

ALI 611A:Tafakkur in the Quran, Session 2

ACADEMY FOR LEARNING ISLAM

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Outline

- Introduction to Terminology
- Importance of Tafakkur
- What to Reflect Upon
- Practical Guidance on Tafakkur
- Tafakkur and Meditation

Questions

- What is the difference between batil and abath.
 - Batil is the opposite of haqq.
 - Abath is when an action does not have a meaningful purpose.
- Can reflecting too much lead to a fixation on mental cognition?

Yes, in the following circumstances:

- The intention is not for the sake of closeness to Allah (S).
- There is no plan for self refinement (tazkiyah)

Review

- Know that contemplation is the inquisitive groping of the inner vision for attaining the coveted end.
- Tafakkur can happen in the following three areas:
 - Tawhid
 - The Creation of Allah (S)
 - The Reality of Actions and States

Tafakkur on Tawhid

- Tafakkur should not be about the dhat of Allah (S).

Verse

Allah warns you to beware of [disobeying] Him. (3:28)

Hadith

Abu Basir reports Abu Ja'far (A) as having said: Speak (takallamu) about the creation of God, and do not speak about God (fi Allah), for discourse about God will bring nothing but confusion (tahayyur) to the discourser.

Tafakkur on Tawhid

- Tafakkur on tawhid involves contemplating on the arguments for the oneness of Allah (S). In particular, the arguments that demonstrate that the creator (khaliq) and the sustainer (rabb) can only be one and the same.

Practical Tips:

- There are many verses of the Qur'an that demonstrate tawhid.
- Such tafakkur should be carried out under the guidance of a scholar.

Tafakkur on Creation

- The main goal is to see everything as an ayah (sign).
- Tafakkur on creation requires observation or knowledge of how creation functions.

Practical Tip:

- In order to achieve depth of tafakkur, avoid thinking or reflecting upon vain issues.

Tafakkur on States and Actions

- This subject of tafakkur can occur in the following manner:
 - a. The reality of the states and actions.

The purpose of this reflection is to realize that all deeds and states are from the grace of Allah (S).

States and Actions

- Tafakkur also covers tafakkur one one's actions and character.

O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and let every soul consider what it sends ahead for tomorrow, and be wary of Allah. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do (59:18)

States and Actions

- Tafakkur on Our Goals and Objectives

Al-Hasan al-Sayqal states that I asked Imam al-Sadiq (a) about what people narrate that tafakkur for a period of time is better than the standing of a night. I said, “How should he do tafakkur?” He (a) said, “He passes by some ruins or a house, and he says, ‘Where are your inhabitants? Where are your builders? What is with you that you do not speak?’”

States and Actions

- Tafakkur on our actions before we perform them.
- Tafakkur on the actions that we have performed.

You will continue your watchfulness until your bedtime, when you will reflect upon your actions of that day for four to five minutes. You will make them go through your mind one by one. For all the actions that you have performed in accordance to the pleasure of Allah, give thanks for it. For every action in which you have disobeyed, seek forgiveness. Allamah.

States and Actions

- Reflection upon our character and remedying it.

Example: You should know that a jealous person is angry at the decree of Allah (S), and detests granting of the Lord in what he has distributed amongst his creatures...and his actions are the result of objecting to the Creator of the servants, and that the very principal of tawhid and faith are corrupted by it.

- *Reflecting upon the reality of the actions and the states.*

Tafakkur and Meditation

- Tafakkur is different from the practice of meditation.
- Meditation is practiced by people for various reasons.
- In Islamic spirituality, meditation may be practiced for the purpose of developing focus and attention.
- Scholars of Islamic spirituality have elaborated on some ways of meditation.
- Such meditation should only be carried out under the guidance of an expert scholar.

Tafakkur and Meditation

Meditation or contemplation is very vast in its meaning and its sense differs according to the degrees and stages of the spiritual journey. In the beginning it means refraining from all acts not useful in this world or the hereafter and abstaining from saying or doing anything disliked by Allah.

Gradually this meditation becomes stiffer and higher, and may sometimes mean concentration on one's silence, or on one's self or on a higher truth, that is the names and the attributes of Allah. The degrees and grades of this kind of meditation will be mentioned later.

Shahid Mutahhari, Light Within Me.