

# **REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH**

*[Zikrullah]*



Asad-ul-Ulama Hazrat Abu Sayeed Syed  
Mahmood Tashrifullahi <sup>RH</sup>

*Article on Zikrullah, one of the distinct tenets of  
Mahdavia community, beautifully articulated piece  
of scholarly work lifted from author's book  
Tauzihat*

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## *[Zikrullah]*

There are many Verses in Quran about the remembrance of and thinking [*zikr* and *fikr*] about Allah. The Verses, which talk about *fikr* [thinking], deal with thinking about the things Allah Most High has created. But some people, for instance the author of the book, *Do Quran*, and others, have tried to argue that this is meant to draw the attention to the issues of Science and Technology et cetera, so that human beings could be served in every respect. Hence, facilities should be provided to achieve economic and defense strength. And these matters are necessary for the power and strengthening of the Abode of Peace [*Dar-ul-Islam*]. Other communities have acted in accordance with these principles and have developed. The credit for the inventions and military might goes to them.

This argument is not wrong in its relevant context and even in *Shariat* these matters are given the position of the concomitants of the Abode of Peace. But it would be a mistake to entirely associate all the Verses, which deal with the remembrance and thinking, with this one objective.

Iqbal says: “*What is the wonder if you do not understand the meaning of the term, wan-najm? Your ebb and flow is still dependent on moon.*”<sup>1</sup>

We have stated earlier too that the Quran is an ocean of knowledge and Law. Allah says, “*And everything We have placed on record.*”<sup>2</sup> Again Allah says, “[*not a grain...nor a thing...*], which hath not been taken note of in the luminous Book (of Divine Knowledge).”<sup>3</sup> Hence, it is not astonishing to take the help of Quran to argue on any subject or branch of knowledge or technique. There are many exegeses of the Quran, which deal with only one branch of knowledge, like grammar and syntax, meaning and explanations, scholastic theology and Traditions [*Hadis*] et cetera. Similarly, an exegesis of Quran can be written to support the scientific point of view. Precedents of this kind are not rare in the writings of the past. An Egyptian scholar, Allamah Tantavi Jawhari, has written such exegeses.

Learned people know that the concomitants of a subject under discussion alone will be argued about. Some people are concerned about serving the humanity, uplifting of the economic condition or strengthening the defense of the country. They are right in thinking that the Quranic Verses, which urge people to think over Allah’s creation, are about such matters. But this is a secondary and not the primary objective. Hence, in the parlance of the researchers, these matters relate to the sciences [*ulum*], which are *farz-e-kifaya* [concessional obligations termed as sufficient]. It is obvious that the *farz-e-kifaya*

<sup>1</sup> The word *najm* means installment, part payment, celestial body, star, constellation, herbs and herbage, grass et cetera. It has to be understood with reference to the context in which it is used.

<sup>2</sup> Quran, S. 78: 29 SAL.

<sup>3</sup> Quran, S. 6: 29 SAL.

is for the person who has the ability and aptitude to perform it. For instance, everybody cannot become a scientist and this is not needed for everybody without regard to his or her capability.

In fact, these Verses guide [the people] towards those sciences, which are real obligations [*farz-e-'ain*]. The details about these sciences will be discussed in the explications of parables relating to knowledge. From this point of view of the researchers, the first and foremost purpose of these Quranic Verses is that one should think over the universe only to get the knowledge [*ma'rifat*] of the Existence and Omnipotence of Allah. This purpose is manifest in the concerned Quranic Verses themselves. Everybody, man or woman, learned or unlettered, comes under the purview of these Verses. Not only this; in some of the Verses, even the infidels [*kafirs*] are invited to think over Allah's Creation to attain the knowledge of the Divine Unity. Some of the Quranic Verses are given below:

- ▶ *"It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth."*<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ *"Has thou not seen that...among the hills are streaks white and red, of diverse hues, and others raven black; And of men and beasts and cattle, in like manner, diverse hues? The erudite among His bondsmen fear Allah alone."*<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ *"Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and [in] the difference of night and day are tokens [of His Sovereignty] for men of understanding."*<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ *"And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and variety in your languages and colours."*<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ *"Say [O Muhammad]: Travel in the land and see how He originated creation..."*<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ *"And in your creation, and all the beasts that He scattereth in the earth, are portents for a folk whose faith is sure."*<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ *"Many are the signs in the heavens and in the earth, [so full of meanings for men]; yet they pass them by, hardly taking notice of them."*<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ *"Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah hath created? [Do they not see] that it may well be that their term is nigh drawing to an end?"*<sup>11</sup>
- ▶ *"He maketh the night to pass into the day and He maketh the day to pass into the night. He hath subdued the sun and the moon to serve. Each runneth into an appointed term. Such is Allah, your Lord; His is the Sovereignty; and those unto*

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<sup>4</sup> Quran, S. 2: 29 AYA.

<sup>5</sup> Quran, S. 35: 27-28 MMP.

<sup>6</sup> Quran, S. 3: 190 MMP.

<sup>7</sup> Quran, S. 30: 22 SAL.

<sup>8</sup> Quran, S. 29: 20 MMP.

<sup>9</sup> Quran, S. 45: 4 MMP.

<sup>10</sup> Quran, S. 12: 105 SAL.

<sup>11</sup> Quran, S. 7: 185 AYA.

*whom ye pray instead of Him own not so much as the white spot on a date-stone.”*  
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These Quranic Verses show that Allah Most High has drawn the attention of the people towards His power of Creation at many places [in Quran] in various ways. The first of the objectives of this is [imparting] the knowledge [*ma'rifat*] of His Unity and Omnipotence and saving the people from worshipping *ghair-Allah* [other than Allah] and make them accept [and recognize] the One and Only *zath* worthy of worship. Besides, Allah has used the word *aayaat* [signs] for the Created. This shows that the Signs of Allah are there in the Quranic Verses and there are Signs in the universe and all things present [*maujudat*]. As the greatest scholar [*'alim*] cannot create a Quranic Verse, a greatest scientist too cannot create a leaf or an atom [*patta* or *zarrah*]. Taking advantage of what Allah has created, inventing a gadget is one thing and creating a thing is a different thing. Hence, Allah has used the words like *aayaat* [signs] and *baiyanaat* [clear proofs], which are special to His Omnipotence. In short, the first and foremost objective of the thinking on the universe is acquiring the knowledge [*ma'rifat*] of Allah. Iqbal says: “*The nation, which is deprived of the heavenly bounties; the limits of its perfection are electricity and steam.*” On another occasion

Iqbal says: “*You are neither for the earth or the skies; the world is for you and you are not for the world.*”

[Some people have] explained that that the Quranic Verses pertaining to the remembrance [*zikr*] of Allah purport to divine deeds of [a man]. In other words, it is to think over the manifestations of Allah's Omnipotence in the existing things of the world and explain their specialties. It is, however, wrong to confine the Verses about *zikr* to this one sense because there is a clear Verse about repeating and reciting the name of Allah in the Holy Quran: “*Remember the name of thy Lord...*”<sup>13</sup> At another place, Allah says’ “*Call Him [by the name of] ‘Allah’ or [by the name of] ‘Rahman’--- by whichever you like, all His names are excellent.*”<sup>14</sup> Allah further says, “*The most beautiful names belong to Allah; so call on Him by them; but shun such men as use profanity in His names.*”<sup>15</sup> In short, Quran not only guides towards the names of the divine deeds but also towards the remembrance of the names of the *Zath* but also the remembrance of the names of the attributes.

Iqbal says: “*All these are the stations of the inquisitiveness of the seeker [of Allah], which has come in the glory of the knowledge of the names [Ilm-ul-asmaa]. The station of the remembrance [of Allah] is the perfections of Rumi<sup>RA</sup> and Attar<sup>RA</sup>.*<sup>16</sup> *The station of thinking [fikr] is the writings of Avicenna.*<sup>17</sup> *The station of thinking is the measurement of Time and Space. And the station of remembrance is Subhana Rabbi-al-la [Chaste is the Lord Most High].”*

<sup>12</sup> Quran, S. 35: 13 MMP.

<sup>13</sup> Quran, S. 76: 25 MMP.

<sup>14</sup> Quran, S. 17: 110 SAL.

<sup>15</sup> Quran, S. 7: 180 AYA.

<sup>16</sup> Rumi<sup>RA</sup> and Attar<sup>RA</sup> are saints of great repute.

<sup>17</sup> Avicenna is the Anglicized name of Bu-Ali-Sina, Ibn-e-Sina or Sheikh-ar-Rais.

The purpose of the advent of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> was the teachings of the Love of Allah. Hence, the subject of his teachings is the desire of the Vision of Allah. And one of the concomitants of the desire for Vision of Allah is the *ziker* [remembrance] of and *tawajjuh* [attention] towards Allah. Hence, He decreed perpetual remembrance of Allah as an obligation in accordance of the command of Allah. And the Quranic Verses too stand witness to this obligation. Allah says, “*When ye have performed the act of worship, remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining. And when ye are in safety, observe proper worship. Worship at fixed hours hath been enjoined on the believers*”<sup>18</sup>

Some people have said that *ziker* means *namaz*. This meaning could be correct in view of the context but to take the same meaning in every place and avoid the remembrance [*ziker*] of Allah is not correct. Please note that the reference to *namaz* is different and the reference to *ziker* is different. The Arabic term, ‘*Fa-‘izaa qazay-tumus-Salaata*’, deals with *namaz* [*salat*]. After this comes the subject of *zikerullah* where the connotation of perpetuity, assiduity or constant attention has been dealt with. It is after this that the speciality of *salat* is mentioned as enjoined at stated hours. And *Zikerullah* is obligatory in every situation. At another place, Allah says, “*Verily, in the creation of the heavens and of the earth and in the alteration of night and day are signs for those gifted with understanding --- Who standing, sitting or reclining, bear Allah in mind....*”<sup>19</sup> Every person remains in one of these three postures. Allah Most High has commanded people to remember Him and keep their attention focused on Him. The author of *Mu’alim at-Tanzil* writes in the exegesis of this Quranic Verse: “All the commentators [of Quran] have written that Allah’s purport in this Verse is that people perpetually remember Him in all conditions and postures because a human being is rarely in a posture other than these three postures.”

In the exegesis of the Quranic Verse, “*And be thou not of the neglectful*”,<sup>20</sup> Imam Fakhruddin Razi<sup>RA</sup> quotes a parable reported by Hazrat Ibn Abbas<sup>RZ</sup>. It says, “Ibn Abbas<sup>RZ</sup> reports in respect of the Quranic Verse, ‘*Standing, sitting or reclining, bear Allah in mind...*’, that if the human beings were to adopt a fourth posture, [other than the described three], Allah Most High would certainly have commanded His remembrance even in that posture.’ Imam Razi<sup>RA</sup> says that he [Ibn Abbas<sup>RZ</sup>] meant that Allah Most High has commanded His perpetual remembrance.” The author of *Mu’alim-at-Tanzil* has quoted Hazrat Aisha<sup>RZ</sup> under the said Quranic Verse as saying, “Hazrat Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> used to remember Allah [*Ziker-e-Ilahi*] at all times.” In short, what the commentators of Quran, the Imams of Traditions, the eminent scholars of *Ahl-e-Sunnat* and saints have said in praise of *ziker* are compiled, it would become a bulky volume.

Iqbal says: “*If you are a Muslim, do not get tied up to any state and do not get lost in the affairs of the world.*”

At another place, Allah says, “*O ye who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance.*”<sup>21</sup> In this Verse, *Ziker* has been emphatically enjoined. This proves that *ziker* is *farz* [obligation]. In respect of *namaz* and *zakat* there is only a simple imperative

<sup>18</sup> Quran, S. 4: 103 MMP.

<sup>19</sup> Quran, S. 3: 190-191 SAL.

<sup>20</sup> Quran, S. 7: 205 MMP.

<sup>21</sup> Quran, S. 33: 41 MMP.

but how great an importance is given to it [*zikh*], needs no explanation, even though Allah has at one place said that *zikh* is superior to *namaz*. Allah says, “*Recite that which hath been inspired in thee of the Scripture, and establish worship [salat]. Lo! Worship preserveth from lewdness and iniquity, but verily remembrance [zikh] of Allah is more important [or greatest]. And Allah knoweth what ye do.*”<sup>22</sup>

The reality of the people who hold *zikh* to mean *namaz* or reciting the Quran gets unveiled here, because *namaz*, *tilawat* [recitation of Quran] and *zikh* have been separately discussed in this Verse and *zikh* has been decreed as the ‘greatest’. This also shows that that, which is superior to the obligatory *namaz*, too would essentially be obligatory. The commandment about *zikh* has been mentioned with due deliberation in Quran in various manners and at various places. Besides, the fact that Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> too has, by the command of Allah, decreed it as obligatory, makes it more emphatic. Allah Most High did not leave the *zikh* by making it obligatory and emphasizing and explaining its importance, but classified the practitioners of scarce remembrance [*zikh-e-khaleel*] as having the attribute of the hypocrisy. Allah says, “*The Hypocrites ---they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will over-reach them; when they stand up to prayer, they stand without earnestness, to be seen by men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance.*”<sup>23</sup>

Besides, there are many Verses in Quran wherein neglecting *zikh* has been shown as punishable inviting divine wrath. Allah says,

- ▶ “*So woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah. It is such as these who are clearly in error.*”<sup>24</sup>
- ▶ “*And whoso shall relax his remembrance of Allah, the Compassionate, We shall attach to him a satan [or let an evil tendency develop in him] who shall be to him a fast companion.*”<sup>25</sup>
- ▶ “*But he who turneth away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection.*”<sup>26</sup>
- ▶ “*...And whoso turneth away from the remembrance of his Lord; He will thrust him into ever-growing torment.*”<sup>27</sup>

When the neglect of the remembrance of Allah [*zikh*] incurs divine displeasure and retribution, one needs to accept that *zikh* is obligatory and belief in and compliance on it is necessary.

Iqbal says: “*What is the use even if the intellect [khirad] recites La ilah.... There is nothing if the heart and the sight [nigah] are not musalman.*”

The group of the followers of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> has impeccably obeyed his teachings. He has declared that the *faqir* who performs the *zikh* of eight *pahr* [or twenty-four hours a day] is a perfect *mumin*. Since the group of the Imam<sup>AS</sup> performed the

<sup>22</sup> Quran, S. 29: 45 MMP.

<sup>23</sup> Quran, S. 4: 142 AYA.

<sup>24</sup> Quran, S. 39: 22 SAL.

<sup>25</sup> Quran, S. 43: 36 SAL.

<sup>26</sup> Quran, S. 20: 124 MMP.

<sup>27</sup> Quran, S. 72: 17 MMP.

obligation of *ziker* to perfection, he associated this specialty to his group, as described in the Verse, “Remember Allah with much remembrance.”<sup>28</sup>

Please see parable 202. It says: “Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> said that one time is the Emperor of the day [*Sultan-an-Nahar*] and the other is the Emperor of the Night [*Sultan-al-Lail*]. The person, who protects these two occasions [for *ziker*], will not waste his days and nights. The *faqir*, who wastes them [without *ziker*], is not a *faqir* of the religion [*deen*].”<sup>29</sup> This parable is also found in *Insaf Nama*<sup>30</sup> and other books of parables. *Sultan-an-Nahar* is from the dawn of the morning to the dawn of the sun and the *Sultan-al-Lail* is from the ‘*Asr* prayers to the ‘*Isha* prayers. During these timings, attention gets established in the heart due to the effect of *Ziker-Allah*. Because of this, negligence of Allah does not overcome the heart during the day and night.

In the commandments of Hazrat Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>, the standard of extreme excellence [*aliyat*] is found. Similarly, the commandments of *rukhsat* [permitted] are also found in his commandments. The Imam<sup>AS</sup> has declared the person who performs *ziker* for eight *pahr* is a perfect believer [*mumin*]. [Eight *pahr*, according to present-day measurement of time, is twenty-four hours of the day and night. This includes the *bayan-e-Quran* (explanatory discourse on the Quranic Verses) usually delivered between ‘*Asr* and *Maghrib* (late afternoon and post-sunset) prayers.] This is a high rank of excellence. In *rukhsat* limits, the commandment for the protection of *sultan-an-nahar* and *sultan-al-lail* is also there, so that in the coming era, people can draw the bounty [*faiz*] of the religion of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>, in proportion to their courage and aptitude. And this *rukhsat* itself can become a ladder for them to climb to the higher ranks, if they perform the *ziker* with sincerity of heart. It should be kept in mind here that the issues of the *rukhsat* level, Hazrat Bandagi Miyan Syed Mahmood Khatam-al-Murshidin<sup>RZ</sup> has explained, pertain to the commandments of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> alone. But this is not the occasion to go into them.

Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> has stated some stages of the Islamic Confession, *La ilah illa Llah*. There are four states of this Confession: [1] *guftani*, that is saying it by word of mouth; [2] *danistani*, that is by knowing; [3] *didani*, that by seeing; and [4] *shudni*, that is to become *La ilaha illa Llah*. In some other books, there is *chashidani*<sup>31</sup> instead of *didani*. To explain these stages, the example given partly is that of a stone. The stage of *guftani* is where a stone is in water. In this stage, the *zakir* [one who performs *ziker*] is affected by his remembrance of Allah only to the extent that a stone is affected by its presence in water. And the example of the *danistani* stage is like the stone being in fire. In other words, the *zakir* accepts the effect of the Confession [*La ilaha illa Llah*] to the extent the stone accepts the heat of the fire in which it is engulfed. In the stage of *didani* or *chashidani* it is like the fire in a lamp. A lighted lamp illuminates the *batin* [immanence or inside] of the *zakir*. Another example of this stage is a horseshoe in fire. In this stage, the horseshoe accepts the effect of the fire to such an extent that it takes the shape or

<sup>28</sup> Quran, S. 33: 41 MMP.

<sup>29</sup> *Naqliyat Miyan Abdur Rashid*<sup>RZ</sup>, Urdu translation by Hazrat Abu Sayeed<sup>RA</sup>, Hyderabad, 1369 AH, pages 136-137. English Translation by Faqir Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi, Bangalore, 2004, p. 95.

<sup>30</sup> *Insaf Nama*, by Hazrat Vali bin Yusuf<sup>RZ</sup>, Urdu translation by Hazrat Syed Dilawar<sup>RA</sup>, Hyderabad, 1407 AH/1987 AD, page 234; English translation by Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi, Bangalore, 2001 AD, Chapter 11.3, Parable 32, page 173.

<sup>31</sup> *Chashidani* means tasting.

colour of the fire, but its nature, as iron, does not change. The example of the *zakir* in the *shudni* stage is like fire and firewood or water and ice. In this stage, the *zakir* becomes exactly like *takhliq bi akhlaq Allah*.<sup>32</sup> The application is so perfect that the *zakir* perishes in Allah and becomes *Fana-fi-Allah-o-Baqa-bi-Allah*.<sup>33</sup> In short, as the stages of *ziker* improve, so do the perpetuity and assiduity of *ziker*. So much so that in the stage of *shudni* perpetuity, assiduity and perishability<sup>34</sup> have reached their ultimate perfection.

Iqbal says: “*The survival of remembrance [ziker] lasts till the last breath of the zakir [one who performs ziker]. The perpetuity of the ziker confers perpetuity to the zakir.*”

Please see Parable 200.<sup>35</sup> It says, “Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> has said that if the confession, *La ilaha illa Llah*, has the effect on the heart of the servant [*banda-e-Khuda*] for as long as a grain of green gram has if thrown on the horn of a cow, his objective can be achieved.” Please also see Parable 201.<sup>36</sup> It says, “The Imam<sup>AS</sup> has also said that the confession, ‘There is no god but God’, should leave the effect on the heart of the faithful [*mumin*] as a spark leaves on a house full of cotton that is left entirely burnt. But the effect of the confession is that it completely burns the love of things other than Allah [*ghair-Allah*].”

These sayings show that the basic issue is the Love of Allah. Without this, the *ziker* does not acquire the effect and the hue of the saying, “One remembers most what one loves most.” It is for this reason why *Ishq* is called *Umm-ul-Kitab* [mother of Book] and *Aab-e-Hayat* [Elixir of Life], which is the essence of the teachings of Quran and causes the *Baqa-bi-Allah* [survive with Allah].

The author of *Insaf Nama* has written: “*Muraqaba* [observation] has two meanings. One *muraqaba* is derived from *raqabat*, which means *muhafazat* [protection]. Here it means that one should protect [or cleanse] one’s heart [or mind] from thoughts and ideas other than those of Allah, and engage oneself in the remembrance of Allah. And one should see oneself as the point of Allah’s awareness [*matla*’]. In other words, one should understand that Allah is Present and Seeing. He is seeing every condition [*halat*] of ours. This is the *muraqaba* of the beginners. The other *muraqaba* is derived from *ruqub*, which means seeing or sighting. This *muraqaba* means that one should immerse oneself in the beauty [*jamal*] and splendour or loftiness [*jalal*] of the nature and essence [*zath*] and attributes [*sifat*] of Allah, so much so that no other thing should enter the mind. This is the *muraqaba* of the fully accomplished [*muntahi*]. Hence, the observance of the manifest deeds is possible with the distraction of the mind. But *muraqaba* without the recess or emptiness of the mind [*khilwat-e-batin*] is never possible. Hence, O friend, the seeker of Allah [*haq* --- Truth] should always be in *muraqaba*. If he

<sup>32</sup> This is a Tradition of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>. It means, ‘Create the good qualities and virtues of Allah in you.’

<sup>33</sup> It means ‘Perishing in Allah and surviving with Allah.’

<sup>34</sup> *Faniyat* has been translated here as perishability. This word is not in the U.S. English dictionary in the computer. But it is in Roget’s International Thesaurus, New Delhi, 1978 and The Standard English Urdu Dictionary, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu [Hind], New Delhi, 1989.

<sup>35</sup> Of *Naqliat Miyan Abdur Rashid*<sup>RZ</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

were ever to dream [of anything], he should inform his *murshid* [spiritual guide] and should not be proud of himself.”<sup>37</sup>

The specialty of Hazrat Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> was that he used to instruct [*talqin*] every *musaddiq* [believer], whether he or she was a learned person or an unlettered one, in concealed remembrance of Allah and *pas-e-anfas* [synchronizing the inhaling and exhaling of the breath with the recitation of the Islamic Confession, *La ilaha illa Llah*]. And this is the most superior among the wordings of the gradable *zikr*. It is for this reason that among the Mahdavis there is no counting the beads of the rosary, recitation of the sacred phrases or any other kind of daily worship [other than the daily obligatory *namaz*], because all those things were not necessary in addition to the concealed remembrance of Allah. Please note Parable 201.<sup>38</sup> It includes these couplets, which read in translation: “Keep an eye on your breaths, if you are a knowing man [*mard-e-‘arifi*]; you will win the kingdom of both the worlds in one breath. Every breath that comes out of your body is a pearl; its cost is the kingdom of both the worlds. Do not be pleased to waste this treasure. But, if you do, you will go into the mud empty-handed and voiceless.”

Some people have criticized the *zikr* [remembrance] synchronized with breaths and said that Mahdavis had converted the nose into a tool of *zikr*. But Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> has contradicted this in one of his tracts. He says, “It is absolutely wrong that the followers of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> have converted the nose into a tool of *zikr*. He quoted Quran, “*And do thou [O Muhammad] remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and with awe, at morn and evening. And be not of the neglectful.*”<sup>39</sup> He also quoted the Verse, “*Behold! He cried to his Lord in secret.*”<sup>40</sup> Explaining this, Bandagi Miyan<sup>RZ</sup> said, “That Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup> and other Prophets are appointed [*mamur*] on concealed remembrance of Allah shows that concealed remembrance is the most superior among the remembrances [various kinds of *zikr*]. The tool of *zikr* is the heart. And as long as the *zikr* is not established in the heart, one cannot escape from the attributes of neglect. And establishing *zikr* without synchronizing it with breath is impossible. Without *pasdari* [regard] the heart cannot be cleansed from thoughts and whims, because the center of the breath is the heart.

Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup> further says, “Breathing is not restricted to the nose. It is concerned with all the organs of the human body. That is why the *saliks* [mystic devotees] of the path of the Ultimate Truth and the seekers of the Absolute *Zath* [essence or nature] have determined that concealed remembrance of Allah is more superior because the existence of the *zakir* [one who performs remembrance or *zikr*] will not be free of impurity, hypocrisy and arrogance, without the concealed remembrance, which synchronizes with the breath, and perpetual remembrance cannot be achieved. The reason for this is that if one performs *zikr* using the tongue, one would not be able to continue perpetual recitation or remembrance of Allah, because one would be talking, sleeping, eating or engaged in other work at times. And by doing so, one could be

<sup>37</sup> *Insaf Nama*, by Vali bin Yusuf<sup>RZ</sup>, Urdu translation by Hazrat Syed Dilawar<sup>RA</sup>, Hyderabad, 1407 AH/1987 AD, page 82; English translation by Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi, Bangalore, 2001 AD, Chapter 5.1, pages 68-69.

<sup>38</sup> Of *Naqliat Miyan Abdur Rashid*<sup>RZ</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Quran, S. 7: 205 MMP.

<sup>40</sup> Quran, S. 19: 3 AYA.

counted among the negligent, although negligence is not the attribute of the *mumin* [believer].”

After this, Bandagi Miyan<sup>RZ</sup> quotes the Tradition of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad<sup>SLM</sup>, “The breath that exhales without the remembrance [*ziker*] is dead,” and says, “The wisdom in the saying of Prophet<sup>SLM</sup> is that since the breath enters the heart and all the organs of the human body and penetrates into and affects them, it raises the plant of faith [*iman*] in the heart of the *zaker* as the Prophet<sup>SLM</sup> has said, “The Islamic Confession, ‘There is no god but Allah’, raises the plant of Faith [*iman*] as water raises the greenery [*sabzi*].” O friend! Know that the objective is that the remembrance of Allah is established in the heart by synchronizing it with the breaths. The breath goes in and out, either through the nose or mouth. Both are the paths of the breath. Since the breath enters the body through the nose, it does not become the instrument of remembrance, because the breath in itself is absolute. The objective of the followers of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> is that the *ziker* is established in the heart through synchronizing it with the breath. And the heart achieves contentment through the *ziker* of Allah. Allah Most High says, “*Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction.*”<sup>41</sup> And this is the source of achieving the Vision of Allah too. Allah Most High says, “[*To the righteous will be said:] ‘O [thou] soul, in [complete] rest and satisfaction! Come back thou to thy Lord, --- well pleased [thyself], and well pleasing unto Him! Enter thou, then, among My devotees! Yea, enter thou My Heaven.*”<sup>42</sup>

Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> has specified the Islamic Confession, *La ilaha illa Llah* [There is no god but God --- Allah], for *ziker* [remembrance]. He has also said that the purport of all the apostles and the heavenly [sacred] books was also the same Confession. Since the Imam<sup>AS</sup> has taught the concealed remembrance of Allah, there would be no relationship with anybody or anything other than Allah [during the *ziker*]. Contrary to this, all other recitations of holy names and daily worship would be related to things other than Allah. For instance, the holy name ‘*Ya Wadud*’<sup>43</sup> is daily recited to solicit sustenance, ward off misery, financial or otherwise, and improve bodily strength and to win the love of somebody. Although in these recitations, there is the name of God, their purpose is not Allah. It is for this reason that the Imam<sup>AS</sup> has specifically made obligatory the remembrance of *La ilaha illa Llah* alone. There is no inkling of anything other than Allah in this Confession.

Allah Most High has clearly stated at many places that the remembrance and worship of Allah should sincerely, entirely and singularly be for Allah, because the purpose of worship itself would become the deity and the objective of the worship, as Allah Most High has said, “*Hast thou seen him who maketh his desire his god...*”<sup>44</sup>

It is narrated that somebody once asked Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup> about the essence of the four heavenly books. The Imam<sup>AS</sup> said, “The essence of the Torah, the Psalms of David,

<sup>41</sup> Quran, S. 13: 28 AYA.

<sup>42</sup> Quran, S. 89: 27-30 AYA. Hazrat Abu Sayeed<sup>RA</sup> interprets *Heaven* as Vision of Allah Most High.

<sup>43</sup> *Ya Wadud* is one of the 99 names of Allah.

<sup>44</sup> Quran, S. 45: 23 MMP; S. 25: 43 MMP. The translation of the latter Verse reads, “*Hast thou seen him who chooseth for his god his own lust?*”

the Bible and the Quran is a small phrase, *La ilaha illa Llah.*"<sup>45</sup> This concise answer of the Imam<sup>AS</sup> unveils the reality that the main purpose of the advent of the apostles and revealing of the heavenly Books is the affirmation and knowledge of the Unity of Allah Most High. Besides these, all other [methods of] worship and affairs are their necessary concomitants. Hence, Islam begins and ends with the Confession, *La ilaha illa Llah.* The Confession first imparts the teaching of denying and rejecting the *ilah* [worshipped deity] other than Allah. The essential consequence of this would be that a believer would reject any deity that he sees on his way to *illa Llah* [except Allah] and strives to reach the proximity of the latter, because the rejection of *ghair-Allah* takes precedence over the *iqrar-bi-Allah* [affirmation of Allah].

Iqbal says, "*The point of [Divine] Unity can be explained; [but] what can be done if there is a temple of idols in your mind? The secret that is hidden in the La ilaha [is obvious]; [but] what can one say if the path of the Sheikh is of fiqh [Islamic jurisprudence].*" In short, the teachings of the Imam<sup>AS</sup> specifically stress the importance of the point that a believer should never have even an iota of the thought of things other than Allah.

There was great love between Bandagi Miyan Syed Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup> and Bandagi Miyan Syed Abdul Latif<sup>RA</sup>.<sup>46</sup> The latter had paid fealty [*bai'at* or *ilaqa*] to the former as his *murid*. Miyan Abdul Latif<sup>RA</sup> avoided the prayer [*namaz*] congregation, whenever his elder brother Miyan Syed Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup> led the prayers. Somebody from among the *fuqara* of the *daira* told Miyan Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup> one day, "Miyan Syed Abdul Latif<sup>RA</sup> rarely joined the prayer congregation. Miyan Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup> smiled and said, "You better ask him." The brothers of the *daira* asked [Miyan Abdul Latif<sup>RA</sup>], "Why do you rarely come to the congregation prayers." He replied, "I say my prayers individually when the imam is not present." The brothers said, "The imam is present in every prayer." Miyan Abdul Latif<sup>RA</sup> joined the *maghrib* prayers. He continued his prayers for a couple of cycles [*rakaat*]. Then he broke away and said his prayers individually. The brothers asked him, "Why did you say your prayers individually even though the imam was present?" The Miyan<sup>RA</sup> said, "The imam was not present [that is, he was not fully concentrating on the prayers]. He had gone to the house of the *tehi* [oil seller] to bring oil. Who had I to follow in the prayers?" Then the imam said, "He has said the truth. My thoughts were about the same place [that is, *tehi's* house]." After that, the belief of the brothers improved and they were all grateful to Miyan Syed Abdul Latif<sup>RA</sup>.<sup>47</sup>

Miyan Syed Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup> was aware of the lofty esoteric state of his younger brother and disciple Miyan Latif<sup>RA</sup> because he had smiled and asked the questioners to inquire from Miyan Latif<sup>RA</sup> himself. This is self-explanatory. The style of the narration of the parable also indicates that Miyan Latif<sup>RA</sup> was not content without the perfect concentration of the imam during *namaz* and because of this particular esoteric condition of his *murid*, he had left his *murid* undisturbed. Since the type of *namaz* that was being

<sup>45</sup> *Hashia Insaf Nama*, by Hazrat Vali bin Yusuf<sup>RZ</sup>, Hyderabad, 1369 AH, page 1.

<sup>46</sup> The former was the elder and the latter the younger of the siblings. They were the sons of Bandagi Miyan Syed Sharif Tashrifullahi<sup>RA</sup> and grandsons of Bandagi Miyan Syed Khundmir<sup>RZ</sup>. The author [Hazrat Abu Sayeed Syed Mahmood<sup>RA</sup>] is a descendant of Bandagi Miyan Syed Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup> and his *silsila-e-faqiri* also reaches him.

<sup>47</sup> *Akhbar-al-Asrar*, [a manuscript], Chapter 2, Section 9.

performed in the *daira* was perfectly correct according to the *Shariat* in its exoteric manifestation, Miyan Sa'adullah<sup>RA</sup>, who was the *murshid* of the *daira*, did not disclose the required esoteric condition of perfect concentration of thought during the *namaz*. This type of concentration is not within the power and capacity of every person. The revelation [*kashf*] of the condition of the mind of another person is the personal affair of the person concerned. Hence, the *murshid* did not disclose it to the people. The increase in the faith and belief of the brothers of the *daira* and their being grateful to Miyan Latif<sup>RA</sup> is the proof that the lesson, he imparted, manifested the esoteric status of the *namaz*, that is, perfect concentration of mind on the Lord and avoidance of the thought of anything other than Allah during the prayers. The basic purpose of this lesson too was the same. Imam Ghazali<sup>RA</sup> says that every scholar of *Shariat* will issue an edict of correctness about the *namaz*, performed in accordance with the norms of *Shariat*, which is in compliance of the principle, "We judge on the [basis of] exoteric [condition]." <sup>48</sup> But when you ask an *arif bi-Allah* [one who knows Allah] about it and if he says that your *namaz* has been perfectly said, ponder over what kind of *namaz* it should be!

This incident relates to the time of the fourth generation followers of Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. But one can guess what would have been the esoteric status of the *namaz* and *zikr* of the people who had lived, learned and received the bounty of companionship from Hazrat Imam Mahdi<sup>AS</sup>. The Imam<sup>AS</sup> has said, "One glance of this servant [of Allah] is better than the worship of a thousand years."

Iqbal says: "*One is the law of musalmani; one is absorption of musalmani. The absorption of musalmani is the secret of the sky of skies. O wise wayfarer without the absorption of musalmani! Neither the branch of action is born, nor the branch of certainty is green!*" Allah says, "*That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things; then worship ye Him....*" <sup>49</sup> At another place He says, "*Hast thou not seen that Allah, He it is Whom all who are in the heavens and the earth praise, and the birds in their flight? Of each He knoweth verily the worship and the praise....*" <sup>50</sup>

When everything in the earth and the heavens bears the specialty of remembrance and worship [of their Lord] in their own spheres, the imperative of the intellect and discretion of a human being should be that he makes the worship and remembrance of his Lord obligatory on himself. Instead of this, despite all the commandments of obligations and elucidations with tenable and cogent arguments and proofs, the efforts to interpret the Quranic Verses about the remembrance of Allah and explaining them in a different way is against the divine will and teachings.

Iqbal says: "Asked, 'what is the death of intellect?' I said, 'Giving up thinking!' Asked, 'What is the death of heart?' I said, 'Giving up remembrance.' Asked, 'Body?' I said, 'Provision from the dust of the path.' Asked, 'Soul?' I said, 'La ilaha [No god].' Asked, 'Adam?' I said, '[He] is from His secrets.' Asked, 'World?' I said, 'It is itself before [you]'".

<sup>48</sup> This is a rule of the *Shariat*. The '*alim-e-Shariat* decrees a *namaz* or any other deed that is in accordance with the rules of *Shariat* as correct. The esoteric state of the performer is no concern of the scholar of the *Shariat*.

<sup>49</sup> Quran, S. 6: 102 AYA.

<sup>50</sup> Quran, S. 24: 41 MMP.