

Ramadan Immersion



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The Virtue of Gatherings of Dhikr

- This Hadith is narrated by Abu Hurairah; he combined several hadith together. It entails being there for our brothers and sisters of Islam.
- The point of remembering Allah (through dhikr) and making du'a to Allah. is to get closer to Allah and be from amongst His selected slaves. These actions also have an impact on who we are as an individual.
- The way it transforms a believer is by bringing them relief from distress in the dunya (i.e. financial stress etc.).
- The more distress we want to relieve ourselves from on the Day of Judgment, the more distress we should be relieving others from in this life.
- A recurring theme in this Hadith is the way we treat the creation; is the way our Creator will treat us.
- We can either totally remove the hardship of others altogether or if we are unable to, we should make it easier by helping them partially. Then, Allah will make it easy for us in this life and the next.
- If we do not want to be exposed by Allah on the Day of Judgment, then we should cover up the mistakes and shortcomings of others.

- The only exception to this is those who publicly abuse our community – we are not meant to cover up for them. We are allowed to expose them only after we have given them advice; this is an opportunity for them to rectify their affairs. And if we fear they repeat this behavior, we have to warn others. This is considered a virtue and not a sin.
- Each one of us has mistakes which Allah has concealed. Thus, our pious predecessors would say, when people are impressed by you, they are not impressed by you but by Allah's ability to cover your faults.
- If we want to facilitate our path to Jannah, we have to embark upon the path of seeking knowledge; be it part-time or full-time, or whatever we are capable of. We should do whatever we can throughout our lifetime.
- Four things that happen when we gather to study knowledge:
 - 1. Mercy will envelop us
 - 2. Angels will surround us
 - 3. Tranquility will descend upon us
 - 4. Allah will mention our names in His gathering
- Our lineage will not benefit us if we don't believe in the Oneness of Allah and we don't have good deeds. However, it may enhance the dunya and akhirah if we have both.
 - For example, Ibrahim AS could not seek forgiveness for his father. Similarly, the Prophet was reprimanded by Allah not to seek forgiveness for the disbelievers, even if they are closest family relatives.

Lowering One's Voice

- Abu Musa al-Ash'ari narrated this Hadith. His full name is Abdullah ibn Qays.
- In this Hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) was traveling with his companions. It was his Sunnah whenever they traversed peaks and valleys to say 'Subahanallah and Allahu Akbar'.

- This Hadith shows us that dhikr can be done publicly and we can encourage others to join us. However, it should not be excessively loud.
- In this setting not all the companions were making the same dhikr. Abu Musa was saying 'La Hawla Wala Quwwata Illa Billah (لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ)'. It is one of the hidden treasures of reward from Allah.
- Scholars say the statement 'La Hawla Wala Quwwata Illa Billah' is one that Allah has prepared a special reward for. We will only be able to see its fruits and merits in the Hereafter. Thus, the more we say it, the more we will reap rewards from His hidden treasure.
- The significance of La Hawla Wala Quwwata Illa Billah (There is no might nor power except with Allah):
 - It is a reminder to ourselves nothing can take place except by the ability of Allah.
 - No one has the ability to do anything except in the will and permission of Allah.
 - This statement can be said in times of happiness or distress.
 - We say it with the intention Allah shows us His power and might in the aid that He delivers (i.e. for the ummah; people in Gaza).
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) used to supplicate: "O Allah show us the power of your ability in those that are persecuting the believers."
 - We also see this statement in the Qur'an. In Surah al-Kahf, the man was told:

لَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, 'What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah' ? (18:39)

- It can also be said when one is surprised or when something amazing happens.

- From this Hadith we learn that when we are descending, we say 'Subahanallah' and when we are ascending, we say 'Allahu Akbar'. And when we are traveling, we should be busy doing dhikr and increase in our remembrance of Allah. We can say it aloud but at room volume.

The Virtue of Tahlil and Tasbih

Hadith #1

- Tahlil refers to 'La Ilaha Illallah (There is no God except Allah).' This term in Arabic has ellipsis in it; meaning, that there is no one worthy of worship besides Allah.
- Tasbih refers to 'Subahanallah (Glory be to Allah).' This term is to free Allah from every deficiency and negative attribute.
- Here, when the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned Tahlil, he is referring to the statement:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

There is no god but Allah, the One, having no partner with Him. Sovereignty belongs to Him and all the praise is due to Him, and He is Potent over everything

- Virtues of saying this statement 100 times:
 - Equivalent to freeing 10 slaves
 - 100 good deeds will be recorded
 - 100 bad deeds will be erased
 - Protection from Shaytan until the evening on that day
- Here, Tasbih refers to saying the statement:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

Glory be to Allah and Praise Him

- Virtue of saying this statement 100 times:
 - Sins will be erased even if it is as much as the foam in the sea
- This Hadith teaches us the importance of making time for ourselves and making the dhikr of Allah by saying these statements 100 times.

- There is no greater protection from the trials and tribulations of this life than the dhikr of Allah.
- The more dhikr we make, the more our heart is protected, our sins are forgiven, our good deeds are increased and the closer we become to Allah.

Hadith #2

- Two statements mentioned in this Hadith:
 - سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ (Glory be to Allah and Praise Him)
 - سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ (Glory be to Allah, the Almighty)
- This is the final Hadith reported in Sahih al-Bukhari; it speaks about the virtue of dhikr and the scales of Allah. His first Hadith was about intention, and the last is about tilting the scales to our favor.
- Subahanallah (Tasbih) is to free Allah from every deficiency and negative attribute.
- Hamd (Tahmid) is to affirm every positive attribute to Allah; that He is worthy of praise because He is the possessor of all positive attributes, characteristics and traits.
- Therefore, Tasbih and Tahmid make a beautiful combination when they are said together.
- These two statements are pairing; and when they are said 100 times, our sins will be forgiven.
- They are light on the tongue – meaning, it doesn't require a difficult articulation and it is easy to say.
- They are heavy on the scales – meaning, it is a heavy statement. It shows us that different actions and statements have different weights. It depends on the sincerity and effort we make.
- Due to its meaning, these statements are beloved to Allah. Thus, when we say that which is beloved to Him, it will make us amongst the beloved to Him.
- It teaches us, as a part of concluding something, we are meant to free Allah from any deficiencies, and we are supposed to praise and thank Allah for the ability to do good.
 - For example, when we end a gathering, we say the statement:

سبحانك الله وبحمدك، أشهد أن لا إله إلا أنت، أستغفرك وأتوب إليك

O Allah, You are free from every imperfection; all praise is for You. I testify that there is no true god except You, I ask Your forgiveness and turn to You in repentance

Seeking Forgiveness Abundantly

Hadith #1

- The word tawbah and istighfar are two separate terms.
 - Tawbah is to leave a sin immediately and make the intention never to return to it, while having remorse in the heart as well as to return the rights of the people.
 - We should make tawbah before the sun rises from the west and our souls reach our throat.
 - Istighfar is the act of saying 'Astaghfirullah'; seeking forgiveness from Allah on our tongues.
 - They are used interchangeably in Arabic. The word tawbah encompasses the word tawbah.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) said he sought repentance from Allah 100 times – this refers to him making istighfar 100 times.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was forgiven for all his sins and mistakes. However, he teaches us that there are levels of seeking forgiveness for our sins and mistakes.
- There are four different levels:
 - Level #1: The lowest level is seeking forgiveness for our sins and mistakes
 - Level #2: This level is seeking forgiveness after falling into something makruh (disliked; but not sinful for)
 - Level #3: This level is seeking forgiveness after missing out on what is mustahhab (good deeds that are not mandatory but we get rewarded for)
 - Level #4: This level is seeking forgiveness just because it is beloved to Allah.
- Seeking forgiveness comes with many benefits:
 - It is affirming Allah's perfection while recognizing our deficiencies and shortcomings.

- This is perhaps why the Prophet (ﷺ) sought forgiveness.
- It opens up the doors of rizq
 - Allah said:

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُزِيلِ السَّيِّئَاتِ عَنْكُمْ مَازَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾ (71:10-12)

'Seek your Lord's forgiveness, 'for' He is truly Most Forgiving. He will shower you with abundant rain, supply you with wealth and children, and give you gardens as well as rivers.

- It is a means of protection
 - Allah said:

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

But Allah would not punish them while you, [O Muhammad], are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness. (8:33)

- As the leader of this ummah, the Prophet (ﷺ) wants to encourage us to get into the habit of seeking forgiveness.
- The more forgiveness we seek, the more Allah opens doors for us. and brings about ease, tranquility and spirituality we are meant to feel.
- Allah said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

Surely Allah loves those who always turn to Him in repentance and those who purify themselves. (2:222)

Hadith #2

- This Hadith shows us that so long as we are alive, Allah wants good for us because He allows us to seek tawbah till the sun rises from the west and our souls leave our body.
- If Allah had not wanted good for us, He would let us die upon a sin.

- Conditions of acceptance of tawbah:
 - Sincerity of repentance to Allah
 - Leaving off the sin immediately
 - Making intention never to return to the sin
 - Feeling remorse and regret
 - Returning the rights of people; if anywhere involved
 - In its appropriate time; doing it before the sun rises in the west or before our soul reaches our throat
- As it is with all deeds that we perform, tawbah is only possible with the tawfiq of Allah. Hence, if Allah has given us the will and ability now, we should immediately repent and never delay it.

Supplications of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Hadith #1

- Aisha' RA compiled several du'as the Prophet (ﷺ) used to make. She gives us an insight as to when and where they can be used.
- The first is a du'a he would make at the end of every salah; seeking refuge from four things.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ الْمَسِيحِ الدَّجَالِ

O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the torment of the grave, and I seek refuge with You from the torment of the Fire, and I seek refuge with You from the trials of life and death, and I seek refuge with You from the evil of the Al-Masihid-Dajjal

- The second is a du'a he would make at the beginning of every salah.

اللَّهُمَّ بَاعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطَايَايَ كَمَا بَاعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ، اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّنِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْسِلْ خَطَايَايَ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ

O Allah! Set me apart from my sins (faults) as the East and West are set apart from each other and clean me from sins as a white garment is cleaned of dirt (after thorough washing). O Allah! Wash off my sins with water, snow and hail

- The third du'a he frequently supplicated and it can be said at any time. Aisha's version is shortened. However, the longer version is narrated by Anas ibn Malik.
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

"O Allah! I seek refuge with You from helplessness, laziness, cowardice and feeble old age; the burden of debt, and being overpowered by men." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Generally, these du'as can be made anywhere. Nevertheless, it is better for us to make them wherever the Prophet (ﷺ) used to include them.
- When the Prophet (ﷺ) refuge (اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ), it is to seek protection from Allah because there is no refuge except with Allah.
- The trial of fire refers to Hellfire being placed in front of us on the Day of Judgment, the punishment of the fire is to be thrown into it.
- The trial of the grave encompasses the questioning, the darkness and the squeezing of the grave as well as the punishment in the grave.
- Two things that bring about the greatest amount of punishment in the grave:
 - 1. To not protect oneself from impurity
 - Particularly for the men, when they are urinating, they have to be careful and make sure the urine does not get back into the body and clothes. They must make sure to clean themselves.
 - 2. The result of what the tongue says
- Seeking refuge from Ad-Dajjal (Antichrist) – this refers to the end of time where Allah will give him the ability to perform what we see as miracles (i.e. bringing the dead back to life, split someone in half etc.). We cannot easily be duped by this and thus need to protect ourselves.

- Cleansing sins with water of snow and hail – this is because water is the main purifying agent in Islam and thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) asks Allah to cleanse him just as a white garment would be cleansed, because the water of tawbah wipes away our sins.
- Distancing sins just as Allah separates the east and the west – this is because we don't want to continuously fall into our mistakes, nor do we want to feel the impact of our sins.

Hadith #2

- The du'a that the Prophet (ﷺ) supplicated:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْهَرَمِ وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ وَفِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ

O Allah, I seek refuge in You from incapacity, laziness, miserliness, cowardice, old age, the torment of the grave and the trials of life and death.

- عَجْز – Refers to the inability to do something as we become older
- كَسَل – Refers to laziness; due to no motivation or desire
- بُخْل – Refers to miserliness; having wealth but not spending it for the sake of Allah
- جُبْن – Refers to cowardice; feeling afraid to confront
- هَرَم – Refers to being frail; not as strong as we once were
- The trials of life; our emotions, thoughts, wealth, faith, family etc.
- The trials of death; not being able to repent to Allah, to do good deeds before death, immense pain before death etc.

Hadith #3

- The Prophet (ﷺ) would seek refuge in Allah from the evil of the divine decree, from falling into misery, from the gloating of enemies, and from an unbearable trial.
- سُوءِ الْقَضَاءِ – Refers to the evil of divine decree. The decree of Allah has good and bad. However, the bad is not attributed to Allah but to ourselves. This happens as a result of freewill that Allah had created.

- دَرْكِ الشَّقَاءِ - Refers to being in a state of perpetual misery. For example, someone who spirals in their thoughts. It shows us that mental health is a serious issue and we should seek refuge from it.
- شَمَاتَةِ الْأَعْدَاءِ - Refers to the gloating of enemies after they defeat us.
- جَهْدِ الْبَلَاءِ - Refers to extreme calamities that it can break us. This shows us that we need to seek refuge in Allah from all these severe tests.