

CONCENTRATION IN PRAYER

Jameel Kermalli

COURSE TWO - ANSWERS



25 WAYS
TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE
AND ATTENTIVE IN YOUR
PRAYER

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- 1) Allah will fill your heart with richness and He will not abandon you to what you seek and long for. And it will be upon Him to close the door of poverty upon you and to fill your heart with awe for Him.
- 2) Allah will fill your heart with preoccupation with the world and He will not close upon you the door of poverty and will abandon you to what you seek.
- 3) *Tafarrugh* belongs to the verbal form *tafa'ul*, and *tafarragha li kadha* means 'he has devoted all his time to such and such a thing without being occupied with anything else.'
- 4) Freedom from other preoccupations for the sake of absorption in worship is obtainable through possessing unoccupied time and an unoccupied heart.
- 5) A worship performed without an attentive heart is devoid of value.
- 6) In possessing unoccupied time and an unoccupied heart, and the second lies in making one's heart understand the importance of worship. That which is meant by 'unoccupied time' is that one should set aside a certain time out of his day and night hours exclusively for the sake of worship wherein he should devote himself solely to worship without engaging in any other preoccupation.
- 7) If one were to understand that worship is an important thing whose significance is greater than any other activity, or, rather, that it is something of incomparable significance.
- 8) Observe the timings of *salat*.
- 9) If one offers his prayers out of compulsion and consider the performance of the worship of the Lord as a superfluous matter, he would, of course, delay it as long as it can be delayed and when he offers it offer it in a perfunctory manner, considering it as an impediment in the way of what he imagines to be important tasks.
- 10) 'The one who makes light of his prayers does not belong to me, nor the one who takes intoxicating drinks, and, by God, he will not return to me at the Pond (of *al-Kawthar*).'
- 11) Intercession

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- 12) It will lead you to abandon the Prayer altogether and that will ultimately lead you to deny it as duty, bringing you to certain damnation and everlasting wretchedness.
- 13) As soon as we say the *takbirat al'ihram* of *salat*, it is as if we have opened a shop or a ledger of accounts or an album. Our heart wanders away to other matters and we become totally oblivious of worship. When we come to ourselves, it is when we have reached the moment of *salam*, having passed through the *salat* as a matter of habit!
- 14) At the time of *salat* the color of their blessed faces would pale and their bodies would tremble with the fear lest there should occur some lapse in the course of this divine observance, although they were infallible.
- 15) It is well-known concerning the *Mawla* ('Ali) that an arrow that had pierced his blessed foot and removing which was intolerably painful for him, was taken out when he was engaged in *salat* and he did not even notice its removal.
- 16) It can be achieved with the exercise of some care and vigilance. One should make effort for some time to bring the flights of the bird of his thought under control and restrain it whenever it wishes to fly from one branch to another. After a period of watchfulness, the mind becomes tractable and docile and refrains from engaging in random thoughts. In accord with the aphorism -goodness becomes a habit with it and, attaining detachment from other preoccupations, it becomes attentive to God and His worship.
- 17) The extent that you offer it with an attentive heart. And if someone should vitiate all of it or neglect its etiquette, it is wound up and thrown at the face of its offerer.
- 18) 'Woe to you, don't you know before whom I stood? Nothing is accepted of a devotee's prayer except what he offers with the proper attention of his heart.' Thereupon I said to him, 'May I be ransomed for you, (if that is so) then we (i.e. the like of us) are doomed!' He replied, 'No indeed. Verily God compensates for that for the faithful by the means of supererogatory prayers.' "
- 19) Attentive
- 20) God, the Exalted, during prayer, God turns His face towards him, and turns towards him the hearts of the faithful who regard him with affection, following God's love of him.

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- 21) He does not finish them without God forgiving him every sin that there is between him and God.
- 22) Whole night spent in worship.
- 23) One of these is attention of the heart to worship and the other is attention of the heart to God.
- 24) Concentration on the meaning of the words during *salat* and prayer.
- 25) One of them pertains to concentrating the heart, on revelations (*tajalliyat*) of Divine Acts. Another of them relates to concentrating the heart on revelations of Names and Attributes. The third consists of concentrating with the heart on revelations of the Essence.
- 26) Will
- 27) Directly experiencing the actions with his heart, until his heart becomes the complete mirror of those *tajalliyat* and he achieves the state of swoon (*sa'q*) and annihilation (*fana'*).
- 28) Repeating verses of the Qur'an until reaching a state wherein it was as if you hear them directly from Him Who had sent them down. And it is beyond human power to witness Divine glory.
- 29) I experience a state with God for which neither an archangel nor an apostolic prophet has the capacity.
- 30) Attention of the heart, on which depends the soul and essence of worship and without which it has no value and acceptability near God, the Exalted.

In *al-Kafi*, al-Kulayni reports with his *isnad* from Abu Ja'far and Abu 'Abd Allah-may peace be upon them-that they said to Fudayl ibn Yasar: "The reward that you derive from your *salat* is limited to the extent that you offer it with an attentive heart. And if someone should vitiate all of it or neglect its etiquette, it is wound up and thrown at the face of its offerer."

- 31) An angel takes it up to the heaven. White and pure, it (i.e. the *salat*) says, 'May God take care of you as you took care of me. I have been delivered into the custody of a noble angel.'

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32) A black and dark, it is taken up by an angel, while it calls out to him (i.e. its offerer), 'you neglected me. May God neglect you in the same manner that you neglected me. May God not take care of you in the same way that you did not take care of me.'

33) Every one of virtuous actions and acts of worship has an esoteric and *malakuti* form and makes an effect on the devotee's heart. As to the esoteric and inward form, they are what go into the building of the worlds of *Barzakh* and the physical Paradise, for the grounds of Paradise are empty plains as mentioned in traditions.

Our prayers and works are the material for their building, as mentioned in hadith, and there are many verses in the Sacred Book of God that indicate the incarnation of works.

Aside from the *malakuti* forms of works, that which can be inferred from this noble tradition is that they possess life and its properties.

Hadith on Page 21.

34) Verily the supererogatory acts of worship have been laid down in order to compensate for that which is vitiated out of the obligatory acts.

35) A half of it or a one-fourth

36) Poverty

37) This old shoe of mine, which is full of patches.

38) Fire

39) Darkness and rust

40) Absolute self-sufficiency, immersing the heart in the ocean of honor and contentment and filling it with freedom from need.

41) Outcome of the *nawafil* – supererogatory prayers

42) Allah says: I become the hearing with which he hears and the vision with which he beholds, and the tongue with which he speaks, and the hand by which he grasps.

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- 43) When the servant's poverty is totally removed and he becomes free from the need of both the worlds.
- 44) Allah
- 45) Emptying
- 46) Such neglect would be the source of all forms of wretchedness, defects and diseases of the heart. If that happens, a darkness and obscurity will grip the heart on account of this neglect, and thick curtains through which the light of guidance cannot pass will become an obstruction between it and God, depriving it of Divine succor.
- 47) All its dispensations assume a godly character or, rather, at certain levels, his entire being becomes divine.
- 48) Allah will fill your heart with preoccupation with the world and He will not block the entry of poverty and need into it.
- 49) The soul will become self-willed and its movements will become subject to its egoism. Thereupon, its essential baseness and its real poverty will become manifest; all its movements and pauses will lead it further away from God, and total failure and defeat will be its lot.
- 50) Such neglect would be the source of all forms of wretchedness, defects and diseases of the heart. If that happens, a darkness and obscurity will grip the heart on account of this neglect, and thick curtains through which the light of guidance cannot pass will become an obstruction between it and God, depriving it of Divine succour and making the heart totally absorbed in the world and the pursuit of corporeal pleasures.