

تزكية النفس

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

STEPS TO LOVE ALLAH

PERFORMING VOLUNTARY ACTS

Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril حفظه الله

Spiritual Purification Retreat / Ramadān 1446

Steps to Love Allāh Performing Voluntary Acts

Ash-Shaykh Al-Imām Ahmad Mūsā Jibrīl (حفظه الله)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



The next aspect of cultivating love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that was highlighted by Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى is getting closer to Allāh تعالى سبحانه through Nawāfil (voluntary acts of 'Ibādah) — voluntary acts, of course, after you do the obligatory ones. You do the obligatory and *then* you do the Nawāfil, and this factor, concept, or aspect is taken directly from the Hadīth that's in Sahīh Al-Bukhari

وَمَا تَقْرَبُ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ

My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works until I love him.

My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing the Nawāfil until I love him. And Nawāfil, we said, are voluntary acts of 'Ibādah. Nawāfil are extra deeds besides what's obligatory. How does this fit into our topic? If you've been paying close attention, we're discussing ways to cultivate love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in *our* hearts. Here, Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى highlights how you can earn Allāh's Love. It appears to be two different topics. And the answer is, he's teaching you how to attain Allāh's Love for you. Whenever Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves someone, He bestows upon that person love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and love and Tawfīq to performing 'Ibādāt.

A person who doesn't perform Nawāfil, gets bored of them, or just wants to finish them quickly, he isn't showing that he's trying to earn Allāh سبحانه وتعالى's Love. Instead, he might be leaning towards being a hypocrite, والعياذ بالله, because Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said about the hypocrites,

وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

And when they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing [themselves to] the people and not remembering Allāh except a little

A person who truly loves Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and wants the high ranks in Jannah never feels satisfied with just the obligatory 'Ibādāt. The obligatory 'Ibādāt are not enough for them, they're always looking for additional 'Ibādāt to perform. The greater a person's love for Allāh, the more their Nawāfil will be. The more the Nawāfil increase, the more the love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى increases. Love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and Nawāfil nurture each other. It's like creating a cycle where each one supports and enhances the other. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى said in Madārij As-Sālikīn,

والدين كله استكثار من الطاعات، وأحب خلق الله إليه أعظمهم استكثاراً منها

Deen is all about doing more and more Tā'āt (deeds and Nawāfil), and the ones who are most beloved by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى are the ones who do the most deeds.

The Hadīth says

لَا يَزَالُ لِسَانُكَ رَطْبًا مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

Let your tongue be moist with the remembrance of Allāh.

He also said,

عَلَيْكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ لِلَّهِ

Make frequent prostration before Allah.

In another narration he said,

فَاعْنِي عَلَى نَفْسِكَ بِكَثْرَةِ السُّجُودِ

Then help me to achieve this for you by devoting yourself often to prostration.

Prostrate abundantly and a great deal. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ

They used to sleep only little in the night,

They only slept a little bit at night because they were performing ‘Ibādāt.

Train yourself to follow an ‘Ibādah with another and be careful not to overdo it to the point where it becomes boring, or the opposite. Meaning, don’t let it be deficient in a way that it’ll render it unacceptable.

خُذُوا مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَمِلُ حَتَّى تَمْلُوا

Do the deeds that are easy and comfortable for you. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will not get tired of giving you reward until you get bored of performing the deeds.

It's better to stick to what's little of 'Ibādah and remain consistent than to do a lot and get sick of it. The soul requires training and gradual development in order to ascend the ladder to perfection, and the mind needs training and gradual improvement to rise on the path to perfection in 'Ibādah. At the same time, the soul needs relaxation, the soul needs resting. So engaging in Farā'id, in obligatory acts, without performing the Nawāfil, it's not a sin to do that, however, a person who does that has certainly missed out on a lot. Obligatory acts are the best 'Ibādāt. A person who sincerely performs their Farā'id and in accordance — the ones who do the Farā'id alone — they're better than one who mindlessly does a lot of Nawāfil. One who does Farā'id sincerely is better than one who does a lot of Nawāfil mindlessly. A person who does the Farā'id alone is going to Jannah Inshā'Allāh. A bedouin with unkempt hair went to the Messenger ﷺ, as in Sahīh Al-Bukhari. He told the Messenger ﷺ, *"Teach me about the Farā'id of Islām."* He taught him about what's Fard in Salāh, what's Fard in Siyām, what's Fard in Zakāh, and he informed them about the rules of Islām. Then the bedouin said, and this is our point here,

وَالَّذِي أَكْرَمَكَ لَا أَتَطَوَّعُ شَيْئًا، وَلَا أَنْقُصُ مِمَّا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ شَيْئًا

By the One Who honored you, I'm not going to perform any Nawāfil, but I'm not going to decrease what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى has made obligatory on me.

Meaning, I'm only doing the Farā'id, I'm not doing any more than that. The Messenger ﷺ didn't say, *"You're going to Jahannam."* والعياذ بالله. The Messenger ﷺ said,

أَفْلَحَ إِنْ صَدَقَ، أَوْ دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِنْ صَدَقَ

If he's saying the truth, if he's truthful, he's succeeded, or he's going to Jannah.

Completing the Farā'id (the obligatory acts) brings that person to success which leads to Jannah.

Someone who performs the Nawāfil is more successful. He achieves a higher rank and attains nearness to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The category who do the Farā'id alone are referred to as Al-Muhibbūn, they love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The category who add on the Nawāfil, leave matters of doubt, and leave what's Makrūh, those are referred to as Al-Mahbūbūn, the ones who are loved by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. They're the Awliyā' of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, they're the chosen ones and they're the best of the creation. There's a big difference between Al-Mahbūbūn and Al-Muhibbūn, the ones who love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and the ones who are loved by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and that's what Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى was saying on this specific matter pertaining to this aspect that we're talking about. He was saying doing the Nawāfil with the Farā'id elevates you from being a person who's a Muhibb, loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, to a Mahbūb who's loved by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The ones who do the Farā'id alone follow the middle course, Muqtasid. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ

Some follow a middle course

The category who add on the Nawāfil are the foremost in good deeds,

وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ

And some are foremost in good deeds

The category who do the Farā'id alone are

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ

The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right?

The ones who add on the Nawāfil are the foremost forerunners.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ

And the forerunners, the forerunners

The ones who add on the Nawāfil are Al-Muqarrabūn, the nearest to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

And if he [i.e., the deceased] was of those brought near [to Allāh],

فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتْ نَعِيمٌ

Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure.

In another verse,

أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

Those are the ones brought near [to Allāh]

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

In the Gardens of Pleasure...

Ibn Hajr رحمه الله تعالى has a beautiful statement on how Farā'id relate to Nawāfil in attaining nearness to Allāh تعالى سبحانه. He said it's customary for individuals to seek closeness through means other than what's obligatory upon them. If you owe someone a debt and you pay it back, you're not really seeking closeness to him. You're giving back what you have to give back, you're giving back what you owe. Now, if you present someone with a gift that you're not obligated to give, now you're on your journey towards developing a closer relationship with them. The Farā'id act like a debt you owe. The Nawāfil act like a gift you give. You attain closeness to Allāh تعالى سبحانه through the Nawāfil after the Farā'id.

Now someone asks, “*What Nawāfil do I perform?*” The response is, there are so many Nawāfil that resemble an endless ocean with no shoreline. There are certain matters that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did. He consistently practiced them, but they were not obligatory. For example, he always performed the Sunan

for the Salawāt. If he wasn't traveling, he always performed the Sunan of the Salawāt. In fact, if he missed out on one, he would make it up. He never skipped Witr or the Sunnah of Salāt Al-Fajr even when he was traveling. He consistently fasted Mondays and Thursdays, three days of every month, and 'Āshurā and the Day of 'Arafah and the six days of Shawwāl. There are Nawāfil that can help someone gain and attain the Love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى even though the Messenger ﷺ didn't consistently practice them. Salāt Ad-Duhā is an example, even though it's disputed among the Ulamā' whether the Messenger ﷺ consistently did Salāt Ad-Duhā or not. Ibn Al-Jawzi adopted the opinion that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did Salāt Ad-Duhā. Ibn Al-Qayyim in Zād Al-Ma'ād strongly argued against that. He stated that there's no evidence that the Messenger ﷺ regularly did Salāt Ad-Duhā. Some believe that the Messenger ﷺ only performed Salāt Ad-Duhā when there was a specific reason, like in the conquest of Makkah, or when he was returning from a journey. Now regardless of whether the Messenger ﷺ did it regularly or not, it's an established 'Ibādah and it's among the 'Ibādāt that fall under that which will attain you the Love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى Inshā'Allāh. There are also 'Ibādāt that don't fit in either of those two categories. The ones that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did and the ones that the Messenger ﷺ did sometimes. There are some 'Ibādāt where there's general or specific approval to do them, even though the Messenger ﷺ may not have actually performed them, and a good example of that would be the two Rak'āt before Salāt Al-Maghrib, the ones between the Adhān and Iqāmah of Salāt Al-Maghrib. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى mentioned that there's no proof that the Messenger ﷺ performed them. However, there is evidence that the Messenger ﷺ approved of them and that he saw others praying them but he neither commanded nor discouraged them from doing so. Now fasting is another example. Optional fasting can be observed on any day, so long as it's not a Makrūh or prohibited day. There are general Ahādīth that encourage fasting. For example, someone sees tomorrow is Tuesday. They want to fast on Tuesday. There is no specific Hadīth that says fasting on Tuesdays is recommended. It's not like the first category, where there are Ahādīth on fasting Mondays and Thursdays and that the Messenger ﷺ consistently did them, but there are general Ahādīth that encourage fasting. They encourage fasting as much as one wishes, with the

exception of days that are prohibited. So while Tuesday is not specifically recommended, fasting on that day is still among the Nawāfil and deeds that attain you Allāh وتعالى سبجانه's Love based on the broader Ahādīth encouraging fasting. Ahādīth like,

مَنْ صَامَ يَوْمًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بَاعَدَ اللَّهُ عَمَّا وَجَلَّ وَجْهَهُ عَنِ النَّارِ سَبْعِينَ خَرِيفًا

Whoever fasts one day in the cause of Allāh, Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, will separate his face from the fire by (a distance of) seventy autumns.

And the other Hadīth,

إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ بَابًا يُقَالُ لَهُ الرِّيَّانُ، يَدْخُلُ مِنْهُ الصَّائِمُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

There is a gate in Paradise called Ar-Rayyān, and those who observe fasts will enter through it on the Day of Resurrection

It's from the Rahmah and Ni'mah of Allāh وتعالى سبجانه that He granted us a variety of 'Ibādāt that attain us His love. Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله تعالى authored a treatise on the diversity of the 'Ibādāt and the Fiqh of dealing with them. When you say "Allāhu Akbar" and you want to recite Du'ā Al Istiftāh, there are several. People have different abilities and inclinations. Allāh وتعالى سبجانه granted them a variety of 'Ibādāt to make it easier to find a way to worship Allāh وتعالى سبجانه according to one's strengths, weaknesses, and desires. One can transition from one form of 'Ibādah to another depending on his situation and status. Someone who's in a car and he wants to do an 'Ibādah, he can do Tasbīh. Someone who's in his bedroom at night time, He can do Qiyām, he can recite Qur'ān, and he can do Tasbīh. 'Ibādāt come in many forms, each with its own purpose and benefit. If someone's

unable to perform an ‘Ibādah due to an illness, because he’s traveling, because of poverty, or weakness, he can still earn rewards through an alternative ‘Ibādah. Among the reasons for the various ‘Ibādāt is to take care of people’s circumstances, to relieve their burdens, and to make things easier for them. Islām takes into account the situations of all people. For example, a poor person may feel that a wealthy person has an advantage over him because they can give in charity and he can’t. The rich can give in charity, but the poor ones can’t give in charity. In fact, the poor complain to the Messenger ﷺ about this problem. They said, *“O Messenger of Allāh! The rich are getting all the reward because they are able to give in charity.”* The Messenger of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى taught them a different ‘Ibādah where they can attain the same reward. He said SubhānAllāh is a charity, say SubhānAllāh — it’s like you giving a charity. Say Alhamdulillah, it’s like giving a charity. He told them ordaining the good is a charity, forbidding the evil is a charity, and even being intimate with your spouse is a charity. There are various acts of ‘Ibādah that grant you different benefits. Some ‘Ibādāt can lead to the forgiveness of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, some attain Jannah, and some are protection from Jahannam. Variety in acts of ‘Ibādah also combats boredom, they energize the spirit, and they allow one to feel the joy and pleasure of the ‘Ibādah. There are also ‘Ibādāt that you do individually and there are ‘Ibādāt you do in congregation. Individual acts of ‘Ibādah that you do alone have great wisdom behind them. They strengthen your connection with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, they foster sincerity, they enhance the purity of the soul. We mentioned the quote of Al-Hasan Al-Basri earlier, where he said that those who spend time alone at night with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will grant their faces Noor and brightness from Him. Qiyām with humility and fear is one of the most beautiful forms of individual ‘Ibādāt. Secret charity is a significant individual ‘Ibādah. But then you have ‘Ibādāt that you do in congregation like Salāh in Jamā’ah, Hajj, ‘Umrah, and other various ‘Ibādāt. They have their benefits and purposes as well. ‘Ibādāt done collectively promote love and unity among Muslims, they educate the ignorant, they promote equality among Muslims, regardless of their color and background and social status, and there are more benefits as well. The diversity in the various Nawāfil encourages a Muslim to immerse themselves in the gardens of ‘Ibādah. It’s similar to what I mentioned about Adhkār. You’re in a beautiful garden, all the

flowers in that garden are beautiful. You select the flowers that you love most, that you're most comfortable with.

The summary of this talk is to try to do as many Nawāfil (non-obligatory 'Ibādāt) as you can — after the Farā'id of course, with the Farā'id — and Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will love you. When Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves you, He will place love for Him in your heart and He will help and guide you to perform additional acts of 'Ibādah to bring you closer to Him.

وصلی اللہ علی سیدنا محمد وعلی آلہ وصحبہ وسلم