

Worship in Nahjul Balagha

Session Two

- Introduction
- Qualities of a worshipper
 - steadfastness
 - enduring hardships
 - humbleness
 - yearning
- Types of worship
 - specific acts of worship
 - recitation of Qur'an
 - du'a
- Conclusion

Introduction

O Creatures of Allah

take lessons from useful items of instruction and shining indications

Be cautioned by effective items of warning

Get benefit from preaching and admonition

It is as though the claws of death are pressed into you

the connection of hopes and desires have been cut asunder

hard affairs have befallen you

and your march is towards the place where everyone has to go

namely death.

Khutba # 83

Qualities of a worshipper

Steadfastness

Men whom neither merchandise nor sale diverts from the remembrance of God and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of alms, they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about. (24:37)

There have been people to whom Allah whispered through their wits and spoke through their minds. With the help of the bright awakenings of their ears, eyes and hearts they keep remembrance of the days of Allah and make others feel fear for Him, like guide-posts in wilderness.

. . There are some people devoted to remembrance (of Allah) who have adopted it in place of worldly matters so that commerce or trade does not turn them away from it. They pass their life on it. . . It is as though they have finished the journey of this world towards the next world and beheld what lies beyond it. . . Therefore they removed the curtains from these things for the people of the world till it was as though they were seeing what people did not see and were hearing what people did not hear.

Enduring hardships

You should know that every obedience to Allah is unpleasant in appearance while every disobedience to Allah has the appearance of enjoyment. Allah may have mercy on the person who kept aloof from his desire and uprooted the appetite of his heart. . You should know O creatures of Allah that a believer should be distrustful of his heart every morning and evening.

Khutba 174

Blessed is he who discharges his obligations towards Allah and endures his hardships, allows himself no sleep in the night but when sleep overpowers him he lies down on the ground using his hand as a pillow, along with those who keep their eyes wakeful in fear of the Day of Judgment, whose bodies are ever away from their beds, whose lips are humming with the remembrance of Allah and whose sins have been erased through their prolonged beseechings for forgiveness. *These are the party of God, surely the party of God alone shall be the successful ones.* (58:22)

Letter # 45

Humbleness

Fear Allah . . . From the evil results of vanity because it is the great trap of Shaitan and his big deceit which enters the heart like fatal poison. It never goes waste, nor misses anyone – neither the learned because of his knowledge, nor the destitute in his rags.

This is the thing against which Allah has protected His creatures who are believers by means of prayers and alms giving, and suffering the hardships of fasting in the days when it has been made obligatory, in order to give peacefulness to their limbs, to cast fear in their eyes, to make their spirits humble, to give their hearts humility, and to remove haughtiness from them.

All this is achieved through the smearing of their delicate cheeks with dust in humility, prostrating their main limbs on the ground in humbleness, and contracting their bellies so as to strike their backs due to fasting . . . Look what there is in these acts by way of curbing the appearance of pride and suppressing the trace of vanity.

Khutba # 190

Yearning

If you cast a glance of your mind at what is described to you of Paradise, your heart would begin to hate the delicacies of this world that have been displayed here, namely its desires and its pleasures and the beauties of its scenes. You would become lost in the rattling sound of the trees whose roots lie hidden in the heaps of musk on the banks of rivers in Paradise, and in the attraction of bunches of fresh pearls in the twigs and branches of those trees . .

O listener if you get yourself busy in advancing towards these wonderful scenes . . . Then your heart would certainly die due to eagerness for them, and you would be prepared to seek the company of those in the graves right from my audience here, and hasten towards them. May Allah, by His mercy, include us and you too, among those who strive with their hearts for the abodes of the virtuous.

Types of Worship

Specific forms of worship

The best means by which seekers of nearness to Allah seek nearness is

- belief in Him and Jihad in His way for it is the highest pinnacle of Islam
- and the belief in Kalimatul Ikhlas for it is the just nature
- and the establishment of prayer for it is the basis of community
- payment of zakat for it is a compulsory obligation
- fasting for the month of Ramadhan for it is a shield against punishment
- the performance of the Hajj of the house of Allah and its Umra for these two acts banish poverty and wash away sins
- regard for kinship for it increases wealth and lengthens life
- giving alms secretly for it covers shortcomings
- giving alms openly for it protects against a bad death
- and extending benefits to people for it saves from positions of disgrace.

Recitation of Qur'an

During the night they are erect on their feet reading portions of Qur'an and reciting it haltingly, creating through it grief for themselves and seeking by it a cure for their ailments. If they come across a verse creating eagerness (for Paradise) they bend towards it covetingly, and their spirit turns towards it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them. And when they come across a verse which contains fear (of Hell) they bend the ears of their hearts towards it and feel as though the sounds of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears.

Recitation of Qur'an - II

No-one sits beside this Qur'an but when he rises he should achieve one addition and one subtraction; addition is his guidance and subtraction in his (spiritual) blindness. You should know that no one will need anything after (guidance from) Qur'an, and no one will be free from want before (guidance from Qur'an). Therefore seek from it a cure for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely disbelief, hypocrisy, revolt, and misguidance. Pray to Allah through it, and turn to Allah with its love . . . There is nothing like it through which the people can turn to Allah. . . On the day of Judgment an announcer will announce; beware every sower of crop is in distress except the sower of Qur'an. Therefore you should be among the sowers of Qur'an and its followers.

Khutba #174

Du'a

Know that He who owns the treasures of the heavens and the earth has permitted you to pray to Him, and has promised you acceptance of your prayer. He has commanded you to beg from Him in order that He may give you, and to seek His mercy in order that He may have mercy on you. He has not placed anything between you and Him that may veil him from you . . .

Therefore when you call Him, He hears your call, and when you whisper to Him He knows the whisper. You place before Him your needs, unveil before Him yourself, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs and ask from the treasures of His mercy which no one else has power to give.

Then He has placed the keys of His treasures in your hands . . . Therefore whenever you wish you can open the doors of His favor with your prayer, and get heavy rains of His mercy fall upon you.

Letter # 31

Du'a - II

Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you because the grant of prayer is according to the measure of your intention.

Sometimes acceptance (of prayer) is delayed with a view to be a source of greater reward to the asker and of better grant to the one who expects. Sometimes you ask for a thing but it is not given to you, and a better thing is given to you sooner or later. Or a thing is taken away from you for some greater good of yours.

(This is) because sometimes you ask for a thing which contains ruin for your religion if it is given to you. Therefore your requests should be for things whose beauty should be lasting and whose burden should remain away from you.

Letter # 31

Conclusion

Action, action!

Look at the end and remain steadfast.

Thereafter exercise endurance and piety

You have an objective, proceed towards your objective

You have a sign, take guidance from your sign

Islam has an aim, proceed towards that aim

Proceed towards Allah by fulfilling His rights which He has enjoined upon you. He has clearly stated His demands for you. I am a witness for you and shall plead on your behalf on the day of Judgment. I am speaking to you with the promises and pleas of Allah. He the Glorified has said:

Surely those who say Our Lord is God, and persevere on the right way, the angels descend upon them saying, fear not nor grieve, and receive the glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised. (41:30)

Khutba # 174