

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

In The Name Of Allah The Most Compassionate Very Merciful
All Praise Due To Allah And Peace And Blessings Be Upon His Beloved Messenger

The Concept of Islamic devotion

Different stages of Ihsaan

Allamah Nawawi explains that there are two stages in Ihsaan. If the person has reached such a lofty and elevated position that he finds himself in the Divine Court of the Almighty, then obviously, he will make certain that he is performing every minute detail of ibaadah in its proper fashion. He will also make sure that internally and externally, everything is completed properly. Hence, the purpose of this message is that a person should always have this thought in his mind that when he performs any ibaadah he is actually present in the Divine Court of the Almighty.

Hafiz ibn Hajr Asqalani has explained that the first stage of Ihsaan is that the heart of a Muslim should be so overwhelmed with Divine Awe that he should stand in such a manner as if he is looking at Allah Almighty. And if he has not reached this stage of spiritual elevation, then he should always bear this thought in mind while performing ibaadah that the Almighty is watching him.

Mulla Ali Qari explains that the first stage of Ihsan indicates to the state of an Arif and the inner dimension of his spiritual self or heart. In other words, a true Arif is that person who is overtaken with such state as if he is watching Allah Almighty. The second state is that of an Abid who whenever he is performing ibaadah, he is also conscious of the fact that the Almighty is watching him. We see that when an ordinary person is working for someone and as long as the boss of this person is watching him, he will make certain that he makes no mistake while on the job.

The true Abid also is like this person always making sure that every detail of ibaadah is faultless. The first part of Ihsan is certainly the state of those special servants of Allah who have already achieved this state. The special quality of these servants of Allah Almighty is that when any bounty comes to them, they do not look at the bounty but the Being who has blessed them with this bounty. In like manner when any test or illness comes to them, they are not concerned about the test or the illness which has come or the effects of this illness such as pain and hardship, but in all moments, they are watching the Almighty. Those who are in this state are always immersed in watching the marifah of Allah Almighty.

This is one of the reasons that one day while people were reading salah in a masjid a snake fell from the ceiling and everyone broke their salah and ran except Imam Abu Hanifah. As far as this great Imam was concerned, he was not even aware that a snake had appeared! (Tafseer Kabeer).

In like manner, Urwah bin Masud had a major wound in one part of his limb and it was recommended that it should be cut away. However, while he was in salah, this part was cut off and he did not even notice the slightest bit of what had happened! (Tafseer Kabeer).

Once Imam Bukhari was reading salah and after salah, he picked up the upper portion of his kurtah and asked one of his students to see what was under it. The student was shocked to see that there was a scorpion present and that it had bitten the great Imam nearly sixteen times and every part of this area which had been stung was greatly swollen. The student asked as to why the great Imam did not

break his salah on the first occasion when this scorpion had stung him. The great Imam replied, "I was so immersed and spiritually overwhelmed by the verses of the Quran I was reading that I did not even notice I had been stung.

In brief, these giants of Islam became so over awed and amazed by the Divine Manifestation they were seeing that they noticed nothing around them. Imagine if people are so amazed and transfixed at the beauty of a mere creation, such as Nabi Yusuf that these females in the royal court of Egypt actually cut their fingers instead of the lemon they had in their hands, what would be the state of those people who are actually looking at Divine Manifestation?

Allamah Mulla Ali Qari explains that there are three categories of an abid in regard to their state of Imaan. The first is that person who performs ibaadah because he is fearful of hell and is also earnestly in need of reward. It is said that the state of his Imaan is Ilmul Yaqeen and his worship is considered as ibaadah.

The second type of individual is that person who performs obedience with genuine spiritual enthusiasm. His Imaan is considered as Ainul Yaqeen and his state of ibaadah is considered as "Uboo diya". The third type of person is that person who worships the Almighty because he sincerely believes that he is the servant of Allah Almighty and the duty of a slave is to serve his Master. The state of his obedience is called Haqqul Yaqeen and the state of his worship is called "Uboo datun". The common Muslim like us, are those who are considered to be in the third category, in other words, our state of obedience or Imaan is Ilmul Yaqeen. We make sincere Dua that the Almighty blesses us with the state of the other two categories of Imaan ameen.

(Extracted from the commentary of Sahih Muslim)