits of *Istighfar* and
Taubah. In explanation of Verse 90 of Chapter 11 quoted above he has written in Malfuzat Vol. II, on page 68:

'Asking for forgiveness. "Wa anistagh-firoo Rabbakum summa tooboo ilaihi." "And if you ask for forgiveness from your Lord and then you turn to Him." You should remember that this ummah has been granted two things: one is to obtain strength and the other is for a practical display of that strength. In order to obtain strength, Istighfar has been given to the Muslims, which in other words can be called asking for help (Istimdad and Isti'anat). The mystics say that just as one gets physical strength through exercise (exercise with dumbbells and other things) so also it can be said that Istighfar is the means of exercise for spiritual strength. It gives strength to the soul and also grants steadfastness to the hearts – whoever wishes to gain strength should be doing Istighfar (i.e. he should be asking for the forgiveness of his sins). Ghafara means to cover up or press down. With Istighfar one tries to cover up or press down the low passions which keep one away from God. Thus Istighfar actually means that one should try to press down (and put an end to) the poisonous matter which attacks man to ruin him, and thus getting away from what stands between him and his God, he should act upon His Commandments.

It should also be remembered that there are two kinds of matters to be found in human beings. One, the poisonous matter and, two, the elixir. The poisonous matter is handled by Satan. When a man shows pride and begins to think that he is somebody very important, and he does not ask for help from the fountain of elixir, then the poisonous matter overpowers him; but when he humbles himself and begins to realise that he is nobody and of no importance and feels the need for seeking the help of God, then a fountain is made to flow and his soul begins to melt. This is what Istighfar is, that is, he overpowers the poisonous matter and does so by receiving the power from God.

In short, it means that you should constantly worship God. First you should obey the Prophet, sallallahu alaihi wa sallam. Second, you should always ask for help from God.
Of course, first and foremost you should ask for help from God and when you have got it, then you should: *toboo ilaihi*—then you should turn to Him."

But he makes the point that there is a difference between *Taubah* and *Istighfar* as he continues: *Istighfar* and *Taubah* are two separate things. *Istighfar* comes before *Taubah* because *Istighfar* is help and power that are sought and obtained from Allah and *Taubah* signifies standing firm on one's feet. Allah's way is that when He is beseeched for help then He confers a power on the supplicant and after receiving this power, the person is able to stand on his own two feet.

Further, for the sake of performing acts of righteousness a vigorous feeling is born within him and the name of this vitality is *tubuilul-Lahi*: turn towards Allah." *Malfuzat*, Book II, pages 68-69.

He also says elsewhere in explaining 2:222 — "*Innal Laha yu-hibbunal tawwabina wa yuhibbul mutatah-hirin*”—

"Surely Allah loves those who turn much to Him in penitence, and He loves those who purify themselves", that not only does Allah love those who turn to Him but this, too, is evident from the verse — that genuine repentance must be accompanied by cleanliness and purity of the heart. Some of the fruits of such repentance are:

*Allah forgives such a person all his past sins and He gives him guidance on the path of rectitude. He also accepts his supplications and He becomes the friend of his friends and the enemy of his enemies. Further, as for those pre-ordained punishments which he may have incurred because of evil deeds, Allah banishes them far away from him.*

The Holy Quran, however, does not recommend remembrance of Allah only when a mistake is made, but it provides guidance aimed at preventing such an eventuality or at least minimising it. And so it teaches us preventive measures against the commission of sins when it exhorts us to seek refuge in Allah whenever Satan tries to infiltrate our hearts with evil whisperings (*wasawas*). In 7:200-201 we are advised,
"And if a false imputation from the devil afflicts thee, seek refuge in Allah. Surely He is Hearing, Knowing. Those who guard against evil, when a visitation from the devil afflicts them, they become mindful, then lo! they see."

And in 41:36 the same counsel is repeated:

"And if a false imputation from the devil afflicts thee, seek refuge in Allah. Surely He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

The following Hadith of the Holy Prophet (OWBP) clarifies the matter further: Ibn Abbas reported God's messenger as saying:

"The devil is couching at the heart of the son of Adam. When he mentions God, he (the devil) withdraws, but when he is neglectful he makes evil suggestions." (Bukhari)

As a matter of fact, even before Satan's evil insinuations we are taught to pray for protection. In 23:97-98 we are given the following prayer:

"And say: My Lord, I seek refuge in Thee from the evil suggestions of the devils, and I seek refuge in Thee, my Lord, lest they come to me."

Chapters 113 and 114 specify the most important dangers against which we must safeguard ourselves by seeking refuge in Allah:

"Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn, from the evil of that which He has created, and from the evil of intense darkness, when it comes, and from the evil of those who cast (evil suggestions) in firm resolutions, and from the evil of the envier when he envies." (113). "Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, from the evil of the whisperings of the slinking (devil), who whispers into the hearts of men, from among the jinn and the men." (114).

Another aspect of our weakness manifests itself when we realize how helpless and powerless we are to solve our problems for ourselves, whether these problems are physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, or spiritual – when we come face to face with loneliness and despair, with feelings of inadequacy and lack of self-esteem, of alienation, of despondency, fear and grief, of the total meaningless-
ness of our lives. It is then more than ever that we get to know in the depths of our hearts that we need a Higher Power to give us stability and we begin to feel the stirrings of that inner faculty with which the Holy Quran alludes in Suratul Fatiha: "Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'în." (1:4). "Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone do we beseech for help."

Sometimes in life, Allah reduces us to a state of complete helplessness in order for us to know the difference between Creator and created and when this discovery is made and we begin to lay hold to the rope of Allah then we take the biggest step towards fulfilling the purpose of our existence – to experience truly that Dhikr that we make after Salah: "Allahumma Antas Salam wa Minkas-Salam wa ilaika yarju'us salam," – "O Allah! Thou art Peace and Peace comes from Thee and Peace is returned unto Thee."

The Holy Quran tells us we can rise from this condition of nothingness to become Khalifas of Allah if our remembrance of Him is sincere:

"Or Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and will make you successors in the earth? Is there a god with Allah? Little is it that you mind! Or, Who guides you in the darkness of the land and the sea, and Who sends the winds as good news before His mercy? Is there a god with Allah? Exalted be Allah above what they associate (with Him)!" (27:62-63).

We are also warned not to forget Allah when our circumstances improve else we may suffer the fate of those who preceded us and were ungrateful to Allah for His favours:

"These are they who have lost their souls, and that which they forged is gone from them. Truly in the Hereafter they are the greatest losers. Surely those who believe and do good and humble themselves before their Lord, these are the owners of the Garden; therein they will abide." (11:21-23).

And Mirza Sahîb explains the following verse of the Holy Quran: ".....Khuliqal insanu za'ifa," that is, "Man is created weak," and warns of the consequences of being forgetful of and ungrateful to
Allah: "Nobody can do anything without the grace and help of God, but when a man is drawn towards Him and gets himself annihilated in His Being, he does the kind of things that can be called God's work and then excellent lights begin to shine on him. So far as the weakness of the man is concerned, it is almost limitless. He cannot move even one step without the grace and the help of God. I am quite confident that if he is not helped by God, he cannot even tie his trousers after easing himself. The physicians say that there is a disease which kills a man through sneezing (that is, the man sneezes and he is no more). The fact is that man is a collection of weaknesses and that is why God says: "Khulqi al Insanu za-ifa"—"man has been created weak" There is nothing that lies in his hands. He has not got as many parts of his body as he has got diseases. Being a target of so many weaknesses, his security lies in nothing but in his being straight-forward with his God. He could become His true and sincere servant and for this he must adopt perfect truthfulness. Even the physical system depends upon truthfulness. Those who abandon it and make falsehood their shield are very much mistaken. It is quite possible that somebody may have a temporary gain by telling lies but it is sure that it blackens the heart and he is eaten up from within as the white ants eat up things from within. One has to tell many lies to cover up one lie which has to be given a tinge of truth. Thus his moral and spiritual talents are eroded from within and he reaches a stage where he begins to fabricate against God and belies His messengers; he is then marked by God as an unjust person, as he says: Man Azlamu mimmanistara 'alal-Lahi Kaziban au Kazzaba bi-ayatihee'—'Who is more unjust than the person who fabricates lies against God.' (6:21) Malfoozat Vol. I, page 352.

Reading the Holy Quran is another powerful source of keeping Allah, Most High, in constant remembrance. As a matter of fact, one of the names of the Holy Book is Al Dhikr, the Reminder. But the reading must not be limited to superficial recitation or skimming, nor to particular occasions like births, deaths, anniversaries of deaths, periodic Quranic functions, nor to mere chanting of the Arabic text without an understanding of the meaning, nor to Quranic recitation
contests. Instead, in both the Holy Quran and the Hadith, we are urged to read and study deeply the words of God and to practise them and teach them not only to Muslims but to non-Muslims as well, so as to fight a Jihad against them (the unbelievers) with the Holy Quran. Therefore, we are commanded to view all phenomena in all the worlds (of people, animals, plants, things, etc.) through the lenses of the Holy Book and look for the manifestation of the words of the Book in the world of nature and vice-versa, as the physical laws are tangible expressions of hidden spiritual reality; for example, the much repeated comparison between rain water to a dead land and its consequent resuscitation, and revelation (rain water) bringing to life again the dead hearts (land) of people.

The very first words of revelation were: "Read, read in the name of thy Lord" (96:1) and 29:45 commands: "Recite (or read) that which has been revealed to thee....." In 3:79 we are asked to make a deep perusal of the Holy Book: "..... become men of God by spreading the knowledge of the Divine Writ, and by your own deep study (thereof)." In 15:45 the word mutawassim in is used: 'Inna fi dhalika la ayatil-lil-muttawassim." "Surely in this are signs for those who take a lesson." This verse comes after another brief account of the fate of the people of Lot and Maulana Muhammad Ali, in Note 1346, explains: "Mutawassim is one who examines things in order to know the real character of a thing from outward signs; hence one who takes a lesson from the fate of others."

In 25:52 we are instructed to wage a Jihad against the unbelievers with the Holy Quran; that is, to make them appreciate the invincible logic and the moral and spiritual beauties of the Word of Allah: "So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them a mighty striving with it;" that is, the Holy Quran. And in 22:78 our mission as Muslims is plainly stated: "..... He named you Muslims before and in this (Quran) that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you, and you may be a bearer of witness to the people....."

The Hadith too, tells us: "The best among you is he who learns the Quran and teaches it" (Bukhari) and warns us: "Anyone who has nothing of the Quran within him is like a ruined house," no doubt
because Allah does not reside in the heart of such a person.

Just as we are instructed to study the Holy Quran deeply, we must also ponder over the attributes of Allah and look for their manifestations or signs within ourselves and outside of us, for: "..... in the earth are signs for those who are sure, and in yourselves – do you not see? And in the heavens is your sustenance and that which you are promised." (51:20-22)

Prophet Moses (A.S.), when called upon by Allah to go to Pharaoh, asked for a helper from his family so that: "..... we may glorify Thee much, and much remember Thee." (20:33-34)

A mere superficial repetition (by rote) of the names of Allah is of very little use as the following tells us: "Abu Huraira reported Allah’s messenger as saying: 'Allah has ninety-nine names, one short of a hundred. He who retains them in his memory will enter Paradise.' " The Arabic is ahsaha, a word which has different meanings. Besides the meaning above, it can mean to number, to reach the last number, to understand, to attain comprehensive knowledge. Mishkat Al-Masabih, page 483 (Robson).

The next hadith gives us the 99 attributes of Allah: "Abu Huraira reported God’s messenger as saying, 'God Most High, has ninety-nine names. He who retains them in his memory will enter paradise. He is God besides Whom there is no god, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the King, the Holy, the Source of Peace, the Preserver of Security, the Protector, the Mighty, the Overpowering, the Great in Majesty, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner, the Forgiver, the Dominant, the Bestower, the Provider, the Decider, the Knower, the Withholder, the Plentiful Giver, the Abaser, the Exalter, the Honourer, the Humiliator, the Hearer, the Seer, the Judge, the Just, the Gracious, the Informed, the Clement, the Incomparably Great, the Forgiving, the Rewarder, the Most High, the Most Great, the Preserver, the Sustainer, the Reckoner, the Majestic, the Generous, the Watcher, the Answerer, the Liberal, the Wise, the Loving, the Glorious, the Raiser, the Witness, the Real, the Trustee, the Strong, the Firm, the Patron, the Praiseworthy, the All-Knowing, the Originator, the Restorer to life, the Giver of life, the Giver of death, the
Living, the Eternal, the Self-sufficient, the Grand, the One, the Single, He to whom men repair, the Powerful, the Prevailing, the Advancer, the Delayer, the First, the Last, the Outward, the Inward, the Governor, the Sublime, the Amply Beneficent, the Accepter of Repentance, the Avenger, the Pardoner, the Kindly, the Ruler of the Kingdom, the Lord of Majesty and Splendour, the Equitable, the Gatherer, the Independent, the Enricher, the Depriver, the Harmer, the Benefiter, the Light, the Guide, the First Cause (or the Incomparable), the Enduring, the Inheritor, the Director, the Patient." (Tirmidhi) Mishkat Al-Masabih, Vol. I, pages 483-484. (Robson)

But Allah does not want our knowledge and remembrance of Him to be confined to only an intellectual understanding and appreciation of His attributes. As He Himself says elsewhere, He will expand our breast and intellect for Islam and every limb and faculty will bear witness to the Majesty of the One True God: "Sibghatal Allah." (2:138). That is, "Colour yourselves with the Divine attributes." so that we may all become walking testimonies of Allah for the Hadith tells us that the best person is he, who when seen by others, reminds them of Allah.

Of immense benefit in keeping Allah, Most High, constantly in our thoughts and actions is the company we keep. The Holy Quran instructs us: "O you who believe, keep your duty to Allah and be with the truthful." (9:119)

The most truthful of all men were the Prophets of God, but Prophethood has come to an end with our Holy Prophet Muhammad (OWBP). Allah, however, has instituted for us, at the head of every century, the chain of Mujaddids who will be Khalifas of the Holy Prophet according to Verse 55 of Chapter 24 of the Holy Quran, and it is compulsory for us to accept and obey them for one of their principal duties is to restore the soul of man to its pristine purity – to make Allah reign supreme in our hearts, to make us ready to sacrifice everything for Allah's sake, to put religion above the world. The Holy Prophet has also asked us to obey the Imam of the Age. But if we are not privileged to live in the presence of a Mujaddid, then what should we do? We must study his writings and align ourselves
to his party and follow the specific guidance given to us in the Holy Quran and Hadith on this matter.

We are commanded to avoid the company of those who follow their low desires and instead:

"..... keep thyself with those who call on their Lord morning and evening desiring His goodwill, and let not thine eyes pass from them, desiring the beauties of this world's life. And follow not him whose heart We have made unmindful of Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case exceeds due bounds." (18:28)

The Hadith also warns and advises us: "If there are three men in a village or in the desert among whom prayer is not arranged, the devil has got the mastery over them. So observe prayer in company, for the wolf eats only the straggling animal." (Ahmad, Abu-Dawud and Nisa 'i). And, "Prayer said in a congregation is twenty-seven degrees more excellent than prayer said by a single person." (Bukhari and Muslim).

The Holy Quran gives us a clear warning of the dire consequences to befall one who turns his back on the remembrance of Allah: "Wa man a'rada 'an dhikri fa inna lahu ma'ishatan dankanw-wa nahshuruhu yaumal-qiyamati a'ma." (20:124). "And whoever turns away from My Reminder, for him is surely a straitened life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection."

Observation and experience make plain to us how a person without the presence of God within himself gradually degenerates morally, intellectually and spiritually and becomes a creature of passion, despite his advancement in his study of philosophy, science, etc. Furthermore, he can never achieve tranquillity and peace of mind that all mankind craves for, because his condition will forever be as the Quran describes in 104:6-9: "It is the Fire kindled by Allah, which rises over the hearts, surely it is closed in on them, in

*Danuka: It was or became narrow or strait, and when used of a man it means: he was or became weak in judgement, and in his body, and in his soul and in his intellect. (Lane, page 1806).
extended columns."

On the other hand, Allah holds out a promise to all yearning hearts (and who can be more faithful to his promise than Allah?): "Say: Allah leaves in error whom He pleases and guides to Himself those who turn to Him (in lowly penitence)." "Al-ladhina a manu wa tatma'innu qulubuhum bi dhikril-Lahi. Ala bi dhikril-Lahi tatma'innul qulub." (13:28). "Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Now surely in Allah's remembrance do hearts find rest."

Mirza Sahib has given an explanation of this verse in Malfuzat, Vol. VIII, page 1: *Tranquillity of Heart*. The common meaning of this is that with the remembrance of Allah hearts find peace. But the true meaning and philosophy of this is that when man remembers Allah with complete sincerity and perfect faithfulness and every second he is sure that he is living in the Supreme Presence, then, as a result of this, an awe of the greatness and majesty of Allah is born in his heart and that fear saves him from abominable and forbidden things. He then advances in Taqwa to such a degree that the angels of Allah descend upon him and give him good news and the door of ilham (inspiration) is opened to him: "Those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised. We are your friends in this world's life and in the Hereafter, and you have therein what your souls desire and you have therein what you ask for. A welcome gift from the Forgiving, the Merciful." (41:30)

At this stage, he, as it were, begins to see Allah and he becomes a witness of Allah's most hidden secrets. Also, neither fear nor grief can descend on his heart and his inner nature (tabi'at) is always suffused with pleasure and delight. In this way, he advances to a higher station. "Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve." (2:112).

If any tinge of fear or grief remains then Allah, Most High, through His ilham (inspiration), either creates for his benefit, external
causes for the removal of this pain and anxiety, or He bestows upon him extraordinary powers of endurance (to withstand the affliction)."

A close examination of the life of the Holy Prophet (OWBP) will furnish the seeker with the best practical example of the remembrance of Allah. Saiyyid Qutb in *In the Shade of the Quran* quotes from Imam Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: "Imam Ibn Qayyim as-Jawziyyah summarises in his book *Zad al-Ma'ad* the Messenger's teaching respecting the remembrance of Allah: The Prophet was the most perfect man with regard to his remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. Indeed whatever he spoke was in the line of such remembrance. His commands, prohibitions, legislations, his teaching concerning the Lord and his attributes, judgements, actions, promises and threats were all part of this remembrance. So were his praise and glorification of the Lord, his prayers to Him, his feelings of fear and hope of Him and even his silence. He was conscious of Allah at all times and in every state. His praise of Allah was part of his very nature as if he praised Him with every breath. Indeed he praised Him as he stood up, sat or reclined and when walking, riding, moving, at home or travelling." (Page 224).

Our Holy Prophet remembered Allah in every action of his. Nothing was too small, or too great to make him forget praise and remembrance of Allah or calling upon Him for assistance. From the time he got up to the time he went to bed, Allah was always in his consciousness and in his words and his actions. There is a prescribed *Dua* for every occasion, e.g. going to bed, rising from bed, going into the *Masjid* and leaving, entering the toilet and after, looking at oneself in a mirror, putting on a new garment, visiting the sick or entering a new town or village, before and after meals, etc., and the *Hadith* is replete with examples.

As Saiyyid Qutb concludes: "Thus was the life of the Messenger of Allah. It was conditioned, down to every single detail by the Divine instructions which he received at the very first moment of his message. This instruction helped his faith to be established on a genuine basis." *In the Shade of the Quran*, page 228.

Before closing, let us take a brief look at some of the blessings of
keeping Allah constantly in our minds:
1. It gives us peace and comfort of heart: tranquillity and a healing of all kinds of diseases, together with happiness and success.
2. It inculcates love for Allah and draws His love to us.
3. It restrains us from committing sins.
4. It strengthens our hearts, and gives us power and confidence to face all situations in life.
5. It guarantees that our life will not be spilt but instead it will be spent beneficially and righteously.
6. It will earn for us forgiveness from Allah.
7. It will improve us not only emotionally, morally and spiritually, but intellectually, also.
8. It will bring self-respect, love and respect from others, self-esteem, a well-defined purpose for living and will rescue us from the trap of negative thinking (bad zanni) and its consequent destruction.

Finally let us always keep fresh in our minds the following statement of the Holy Quran: "Wa la dhikrul-Lahi akbar." (29:45). "And certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest force (or greatest virtue)."
1. "Therefore glorify Me, I will make you eminent, and give thanks to Me and be not ungrateful to Me." (2:152)

2. "Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and (lying) on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us from the chastisement of the Fire." (3:190)

3. "Surely I am Allah, there is no God but I, so serve Me, and keep up prayer for My remembrance." (20:14)

4. "So that we may glorify Thee much, and much remember Thee." (20:33-34)

5. And remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and bearing, and in a voice not loud, in the morning and the evening, and be not of the heedless." (7:205)

6. "(It is) in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and His name to be remembered therein. Therein do glorify Him, in the mornings and the evenings, men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the paying of the poor-rate - they fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes will turn about." (24:36-37)

7. "Has not the time yet come for the believers that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and the Truth that is revealed, and (that) they should be like those who were given the Book before, but time was prolonged for them, so their hearts hardened. And most of them are transgressors." (57:16)

8. "Go thou and thy brother with My messages and be not remiss in remembering Me." (20:42)

9. "O you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance, and glorify Him
10. "And glorify the name of thy Lord morning and evening. And during part of the night adore Him, and glorify Him throughout a long night." (76:25-26)

11. "Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book and keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force). And Allah knows what you do." (29:45)

12. "So when you have finished the prayer, remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining. But when you are secure, from danger, keep up (regular) prayer. Prayer indeed has been enjoined on the believers at fixed times." (4:103)

13. "But if you are in danger (say your prayers) on foot or horseback. And when you are secure, remember Allah as He taught you what you know not." (2:239)

14. "Surely We have revealed the Reminder, and surely We are its Guardian." (15:9)

15. "And this is a blessed Reminder, which We have revealed. Will you then deny it?" (21:50)

16. "O you who believe, let not your wealth nor your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah; and whoever does that, these are the losers." (63:9)

17. "They only are believers whose hearts are full of fear when Allah is mentioned, and when His messages are recited to them they increase them in faith, and in their Lord do they trust." (8:2)

18. "Allah has revealed the best announcement, a Book consistent, repeating (its
injunctions), whereat do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts soften to Allah's remembrance. This is Allah's guidance - He guides with it whom He pleases. And he whom Allah leaves in error, there is no guide for him." (39:23)

19. "O you who believe, when you meet an army, be firm, and remember Allah much, that you may be successful." (8:45)


21. "And when you have performed your devotions remember Allah as you remembered your fathers, rather with a greater remembrance." (2:200) That is, let it be a natural love as the inherent love you have for your fathers.

22. "And remember Allah during the appointed days (of the Hajj)." (2:203)

23. "Those who say, Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Garden which you were promised. We are your friends in this world's life and in the Hereafter, and you have therein what you souls desire and you have therein what you ask for. A welcome gift from the Forgiving, the Merciful." (41:30-32)
1. Abu Huraira and Abu Sa'id reported God's messenger as saying, "People will not sit remembering God without the angels surrounding them, mercy covering them, peace descending on them, and God mentioning them among those who are with Him." (Muslim).

2. Abu Musa reported God's messenger as saying, "He who remembers his Lord and he who does not are like the living and the dead." (Bukhari, Muslim).

3. Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as stating that God says, "I am present when My servant thinks of Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me inwardly I shall remember him inwardly, and if he remembers Me among people I shall remember him among people who are better than they." (Bukhari, Muslim).

4. Abud Darda' reported God's messenger as saying, "Would you like me to tell you the best and purest of your deeds in the estimation of your King, those which raise your degrees highest, those which are better for you than spending gold and silver, and are better for you than that you should meet your enemy and cut off one another's head?" On receiving a reply in the affirmative he said, "It is remembering God." (Malik).

5. Anas reported God's messenger as saying, "When you come upon the pastures of paradise feed on them." On being asked what the pastures of paradise were he replied that they were circles where God is remembered. (Tirmidhī).

6. Abu Huraira reported God's messenger as saying, "If people sit
in an assembly in which they do not remember God or invoke a blessing on their Prophet, vengeance will descend upon them. If God wills He will punish them, but if He wills He will forgive them." (Tirmidhi).

7. Ibn 'Umar reported God's messenger as saying, "Do not speak much without mentioning God, for much talk without mention of God produces hardness of heart, and the one who is farthest from God is he who has a hard heart." (Tirmidhi).

8. Ibn Abbas reported God's messenger as saying, "The devil is couching at the heart of the son of Adam. When he mentions God he withdraws, but when he is neglectful he makes evil suggestions." (Bukhari).


10. 'Abdullah b. 'Umar told that the Prophet used to say, "Everything has a polish, and the polish for hearts is remembrance of God. Nothing is more calculated to rescue from God's punishment than remembrance of God." He was asked whether this did not apply also to jihad in God's path, and said, "Not even if one should ply his sword till it is broken." (Baihaqi).