

Collection of Translations, Writings, and Teaching Materials
prepared by two students of Islaam
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(may Allaah pardon their shortcomings)

An English Presentation of the Book

فِقْهُ الْأَدْعِيَةِ وَالْأَذْكَارِ

Understanding Du‘aa’ (Supplicating Allaah) and Thikr (Mentioning Allaah)

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[Episode] 8: Caution Against Being Heedless of Thikr (Mentioning Allaah)

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[1] Just as Allaah (the Owner of Limitless Blessings, and the Most Exalted) has certainly instructed people to mention Him, and strongly encouraged them to do so, in many Aayaat throughout the Honoured Qur'aan; He has also cautioned them against falling into its opposite: being heedless of mentioning Him. That is because Thikr (mentioning Allaah) does not truly come to completion without ridding oneself of heedlessness, and remaining far away from it. There is one Aayah in the Qur'aan where Allaah mentioned these two concepts together: the command to mention Him, and the prohibition of heedlessness. That can be found in the statement of Allaah (the Most Exalted) near the end of Sooratul-A'raaf, ((And I — Allaah — say to every individual who listens, and remains quiet for the purpose of listening attentively: mention your One Supreme Lord within yourself while maintaining humility towards Him and reverential fear of Him, and also mention Him verbally without making your words loud. Do the preceding in the earlier part of the days and the later part of the days, and do not be among the heedless)) [7:205].

[2] The meaning of ((and do not be among the heedless)) in this Aayah is: do not be among those who are negligent towards Allaah, and whom He causes to neglect their own selves as a result. Those are people who have been deprived of true goodness in both this world and the Hereafter; they have turned away from the One whom all happiness and success lies in making mention of Him and directing all worshipping servitude to Him; and instead, they have turned towards those whom all misery and loss lies in being preoccupied with them. The Aayah cited instructs people to mention Allaah and remain constant in doing so, cautions them against being heedless of mentioning Allaah, and also cautions them against the path of the heedless.

[3] That heedlessness is a dangerous ailment. If it comes over people and takes root within them, they would not occupy themselves with obeying Allaah, mentioning Him, and worshipping Him; rather, they would occupy themselves with things that divert and distance them from mentioning Allaah. Furthermore, even if they do perform acts of obedience and worship, those acts would be performed in a way that is bad, not good; and those acts would be devoid of focus on Allaah, humility towards Allaah, returning to Allaah, finding tranquility with Allaah, fearing Allaah with knowledge, being true towards Allaah, and being devoted purely to Allaah.

[4] This is why in many parts of the Honoured Qur'aan, there are Aayaat that caution against heedlessness and censure it; clarify its adverse outcome; explain that it is among the traits of those who commit Kufr (i.e. reject the truth from Allaah both inwardly and outwardly); and explain that it is also among the traits of those who turn away from Allaah by committing Nifaaq (i.e. rejecting the truth from Allaah inwardly while outwardly displaying compliance). Allaah (the Most Exalted) said, ((And I swear that We — Allaah — have indeed created for the Hellfire many jinns and humans; [based on the knowledge that We have about the deeds they would perform, which would cause them to deserve punishment there]. Those individuals have hearts, but fail to comprehend sound guidance with them. They also have eyes, but fail to see sound guidance with them; and they have ears, but fail to hear sound guidance with them. Those individuals are like mere livestock animals, [which lack the functions that enable them to grasp all that humans have the ability to grasp]. In fact, when compared to livestock animals, the aforementioned individuals are even further astray from what is correct. Those individuals are the ones who are truly heedless)) [7:179]. Allaah (the

Most Exalted) further said, ((Indeed, regarding the individuals who neither hope to be granted any reward at the time when they will meet Us — Allaah — nor fear that they would be subjected to any punishment, and they have become pleased with this world as a substitute for the Hereafter, and have become satisfied with the life of this world as their utmost objective; and also regarding the individuals who remain heedless of Our evidences; for those individuals who fit those descriptions, their eventual abode will be the Fire as a result of the bad that they continued to earn)) [10:7-8]. Allaah (the Most Exalted) also said, ((They only know a mere outward appearance of the life of this world; while concerning the Hereafter, they surely remain heedless)) [30:7]. There are many other Aayaat that convey this meaning.

[5] Indeed, the similitude that applies to those who are heedless of mentioning Allaah is that of the deceased. Discussion preceded in earlier episodes about the fact that Thikr (mentioning Allaah) is what gives people's hearts true life, such that they cannot have true life without it; and discussion also preceded about people's hearts needing Thikr to live even more than fish need water to live. Thus, the heart that mentions Allaah is the one that is alive, whereas the heedless heart is the one that is dead.

[6] In the Two Saheeh Collections, there is a Hadeeth from Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree (may Allaah be pleased with him) who narrated that the Prophet (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) had said, "The similitude that applies to someone who does mention his One Supreme Lord versus someone who does not mention his One Supreme Lord is that of the living versus the dead"; and the wording collected by Muslim says, "The similitude that applies to the household in which Allaah is mentioned versus the household in which Allaah is not mentioned is that of the living versus the dead."¹

[7] ash-Shawkaanee (may Allaah have mercy upon him) explained that this comparison shows a very commendable quality and honourable virtue of those who mention Allaah; as well as the fact that their mentioning Allaah (the Almighty and Most Majestic) supplies life to their bodies and their souls due to the various forms of light that cover them and the various rewards that reach them. The comparison also shows that even though the bodies of those who fail to mention Allaah might be physically alive, that is not what is given true consideration; on the contrary, they actually resemble the deceased.²

[8] Indeed, in the aforementioned Hadeeth, Allaah's esteemed Prophet (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) likened the household of the person who mentions Allaah to the home of the living; and he likened the household of the person who is heedless to the home of the dead, which is the grave. In the first wording presented, he likened the actual person who mentions Allaah to the living; and he likened the heedless to the dead. Thus, the two wordings of the Hadeeth together can be understood to indicate that a heart that mentions Allaah is like a living person in the midst of the homes of the living; whereas a heart that is heedless is like a dead person in the midst of the homes of the dead. Based on this understanding, the bodies of the heedless are essentially graves for their hearts, and their hearts within those bodies are like deceased individuals within their graves.

[9] The preceding idea can be found in Arabic poetry [whose meaning is]: Thus, people being negligent in mentioning Allaah means death for their hearts \ and their bodies will become graves even before they reach their graves. | And their souls will become estranged

¹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, no. 6407; Saheeh Muslim, no. 779.

² Tuhfatuth-Thaakireen, p. 15.

from their bodies; \ and they will not be brought back to life until the Day of Resurrection, when all of the dead will be brought back to life.

[10] That idea can also be found in similar Arabic poetry [whose meaning is]: Thus, people being negligent in mentioning Allaah means death for their hearts \ and their bodies are nothing but graves that have been forgotten and effaced with the passage of time. | And their souls feel estrangement towards the One whom they are supposed to love, \ whereas they find comfort with the unwholesome.³

[11] From what preceded, understanding can be gleaned as to why the Prophet (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) prohibited turning homes into graves by not praying in them and not mentioning Allaah (the Most Exalted) in them, as can be found in an authentic Hadeeth. In the Two Saheeh Collections, a Hadeeth from [‘Abdullaah] ibn ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with both of them) mentions that the Prophet (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) said, “Perform some of your prayers in your homes, and do not turn your homes into graves.”⁴

[12] Muslim also collected, in his Saheeh, a Hadeeth from Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) who narrated that the Prophet (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) said, “Do not turn your homes into graves. Indeed, Shaytaan (the rebelliously disobedient towards Allaah) flees from the home in which he hears Sooratul-Baqarah being read.”⁵

[13] There is also a Hadeeth in Sunan Abee Daawood and other works, with a chain of transmission that is authentic at the level of Hasan, from Aboo Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) who stated: Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) said, “Do not turn your homes into graves, and do not turn my burial site into a place of gathering or frequent visitation. However, do supplicate Allaah to mention me with commendation, because the commendation that you supplicate Him to grant me will surely reach me regardless of where you might be.”⁶

[14] Shaykh al-Islaam Abul-‘Abbaas ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) commented that the expression “do not turn your homes into graves” means: “do not make them void of praying to Allaah, supplicating Allaah, and reading [the Book of Allaah]; such that they become like graves. Thus, the Prophet (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection) instructed people to seek to worship Allaah in their homes, and he prohibited seeking to worship Allaah at burial sites; contrary to what is done by those who ascribe partners to Allaah among [particular factions of] the Christians and others who resemble them.”⁷ End of remark from ibn Taymiyyah (may Allaah have mercy upon him).

[15] Due to the fact that people’s hearts are of that nature, such that they can be described with life and with its opposite, hearts can be classified into three types in light of that:⁸

[16] The first type is the sound heart: the one that is free of ascribing any sort of partner to Allaah in any way, rather, it devotes all of its worshipping servitude purely to Allaah (the Most

³ See Madaarij as-Saalikeen by ibn al-Qayyim 3/429, 430.

⁴ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree, no. 432; Saheeh Muslim, no. 777.

⁵ Saheeh Muslim, no. 780.

⁶ Collected in Musnad Ahmad 2/367; Sunan Abee Daawood, no. 2042. Graded authentic at the level of Saheeh by al-Albaanee in Saheeh al-Jaami‘, no. 7226.

⁷ Iqtidaa’ as-Siraat al-Mustaqeem 2/662.

⁸ See Ighaathatul-Lahfaan by ibn al-Qayyim 1/13-15.

Exalted) out of it intending Him, loving Him, relying upon Him, repenting and returning to Him, being humble towards Him, fearing Him with knowledge, and hoping in Him; and it devotes all of its actions purely to Him. Thus, when it likes something, it likes it because of Allaah; when it dislikes something, it dislikes it because of Allaah; when it gives, it gives because of Allaah; when it withholds, it withholds because of Allaah; and for all of its affairs, it refers back to what was brought by the Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah mention him with commendation and grant him protection), such that it does not put anything ahead of him, whether by way of belief, statement, or action.

[17] The second type of heart is the opposite of the one that preceded. It is the dead heart: the one that lacks true life. It does not know its One Supreme Lord, does not worship Him, does not fulfil His commands, and does not do what He loves and is pleased with. Rather, it goes along with whatever it finds desirable and enjoyable even if that displeases or angers its One Supreme Lord. Thus, it is subservient to other than Allaah with respect to what it loves, what it fears, what it hopes in, what it is pleased with, what it is displeased with, what it reveres, and what it humbles itself to. When it likes something, it likes it based on its own inclinations; when it dislikes something, it dislikes it based on its own inclinations; when it gives, it gives based on its own inclinations; and when it withholds, it withholds based on its own inclinations. That is what it gives more priority, and is more beloved to it, than pleasing its One Supreme Guardian Lord. Thus, inclinations to disobey Allaah are its leader, personal desires guide it forward along its course, ignorance urges it onward, and heedlessness is its vehicle.

[18] The third type of heart is one that has life but also has an illness. Thus, it has two sources that supply it with what influences it: sometimes it is supplied by one, and sometimes by the other; and it ends up inclining towards whichever of the two sources has a more dominant influence upon it. Such a heart has a certain degree of love for Allaah (the Most Exalted), accepting and complying with the truth from Allaah, pure devotion to Allaah, and reliance upon Allaah—all of which serve to supply it with life. It also has a certain degree of love for its own desires to disobey Allaah, preference for those desires, and eagerness to fulfil them; as well as a certain degree of envy, pride, conceit, and love for superiority—all of which serve to supply it with what leads to its destruction and ruin.

[19] Hence, the first type of heart is alive, humble, and soft; the second type is dry and dead; and the third type is ill, and could either be closer to soundness, or closer to ruin.

[20] With that in mind, it should be understood that—in order for the heart's life to remain, for its heedlessness to depart, and for its steadfastness to become complete—the heart requires what preserves its strength. That takes the form of Eemaan (accepting the truth from Allaah and complying with it), consistently obeying Allaah in the ways that He prescribed, being constant in mentioning Allaah, and staying away from everything that displeases Allaah (the One who owns Limitless Blessings and is Most Exalted). The heart cannot experience true happiness, enjoyment, blessings, or rectification without recognizing Allaah alone as the One whom it worships, the One who brought it into being, the One whom it remains subservient to, the One whom it seeks as its ultimate aim, and the One who is more beloved to it than everything else. When that is achieved, the heart would be saved from heedlessness and destruction, and it would be permeated with true life. And the special assistance required to obey Allaah lies in the hand of Allaah alone.

Discussion and Review

Q1 What concept was presented as being the opposite of Thikr? (Mention the Arabic term as well as the way that we chose to render it into English here)

Q2 What was noted about what Allaah did in the Qur'aan concerning Thikr, and concerning its opposite?

Q3 When does Thikr truly come about?

Q4 Which Aayah in the Qur'aan contains both the command to mention Allaah and the prohibition of heedlessness?

Q5 What does ((and do not be among the heedless)) mean, and what results from that heedlessness?

Q6 Why is heedlessness considered a dangerous ailment? (Try to mention its effects on a person and on any acts of obedience he may perform)

Q7 What are the approaches used in various Aayaat of the Qur'aan to address this ailment?

Q8 How did we choose to render the meanings of the terms كُفْرٌ and نِفَاقٌ into English?

Q9 What do each of the three Aayaat that were cited inform us about regarding heedlessness?

Q10 What similitude applies to those who are heedless of mentioning Allaah?

Q11 What does Thikr do to people's hearts, and what similitude was given in earlier episodes to show the importance of Thikr to the heart?

Q12 What is the difference between the similitude given in the two wordings of the Hadeeth that was narrated by Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree?

Q13 What do the two wordings of the Hadeeth together indicate, and what does that liken the body of the heedless to?

Q14 What does the prohibition of turning homes into graves mean, and how can that meaning be understood from each of the three Ahaadeeth cited?

Q15 In light of hearts being described with life and with death, how many types can hearts be classified into, and whose classification is the one cited in this lesson?

Q16 What types of hearts were mentioned, and what are some defining features of each type?

Q17 What does the heart require for its life to remain, its heedlessness to depart, and its steadfastness to become complete; and what form does that take?

Q18 What does the heart require in order to experience true happiness, enjoyment, blessings, and rectification?

Q19 What do the aforementioned—in the answers to Q17 and Q18—save the heart from?