

Revive Abandoned Worships

A successful businessman with Allah seeks all that which pleases Allah and your Ibaadah in itself is a business transaction. I did not bring that terminology from myself, it is directly out of the Qur'an:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ ﴿فَاطِر: ٢٩﴾

Verily, those who recite the Book of Allah (this Qur'an), and perform As-Salat (Iqamat As-Salat), and spend (in charity) out of what We have provided for them, secretly and openly, hope for a (sure) tradegain that will never perish. (Surat Faatir: 29)

Reciting the Qur'an, performing the Salah and spending in charity both secretly and openly, those are matters of Ibaadah. What about it? They hope for a sure tradegain with Allah that will never perish. Allah called it a tradegain (a business transaction), but a transaction that will never perish and it is a win win deal.

One thing that happens is that most people tend to get locked in on certain Ibaadaat and do not go beyond that to others, and over time some Ibaadaat become strange, abandoned or neglected. There is a long list of those actually but today Inshaa Allah we will talk about three of them.

MAKING ISTIGHFAAR BEFORE FAJR

The first one is asking Allah for forgiveness (making Istighfaar) before Fajr (before the call of Athaan). This is different to Qiyaam and this is different to Taraweeh. A worshipper seeks what pleases Allah in different forms and fashions, that is Ibaadah.

...وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾ آل عمران ﴿١٧﴾

And Allah is All Seer of the (His) slaves. Those who say: "Our Lord! We have indeed believed, so forgive us our sins and save us from the punishment of the

Fire.” They are those who are patient ones, those who are true (in Faith, words, and deeds), and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah. Those who spend [give the Zakat and alms in the Way of Allah] and those who pray and beg Allah’s Pardon in the last hours of the night. (Surat Aali Imraan: 15-17)

At the end of those verses, Allah says:

وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ

Sahar (سحر) is the end of the night, right before Fajr. That is why Suhoor (سحور) is called Suhoor, because it is at the end of the night. After you do Qiyaam, after you recite the Qur’an and remember Allah, then you are going to go have a meal with your family right before Fajr. Slip away and ask Allah for forgiveness right before Fajr. There is so much reward in it and so much honour in it that you fall under the verse:

وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ

We said that Ramadhaan is an Imaanic therapy to start some more Ibaadaat and to better yourself. Start gradually in this, start slow. Maybe five minutes before Fajr or maybe three minutes before Fajr, go sit and make Istighfaar. Do not listen to this and get all hyped up and inspired and then go do hours, because sometimes that is a Shaytaan tactic. One gets inspired at something and the Shaytaan gets one to exert all his effort in one night, and then he leaves it. Ibaadah is like when you buy a new car. They tell you that you have to break in the engine bit by bit, do not go and drive it at seventy miles per hour from the first day. You have to break the engine in. What little of Ibaadah you do that continues is better than a lump sum that vanishes.

While everyone is sitting at the table eating Suhoor and breakfast, conversing in possibly vain talk and sometimes sinful talk, take a step away and go do Istighfaar. Say Astaghfirullah seventy to a hundred times like the Prophet sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam, or make Istighfaar in any fashion or form. That is the beginning of a new Ibaadah in your life.

All the times are good for Istighfaar, but this time is a time recommended in the Qur’an. Do it and you will be among those praised by Allah in the Qur’an. You do it and Inshaa Allah you will get the forgiveness of Allah.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾

“I said (to them): ‘Ask forgiveness from your Lord; Verily, He is Oft Forgiving.’”
(Surat Nooh: 10)

Allah will forgive those who seek forgiveness. If you have financial problems or you are a couple having fertility problems, Istighfaar is by a clear verse a medication for all that and the best time is that time by Suhoor.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ
مَدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾ وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ
أَنْهَارًا ﴿١٢﴾ ﴿نوح﴾

“I said (to them): ‘Ask forgiveness from your Lord; Verily, He is Oft Forgiving. He will send rain to you in abundance; and give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers.’” (Surat Nooh: 10-12)

Do you want strength? Do you want a position or a promotion? Are you trying to get into a university and they keep declining and rejecting you? Wallahi head to Istighfaar and see.

وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَدْرَارًا
وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَى قُوَّتِكُمْ... ﴿هود: ٥٢﴾

“And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength.” (Surat Hud: 52)

Strength to your strength. It may be a position, a university you are trying to into or a promotion at work.

Do you want to enjoy life?

وَأَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى...

Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, that He may grant you good enjoyment, for a term appointed.

Ibn Katheer said this is in this life. Then the second sentence says:

... وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ... ﴿هُود: ٣﴾

And bestow His abounding Grace to every owner of grace (i.e. the one who helps and serves needy and deserving, physically and with his wealth, and even with good words). (Surat Hud: 3)

This is the life after, so you get both out of Istighfaar.

Do you want to be saved from evil? Do you want to be saved from punishment of sins in this life and in the life after?

... وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿الأنفال: ٣٣﴾

Nor will He punish them while they seek (Allah's) Forgiveness. (Surat al-Anfaal: 33)

The mercy of Allah descends upon you with Istighfaar.

... لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿النمل: ٤٦﴾

Why seek you not the Forgiveness of Allah, that you may receive mercy? (Surat an-Naml: 46)

If you have the mercy of Allah, what else do you need? Now tell me is it worth it? Start in this blessed day and make a determination to make it a habit right before Fajr. Wake up a little bit early and make Istighfaar. Start with your tongue and make sure your heart is at the same pace as your tongue. Be consistent and Wallahi you are going to see a change. If you doubt that, you are doubting the Qur'an.

Now a side issue, why is the pre dawn time specified in the Qur'an for a more special significance? We know all times are good for Istighfaar but why is it specified? Because that is the start of the day. A fresh, clean slate, that is what you need so Allah can bless your day and so you will not be deprived of blessing. When you start, you start on a clean slate (forgiven from Allah) so Allah will bless your day. You are heading to work (a materialistic world and life) and Allah wants you to know the exact reason and purpose for why you were created, so make Istighfaar before your day begins. The entire one third end of the night is a blessed time. I have talked about Qiyaam plenty and about the one third end of the night, but this is a special moment out of the one third end of the night to seek forgiveness from Allah.

TAFAKKUR

The second Ibaadah that has become somewhat strange is the Ibaadah of Tafakkur (تفكر), to ponder and to contemplate. To contemplate the names, qualities and attributes of Allah and the power of Allah. Pondering over the universal verses of Allah, the sky, the earth, the mountains, the day and the night, the wind and the textual signs in the Qur'an. Ponder over the verses in the Qur'an, ponder over the creation of Allah and His power in creating. Pondering? Yes pondering. Did you turn Sufi on us suddenly? No, this is a worship mentioned in the Qur'an.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿آل عمران: ١٩٠﴾

Verily! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding. (Surat Aali Imraan: 190)

What does the end of it say?

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

Those who remember Allah (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth.

يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

What does Tafakkur mean? That is ponder. They think about the creation of the heavens and the earth and they ponder about it. They think about it and when they ponder over that, where does that pondering lead them? Look at the next part of the verse:

...رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿آل
عمران: ١٩١﴾

(Saying): “Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! (Exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire.” (Surat Aali Imraan: 191)

When they ponder, they come to the right conclusion in their Tawheed. It establishes Tawheed within you.

There are many other verses to encourage you to ponder. There are hundreds of verses in the Qur’an encouraging this.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۗ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿الرعد: ٣﴾

And it is He Who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains and rivers and of every kind of fruits He made Zawjayn Ithnayn (two in pairs - may mean two kinds or it may mean of two sorts, e.g. black and white, sweet and sour, small and big, etc) He brings the night as a cover over the day. Verily, in these things, there are Ayaat (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs, etc) for people who reflect. (Surat ar-Ra’d: 3)

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتجاوراتٌ وَجَنَاتٌ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزَرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنَوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنَوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِصِلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكْلِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿الرعد: ٤﴾

And in the earth are neighbouring tracts, and gardens of vines, and green crops (fields etc), and date-palms, growing out two or three from a single stem root, or otherwise (one stem root for every palm), watered with the same water, yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Verily, in these things, there are Ayaat (proofs, evidences, lessons, signs) for the people who understand. (Surat ar-Ra’d: 4)

This is the Ibaadah that should flow with your other Ibaadaat like a soul flows in a body. It must be restrained by revelation. You cannot take it as a source, it is a matter that must be restrained by revelation. The worship of contemplating and pondering unlocks the heart and brightens the heart with that which the heart was blocked off from due to the tar of sins (it removes that tar). This Ibaadah opens the hearts to the meaning of the Qur’an and brings dosage after dosage of Imaan. This Ibaadah attains you certainty in Allah, fear in Allah, love of Allah, hope in Allah, reliance on Allah and continuous repentance (Inaabah) to Allah. This Ibaadah softens your heart, it softens those hard hearts. When you

constantly contemplate the power of Allah, it humbles you. When you contemplate the forgiveness and generosity of Allah, it entices you to do better. Contemplating the verses and signs of Allah is soap that cleans your mind and your soul.

Ponder in every matter that you see, make it a habit and establish yourself in doing that. Abu Sulaymaan ad-Daraani said I never left my house and laid my eyes on anything, except I see the blessing of Allah in it or His power over it. Let me repeat that because this sums up this whole matter. Abu Sulaymaan said I never left my house and laid my eyes on anything, except that I looked to the blessing of Allah in it or His power over it. Anything he sees, he looks to the blessing of Allah in it or the power of Allah over it. Every time you look at the sky, ponder who raised that sky with no pillars? Look at the sky and then look at the walls of your house. Every few months you need to call the handyman to fix it, yet a creation as magnificent as the sky is sustained and maintained by Allah year after year. When you are walking out of the house or walking out of the Masjid, look, ponder, think and say the One who did that to the sky is able to answer that Du'aa that I just made at the Masjid. It fills your heart with assurance, that is what it does. Do you understand now what pondering is?

Sit and visualise the details of the life after (the Aakhirah). Abdullah Ibn al-Mubaarak once visited Sahl Ibn Ali and he saw him zoned out thinking. Today if you see someone zoned out, you tell them to snap out of it. Abdullah Ibn al-Mubaarak said where did your thinking take you? Sahl Ibn Ali said I was at the Siraat. Sahl was daydreaming how he is going to cross over that bridge over Jahannam, that is what he was thinking about. In Musnad Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi, Anas Ibn Maalik asked the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam where am I going to meet you on the Judgment Day so I can get your Shafaa'ah (your intercession)? The Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said you will find me by the Siraat. He said what if I do not find you there? He said by the scale. He said what if I do not find you there? He said by the Kawthar. Do you think someone would ask such a question without having pondered over that matter and thought about the details of the Aakhirah and the Judgment Day for a long time? Ponder over the blessings Allah bestowed upon you. Ponder over Jannah, its mansions and the neighbourhood your palace is going to be in. Ponder over how big your front and back yard is going to be, how big your tent is going to be and how happy your family is going to be when you are reunited in a worry free life. That pondering gets you to escape the trials and difficulties of the prison of this world. It will bring you peace and contentment and place it and embed it in your heart. Ponder being called by Allah to a meeting with Allah. It will refresh your love to Him, it will bring you a heavy dosage of Taqwa and it will instill strong resistance against the Shaytaan because you want that meeting. Ponder over Hell, the misery of the inhabitants of Hell and their torture. It will melt your heart, get you to regret your past, revive Tawbah in you and make you plan a better future based on Imaan and Taqwa. This Ibaadah takes you to Yaqeen (certainty) in Allah.

When a Bedouin far from civilization and education sat and pondered, it led him to something better than most of the educated people of our time would know.

Camel dung indicates there was camels, footprints indicate there was travel, a sky with its constellations and the sea with its waves, all that shows there is the All Knowing, the All Powerful. Thinking about those matters got him to realise Allah.

TABATTUL

The third and final matter and neglected one is:

تَبَتُّلٌ وَالْإِنْقِطَاعُ إِلَى اللَّهِ

To sever yourself from all worldly matters and go to Allah.

Every one of these worships is in the Qur'an.

وَاذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا ﴿المزمل: ٨﴾

And remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with a complete devotion. (Surat al-Muzzammil: 8)

Devote yourself totally for Allah. One of the nicknames of Maryam 'alayhas-salaam was al-Batool (البتول). She was called al-Batool from this word (Tabattul (تبتل)) because she severed herself or refrained from marriage so she can worship, and that is the terminology Tabattul. This does not mean you go to a cave or a church and you sit there away from worldly matters.

There are three types of Tabattul. The first type is like the Catholics and monks do, they go live in a place of worship with no marriage and other essential worldly matters. That is not Islam. Allah created man and knows what suits man, and part of Islam is to get married. Putting them in such places creates and generates pedophiles, not dedicated worshippers. They have come to realise that now, which Islam taught us fourteen centuries ago. They are thinking about changing it but Islam told us that because our guidance comes from Allah the Creator who knows what best suits us.

The second type of Tabattul (devotion) is to take a certain time out of your day or night or the one third end of the night, and be in seclusion with Allah. Sever this world behind you and spend some time with Allah. Five minutes, twenty minutes, whatever it might be. Ibaadah, Salah, Dhikr, Du'aa and reciting the Qur'an, devoting yourself totally to Allah with a complete devotion. And of course among the best times (from the day and night) for Ibaadah is the one third end of the night.

The third type of Tabattul is to put your mind and soul in the life after with full devotion, and there are only few of the masses of the Ummah who Allah blesses with this. Physically they are with you and they are people you see with you physically, but their mind is absent in heavenly matters. People who when they speak, you think they are talking to you and one hundred percent thinking about what you are saying, but their mind is telling them is what I am saying Halaal or Haraam? Does it please or displease Allah? You may see them sad for some sadness that happens, but inside they are attached to Allah with contentment and acceptance of the destiny and decree of Allah. In a nutshell, it is really someone who is physically with you here, but spiritually his mind is devoted in trying to please Allah. He is present and absent at the same time. That is among the levels of Ihsaan, may Allah subhaanahu wa ta'aala grant us and you this level.