



*The
Journey Of
Marefat*

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

*The Way Of The
Lovers Of Love*

Dhruv Sangari (Bilal Chishty)

*Loss in Ecstasy
Is Loss*

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Mukhtar Ahmad





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*The
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Of
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(God-Realization)*

Believers must remember God very much (33:41)

The above verse describes the gist of the Quran. In Islam, remembrance of God is considered to be the highest form of worship. But this remembrance (or zikr) is not in terms of repetition of the word God. In fact, it is in terms of experience. It means that one should develop one's mind to such an extent that every experience becomes a point of reference to remember God; every occasion becomes an illustration of divine planning.

Remembering God much (Zikr-e-Kathir) is a result of a chain reaction in the thinking process of a "Believer. It is a product of a prepared mind, which gets triggered at every experience or observation. One observation leads to another and the chain reaction that ensues immerses the mind of a believer in a deep sense of gratitude (Shukr) towards his Creator. According to the Quran, believers are given a unique blessing, that is, they are able to add faith to their faith" (48:4). This verse is not conveying a mysterious meaning – such a development in one's faith is a direct result of the above kind of chain reaction.

For example, if a believer were to observe the phenomenon of rains, he will start by thinking about the rain cycle. He will discover the natural processes of conversion through which the salty water in the oceans gets converted to fresh water and comes down in the form of rains. Step-by-step, he will discover how God created various processes which finally provided him with fresh water, a natural resource vital to his existence. This chain reaction in thinking makes a believer realize that his Creator did not simply create him and leave him to fend for himself. Instead the Creator custom-made the entire universe such that it comes at the service of man. Such thinking will arouse within man a profound sense of acknowledgement for his Creator, making him bow down to his Creator's beneficence. This is the beginning of God-realization or Marefat.

Marefat is the essence of spirituality. It enhances a believer's relationship with God, makes him grow in wisdom and develops his power of analysis. The realization of an all-powerful God revolutionizes his thinking. An all-Merciful, all-Knowing and all-Compassionate God becomes the centre of his emotions.

When such a spiritually awakened person steps out of his house, he starts observing a host of divine blessings at work, especially for him – from fresh oxygen,



to sunlight, gravitational pull of the Earth, its soil, crops, water and so much more – that exemplifies the bounty of his Creator. When he eats food, it undergoes a divine factory to assimilate in the body to give him nourishment and sustenance, it makes him appreciate the magnificent planning of his Creator. As the day descends into night and his exhausted body retires to sleep, he cannot but deeply acknowledge his Creator for having mercy on man such that his tired body is able to rest and restore its lost strength. And then as night passes into day and the sun rises and lights up the sky, it is an experience that reminds him of the unlimited hope bestowed by his Creator!

Such a discovery becomes the fountainhead of spirituality within a believer. A believer becomes so sincerely absorbed in the feeling of gratefulness that all aspects of his behaviour and dealings take on the hue of God. When such a person speaks, he is conscious of the fact that God is listening to him. When he walks, he does so with modesty so that his gait may not be displeasing to his Creator. When he deals with people, he is always reminded of being accountable before God. The impact of this degree of realization makes his entire life God-oriented. When this recognition takes root in an individual's heart and soul, his whole personality becomes regenerated.

Contemplation in Spirituality

Man is an intellectual being. He is endowed with a mind, which is his greatest faculty. Real spirituality is that which has the power to address our minds. Any kind of spirituality attained at a level lesser than that of our minds is not true spirituality.

According to me, true spirituality is based on contemplation or reflection, which has all to do with one's intellectual development. The journey to spirituality starts from one's urge to search for truth. When a seeker discovers the truth and learns the creation plan of God, his life enters a new phase, that of building of the human personality according to spiritual principles.

The process of gaining spiritual nourishment commences with the de-conditioning of mind. Everyone is born spiritual but, after birth, he lives in a society, which continues to condition him.

He has to therefore learn to erase this conditioning and revert to the natural state in which he was born. There is only one formula for making this possible: *Learn to say I was wrong.*

Many times in our lives we are confronted with situations in which we realize that we were wrong in our thoughts, speech or actions. However, in almost all such situations, we do not have the courage to say that we were wrong. This stops our de-conditioning process. It is only when we openly say that we were wrong and admit the truth that our de-conditioning continues unhindered.

As the conditioning of our mind breaks and we propel forward in our quest for spirituality, we become more sensitive to our surroundings. We observe and realize that we alone do not partake a share of negative experiences in life; in fact, all men and women undergo negative experiences.

The paradox is that all men have been given the freedom to make their own moral choices, and their frequent misuse of this freedom causes untoward experiences. At such times spirituality teaches us to convert negativity into positivity through the art of conversion. In doing so, a spiritual mind learns to stay afloat despite being amidst drowning circumstances and learns to practically apply the spiritual principles of life.



Application of Spirituality

Spirituality is a process of converting our everyday material events into spiritual experiences. While living his social life, man is affected by events, which trigger negative thoughts such as malice, hatred, lust, arrogance, greed, etc. If man remains within the grip of his immediate situation, he cannot uplift himself to an elevated level and consequently remains far from spirituality. Only at this elevated level, man is able to eradicate his negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones. In this state, he learns to convert non-spiritual matters into spiritual matters just as a tree is the result of the conversion of non-botanical matter.

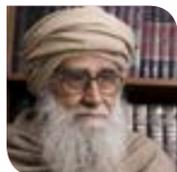
True spirituality cannot arrest the thinking process. Instead it enhances intellectual activity in the complete sense of the word. A spiritual person needs to look no further than his own inner resources for satisfaction in

life. He possesses inner contentment. As a result of living among different kinds of people, he is able to develop a personality that is a blend of opposites. The peace within him translates into peace outside of him, making him a peaceful member of the society.

Far from withdrawing from the world, he lives in it, participating in all its activities. He fulfills all his duties and responsibilities, without his heart being attached to worldly affairs. He appears to live in the world, but he stands apart from it.

Learning to live in the society by adopting spiritual principles is like living in a bush where there are beautiful flowers side by side with harmful thorns. You have to be cautious enough to be able to pluck the flowers without becoming entangled with the thorns.

This tightrope walking requires great observation and preparation, without which no one can achieve the higher goal of spirituality.



ABOUT THE WRITER

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is an Islamic spiritual scholar and is the Founder of Centre for Peace and Spirituality International.

He has also been honoured with the Padma Bhushan

He

Once I asked myself
Who is He?
And I heard a voice whispering:
He is the One
Whom no atom of the universe may disobey
And I thought and I thought and I thought
For I still lay restless

And I asked again of myself
Who is He?

And the some voice whispered:

He is the One
Who guards your every step,
He who feeds you, clothes you, shelters you
And I thought again and again and again
And still I lay restless

So once more I asked myself,
Who is He?

And the voice came once more,
Closer and clearer than before
And I heard it say,
You have a restless heart my child
Come, come, come ;
I shall tell you this,
He is the One
Who dwells in everyone
And I heard no more that voice
For soon I felt rest creeping into me and I fell asleep

When I awoke and wandered out
I saw Him, saw Him in everyone
And I knew who He is
I told myself
He is the One
Who dwells in everyone
He is within us, beside us, around us,
To guard us and guide us



Roma Wani is a writer, poetess and painter, aligned with all religions and traditions. She regards herself as a 'Seeker of light...Student of life'.

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