

# THE BOOK OF ASSISTANCE - A SPIRITUAL ASCENSION



Imam Khalid Latif

## SESSION 4

### The Book of Assistance – A Spiritual Ascension

- In this series, Imam Khalid Latif is discussing the Book of Assistance by Imam Al-Haddad. In previous sessions, he covered the concept of spirituality within Islam, that rituals need inner dimensions, such as sincerity, for it to have life and vitality. The goal is to reach certainty and we start with intentions. In this session, Imam Khalid covers vigilance, muraqaba, as a means becoming aware of our state.

### Vigilance

- We must be aware of the state of the heart, it is the most important part of who we are. If it is in a good state, so will everything else. The third chapter is on vigilance (muraqaba), which is being mindful of Allah SWT in times of movement and stillness. It is understanding the reality that nothing is concealed from Him and to be aware of that reality.

## The Roadmap

- As discussed in previous sessions, the end goal is yaqeen (certainty) and you need niyyah (intention) before you take those steps. However, as you take those steps you want to be able to understand those steps. On the road to yaqeen that takes loops, twists and turns, you want to engage in muraqaba and assess what is happening in the heart. It is a debriefing that determines if it brings you closer to Allah SWT or if it is not good for you.
- The heart watches over you, but you need to watch over it. Different elements come into the equation, such as the nafs, ego, the world (dunya), desires (hawa), and waswasa (whispers of shaytaan). These take our attentiveness from muraqaba. Imam Al-Haddad tells us to feel His Nearness to us, that He is All-Aware of us.

## Movement and Stillness

- You want to be aware of Allah SWT in the moments of movement and stillness. Moments of stillness are critical for inward understandings. With technological advancements, there are diminishing spaces of stillness. We want this remembrance of Allah SWT not just to be on the tongue, but in the heart.

- Muraqaba is the recognition and consciousness of Allah SWT in movement and stillness. Once you affirm niyyah, you can determine if your path is for the sake of Allah SWT, as when you are in motion, it can be difficult to gather thoughts.
- When in stillness, build out of a routine of this awareness. Award is the remembrance of Allah SWT through acts of worship like recitation of Qur'an or dhikr. Imam Khalid advises us to purposefully build moments of stillness within our routines, without the buzz of technology or social media. Find out where that space is for you, to allow an opportunity of deep reflection, to assess what is going on within you. These spaces can be anything: your room, place of prayer, nature, your car, or the mosque.
- Stillness inward is impacted by the physical environment. If you are surrounded with agitation and noise (like at home), it can distract. These do not need to be abnormally long amounts of time, just consistent times, like 10 minutes every day. It is important to note that you may respond to things in different ways, for example if you are morning or night person, or if the seasons affect your mood. The road looks different for everyone.

## The Remembrance of Allah SWT

- Allah SWT is there for use when we feel alone. You have a Divine entity connecting to you in this way. He engages us in the way that He is. Mercy or love is not determined by how people treat us.
- Allah's SWT proximity to us is not determined by human interaction. As we fathom it more, it is beyond our rational capability to understand truly what His capacity is. We desire comfort in His remembrance, not to fully understand it. In doing so, one develops a deep sense of positivity with one's relationship with Allah SWT, not fearful as one would feel a spider. The fear one feels towards Allah SWT is that one of reverence.

## Hayaa (Modesty)

- Imam Al-Haddad tells us we should have hayaa (modesty) before our Lord. We tend to think of modesty within the context of external dressing or gender, but that is not what it simply is about. Hayaa is an consciousness of Allah SWT in the sense that we avoid the places that He has told us not to go or to be in the places that He wants us to be in. In this sense, we wake up for fajr with a sense of hayaa.

- We established that the path is towards yaqeen and the starting point is intention. Along the way, we need muraqaba, which is coupled with the sense of hayaa. If you find laziness with this path there are four progressive steps to take. If the primary one does not work, you move to the next.
  1. Reminds your soul that Allah SWT Sees and Hears you
  2. Increase your knowledge of Allah SWT
    - Are angels on your shoulders and they are writing your actions down. One needs to understand who Allah SWT says He is, so it resonates more
  3. Reality of death
    - This is a spiritual exercise, not a morbid exercise of doom. The time in the world is limited and there needs to be an understanding that this world is limited. There is a much bigger world after this one.
  4. Heaven & Hell
    - Remind your soul of the immense reward of Paradise and the intense punishment of Jahannam.

### The Choice and Strategy

- The choice is for us to be obedient or disobedient towards His Commands. One needs a strategy to get towards that obedience, however, as one does not make a dua and suddenly transform. If you have been doing an action disobeying Allah SWT, you need to develop the patience to bring the obedience to fruition.

- Make an intention for that to exist with you and then seek support mechanisms, like people and environment.

## Bringing it All Together

- If you have that hayaa in obeying Allah SWT, you are in a station of muraqaba. The least is such that when you are alone, you do not do something you would not want a man/woman of virtue to see. There are actions done in public, private, and in secret.
- If you want an indication of where your heart is, then see how you are when nobody else is there and only Allah's eyes are there. It gives you an indication of who you are and tells you what the state of your heart is. If you want your heart to guard you, take into account what you feed your soul. Think deeply of what is going on within you.
- The engagement of haram will harden and bring darkness within the heart. Take account of your recitation of Qur'an, your company, what you eat, your self-reflection on a regular basis, your contemplation, good deeds, service of others, and helping others in their need.
- We ask Allah SWT to allow us to reach this station of awareness of Him within moments of stillness and movement in an effort to develop certainty within our faith. We ask Allah SWT to bless Imam Khalid Latif for sharing this meaningful class to develop more meaning within our devotional practices. Ameen.

## FAQs

- What did the previous two chapters cover?
- What does muraqaba entail?
- What are different distractions that can take us away from muraqaba?
- How can one develop moments of stillness in day-to-day life?
- What does hayaa mean?
- What does it mean within the context of muraqaba?
- What are the four progressive steps one takes when laziness befalls them?
- How can one see the state of their heart?