



# ALI 434: 'Ibādat in *Nahjul Balāgha*

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# Quran on state of heart in salāt

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ \* قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Q 23: 1 & 2 *Certainly, the faithful have attained salvation (1) – those who are humble in their prayers (2).*

Humbleness refers to the stillness with which one should perform the prayer, or else it refers to the attitude of fear during the prayer. In a Hadith: “How many a worshipper stands to pray whose share is only toil and weariness” (*The Study Quran*, p. 851) Imam Ali (a): *Your heart must submit to Allah, the Glorified, for one whose heart submits/humbles, all the other parts of his body also submit* (*Ghurar*, p. 858). HP on the one was playing with his beard.

# Hearts humbled to God's remembrance

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ  
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

Q 57:16 *Is it not time yet for those who have faith that their hearts should be humbled for Allah's remembrance and toward the truth which has come down [to them], and to be not like those who were given the Book before? Time took its toll on them and so their hearts were hardened, and many of them are transgressors.*

Khushu' (humility) is one of the most important virtues in Islam, some say the root of all true virtues. A believer is not truly a believer without humility of heart.

A healthy heart *softens unto the remembrance of Allah* (Q 39:23), and is *at peace in the remembrance of Allah* (Q 13:28).

Story of Fuzayl, the highway robber, who had an 180° change on account of listening & reflection on Q 57:16.

# State of the Heart – NB Saying 322

إِنَّ لِلْقُلُوبِ إِقْبَالَ وَإِدْبَارًا فَإِذَا أَقْبَلَتْ فَاحْمِلُوهَا عَلَى النَّوَافِلِ

وَإِذَا أَدْبَرَتْ فَاقْتَصِرُوا بِهَا عَلَى الْفَرَائِضِ

Surely hearts draw near and retreat, so when they draw near let them be concerned with voluntary acts of worship, and when they retreat, limit them to what is obligatory (*Nabjul Balagha*, Saying 322 ; *The Sayings & Wisdom of Imam 'Ali*, p. 36; *Ghurur*, p. 860)

This is similar to what the Holy Prophet (s) had said and reported by Imam al-Sadiq (a):

(إِنَّ لِلْقُلُوبِ إِقْبَالَ وَإِدْبَارًا، فَإِذَا أَقْبَلَتْ فَتَنْفَلُوا وَإِذَا أَدْبَرَتْ فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالْفَرِيضَةِ. (الكافي ج 3/454).

This also means that when someone is leading salāt, or reciting Holy Quran and Du'ās should not lengthen and extend as there may be people whose hearts are not ready for them.

# State of the Heart – NB Saying 197

Another Hadith by Amīrul Mu'minīn Imam Ali (a)

إِنَّ هَذِهِ الْقُلُوبَ تَمَلُّ كَمَا تَمَلُّ الْأَبْدَانُ فَابْتَغُوا لَهَا طَرَائِفَ الْحِكْمَةِ.

*The hearts become tired as the bodies become tired. You should therefore search for wisdom (in beautiful sayings for them to enjoy by way of refreshment) (Nahjul Balāgha, Saying No. 197).*

Imam Ali (a) says, “*the best of hearts is a heart that has been filled with understanding*’ (Ghurar al-Hikam, p. 860, H. 36).

He also says: *Admonitions are the means of enlivening the hearts* (Ibid, p.1090, H. 11) *and are the polish of the hearts* (p. 1092, H. 17); and *In admonitions there is polishing of the hearts* (Ibid, H. 27).

# State of the Heart – NB Saying 193

And Amīrul Mu'minīn Imam Ali (a) also said:

إِنَّ لِلْقُلُوبِ شَهْوَةً وَإِقْبَالًَ وَإِدْبَاراً فَأْتُوها مِنْ قِبَلِ شَهْوَتِها وَإِقْبَالِها فَإِنَّ  
الْقَلْبَ إِذَا أُكْرِهَ عَمِي

*Verily hearts have desire and aversion, an advancing and a retreating, so approach them from whence they advance and desire, for indeed when the heart is forced [to do anything] it becomes blind (Nahjul Balāgha, Saying 193; Ghurar p. 858, H. 30).*

# Reflection on the 3 Sayings

- When doing 'ibādat look at the state of your heart
- Human heart has different states, conditions & situations.
- Learn to know the states & conditions of your heart.
- The heart gets tired & wearied like a body. However to remedy it, seek wisdom, remembrance, etc.
- Do not force your heart to perform the Nāfila.
- Hearts get blind. The Quran says the hearts get blind (22:46), hardened (2:74, 5:13, 6:43), locked (47:24), rusted (83:14), sick (2:10, 5:52, 33:12, 32, 60; 47:20, 29 & 74:31).

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What if the heart is not ready to perform wājib prayers?
2. What if someone's heart is never ready for saying Nāfila?
3. Can the human heart be cleansed, trained & improved?

# The importance of our hearts

Imam Ali (a): Allah, Great is His Majesty, is not perceived by the eyes through the sense of sight, rather He is perceived by the hearts though the realities of faith. (*Ghurar* p. 84, H. 11)

Imam Ali (a): The pure heart of the servants are places that Allah, the Glorified, looks upon [with Mercy] (*Ghurar*, p. 858, H. 18).

الْقَلْبُ حَرَمٌ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تُسْكِنُ حَرَمَ اللَّهِ غَيْرَ اللَّهِ

Imam al-Sadiq (a): The heart is the sanctuary of Allah, therefore do not settle therein anything but Allah (*A Bundle of Flowers*, H.5 from *Bihar* v. 70, p. 25)

Imam Ali (a): When the heart is empty of God-wariness, it gets filled with the lures of this world (*Ghurar*, p. 856, H. 4).

# Tips on training our hearts

The hearts of men are wild, so whoever shows them affection [and tames them], they turn towards him (*Ghurar al-Hikam*, p. 860).

Deceive your heart into worshipping and be gentle with it (or do not compel it), and engage it [in worship] when it is free and lively, except for what has been prescribed as obligatory, for indeed that must be fulfilled [in any case]. (Ibid, 1028).

Enliven your heart with exhortations and kill it with asceticism, strengthen it with certitude and humble it with the remembrance of death, make it see the transience of this life and show it the calamities of the world (Ibid, p. 860).

Purify your hearts from the filth of evil deeds and your good deeds will be multiplied (Ibid, p. 856)

# Special Du'ā for removing illness and poverty

The Holy prophet taught him the following Du'ā to one of his companions to remove illness and poverty:

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ  
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وُلْدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ  
يَكُنْ لَهُ وِليٌّ مِنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبَّرَهُ تَكْبِيرًا

There is no strength and nor power except with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great. I place my trust *in the Living One, Who does die* (Q 25:58). *All praise belongs to Allah, Who has neither taken any companion or any son; Nor has He have a partner in the Kingdom, nor has He [taken] any protector out of weakness, and magnify Him with a magnification [worth of Him]* (Q 17:111). The narrator has said that very shortly thereafter the man came to the Holy Prophet saying, ‘O Messenger of Allah, indeed Allah has removed from me illness and poverty (*al-Kafi*, v. 2, p.551, H. 3)