

تَزْكِيَةُ النَّفْسِ

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

STEPS TO LOVE ALLAH
RECITE THE QUR'AN

Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril حفظه الله

Spiritual Purification Retreat / Ramadān 1446

Steps to Love Allāh Recite the Qur'ān

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

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Last talk, we answered the question about the factors that lead to loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The question we were addressing was, “*What are the practical steps that lead to loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى*?” And we said in the last talk what I repeated throughout many other talks, which was that the number one way to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is to learn about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and the Ni’am of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The most significant, righteous deed that fosters and cultivates love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is the remembrance of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى’s Blessings and connecting them to the Bestower, especially when connecting them through the Names and Qualities of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Keep in mind that the purpose of loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is to attain the Love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. When you love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى properly, it’s reciprocated.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ

O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allāh will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him

When the Sahābi رضي الله عنه that we spoke about loved Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and expressed it through Sūrat Al-Ikhlās, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loved him back.

So now that we know that learning about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and His Qualities is the first factor that leads to loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, the second factor is recitation of the Qur’ān and recitation of the Qur’ān with Tadabbur. How can you learn about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى without the Word of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, without guidance from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى? The Qur’ān imparts knowledge regarding the Attributes and Names that we previously discussed. The last topic cannot be attained except by learning it from the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān elucidates what befits Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and what doesn’t. It teaches the commands and prohibitions. It instructs one on how to earn Allāh سبحانه وتعالى’s Love and how to attain His

Pleasure. It teaches you to stay away from what Allāh تعالى سبّحانه dislikes so that you will not be disliked by Him. In the Qur'ān, for example, there are sixteen verses that articulate the Qualities of those loved by Allāh تعالى سبّحانه. One who loves Allāh تعالى سبّحانه and one who wants Allāh تعالى سبّحانه to love him follows the actions described in those verses.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَانَهُمْ بَنِي بَيْتٍ مَرْصُوصٍ

Indeed, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Indeed, Allāh loves those who fear Him.

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And Allāh loves the doers of good.

And there are sixteen similar verses like that and there are another sixteen verses pertaining to what Allāh تعالى سبّحانه dislikes.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ

Indeed, Allāh does not like the disbelievers.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

Indeed, Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.

Now, in order to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى through the Qur'ān and to attain the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, you need to understand the Qur'ān. To truly love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, it's essential to comprehend and reflect upon what you recite, and that's what we refer to as the Tadabbur of the Qur'ān. During the previous Ramadān, I spoke about the merits of speed reading compared to slow reading with contemplation. We talked about which method is better based on the times when the reward is increased, like during Ramadān. However, to cultivate a genuine love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in one's heart through the recitation of the Qur'ān and to receive the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, it's essential to recite the Qur'ān with contemplation, comprehension, understanding, reflection, and even to beautify your voice as much as you can. We had the Tafsīr class and we were going over Sūrat Al-Fātihah and we reached approximately sixteen lessons in Sūrat Al-Fātihah alone. Many don't understand the basic meaning of a Sūrah that's recited seventeen times a day by Fard, the most significant Sūrah in the Qur'ān, a Sūrah so essential that it's considered the summary and outline of the Qur'ān. How can you love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى without knowing the meaning of a Sūrah like that? Consider a scenario where your supervisor sends you an email with specific instructions to do something. If you quickly skim through that email or letter or you read it slowly but you don't understand what you read, you're going to be uncertain about what's required of you, you won't know what to perform for your supervisor. That's going to jeopardize your job. And Allah سبحانه has the Supreme Examples, والله المثل الأعلى. To truly love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى through recitation of the Qur'ān, you must engage in deep contemplation of the verses. When reciting the Qur'ān, it's essential to cultivate a sense of personal connection, as if the Qur'ān is addressing you personally and individually. When one reaches the level of feeling that the Qur'ān is addressing him personally, the desire to complete the Sūrah and Juz' and to put the Qur'ān away diminishes.

Instead, you'll find joy in every single letter and in every single verse and you won't get enough from the Qur'ān. You would have Ibn Kathīr by your side to explore the meanings of unfamiliar verses to enhance your experience in reciting the Qur'ān. Contemplating the Qur'ān means you recognize that you are personally addressed by the words of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. You should recite and listen to the Qur'ān with the ear of your heart, and you need to reflect upon the Qur'ān with the eye of your soul. When you comprehend Allāh سبحانه وتعالى's Message and allow your heart to absorb the meaning, you then fulfill the commands and avoid the prohibitions. This type of recitation will then manifest in your demeanor, it'll shape your character, and it will be evident in your speech and in your actions. The Messenger ﷺ's entire life and character was the Qur'ān. When you read a few verses or a page from the Qur'ān, your daily Wird of the Qur'ān, ask what you got about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى's Qualities, Attributes, Commands, Stories, and what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves and what He dislikes. When the influence of the Qur'ān meets a receptive heart and the listener is fully attentive without distractions and preoccupations, the result of reciting the Qur'ān will then be effective and the person will then benefit from what he reads. What can draw someone nearer to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى than what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى revealed? The deeper a person's love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, the more they'll cherish His book, and the more frequently they'll recite it. When someone is deeply in love with their spouse, they'll cherish every message they receive from them. They'll read a text or a letter that's sent by them repeatedly. They'll find joy in reading those messages, they'll find joy in seeing those messages, and just seeing those messages will bring that person comfort and peace, because it's from someone that they truly love. The Salaf recited the Qur'ān like a message from a long-lost love filled with anticipation and longing. An-Nawawi in his book *At-Tibyān fi Ādāb Hamalat Al-Qur'ān* mentions that Al-Hasan Ibn 'Ali رضي الله عنهما mentioned that those who came before saw the Qur'ān as a message from their Lord, and they would reflect on it night and day. During the night they would reflect on it and during the day they would study it. To truly benefit from the Qur'ān, pay close attention while reading and listening to it, and let your heart be present as if you are the one being spoken to by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is addressing you through His Words. The Book of Allāh is from Allāh, anyone

who wants to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will have a deep affection for His Words and he'll always seek to recite the word of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, never getting enough of it. Look at the Tadabbur of Rasūl Allāh ﷺ when reciting or hearing the Qur'ān. In Sahīh Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, he told 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه to recite, and when he reached the verse in Sūrat An-Nisā',

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا

So how [will it be] when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you, [O Muhammad], against these [people] as a witness?

He told him, “Stop.” Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه observed the eyes of the Messenger ﷺ overflowing with tears — ﷺ. That's contemplating the Qur'ān. Let the meaning sink into your heart. If you come across a warning, then you should fear Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. If it's a verse about mercy, ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى for His Mercy. If it's a verse praising Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, then glorify Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. In one of the Messenger ﷺ's nightly Qiyām, he recited Al-Baqarah, then An-Nisā', then Āl 'Imrān. What's mightier than the quantity and the length of that Qiyām is that the Hadīth said,

يَقْرَأُ مُتَرَسِّلًا

Reciting slowly.

He recited it slowly, unhurried, with contemplation. That's Tadabbur. What's even mightier than that is whenever he recited a verse about glorifying Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, he glorified Him. That's Tadabbur. When he reached a verse about supplication, he made supplication. When he reached a verse that spoke about

سبحانه وتعالى seeking refuge with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, he sought refuge with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.

The Qur'ān was sent down upon you full of blessings, for what purpose? For voice competitions? To decorate the walls with it? To read it quickly without understanding it?

لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ

That they might reflect upon its verses

The purpose is to ponder, reflect, and understand the verses, and of course then to apply them.

One needs to feel the honor of having the Qur'ān, of reciting the Qur'ān. It's an honor that surpasses all others. According to Ibn As-Salāh, he said that it's an honor that the angels didn't even receive. Some Ulamā' dispute that but it still shows what an honor it is for us to have the Qur'ān. In fact, Allah سبحانه وتعالى said,

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ

And certainly, this (Qur'ān) is a word of honor for you and your people...

Befriending the Qur'ān is a privilege and honor like no other. When you befriend the Qur'ān, it guides you to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and in return, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will love you. That will lead to the highest levels of Jannah. The litmus test for loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is the love for the Words of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Ibn Mas'ūd who learned the Qur'ān first-hand from the Messenger ﷺ, the Sahābi who the Messenger ﷺ used to ask to recite the Qur'ān so he could listen to him, as we just mentioned — the Messenger said about him, *“Whoever would like to recite the Qur'ān fresh like it was revealed, then let him recite it according to the recitation of Ibn Mas'ud,”* رضي الله عنه. So his specialty was the Qur'ān, he took it first-hand from the Messenger ﷺ. He provided us with the standard and benchmark to assess our love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. In Kit'āb As-Sunnah by 'Abdullāh the son of Im'ām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and also in At-Tabarāni in Al-Kabīr, Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said,

من كان يحب أن يعلم أنه يحب الله عز وجل، فليعرض نفسه على القرآن، فإن أحب القرآن فهو يحب الله عز وجل فإنما القرآن كلام الله عز وجل

Those who want to ascertain their lover for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى should reflect upon their relationship with the Qur'ān. If they love the Qur'ān, it's a clear indication that they indeed love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, because the Qur'ān is the Word of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

You must love the Qur'ān, it's not a matter of choice. Your heart must be filled with joy at the recitation of the Qur'ān. You must find comfort and reassurance when reciting the Qur'ān. The biggest sign that you love the Qur'ān is to do what you can to understand the Qur'ān, that's the Tadabbur of the Qur'ān — that's where the Tadabbur begins. Allāh condemned the hypocrites for not having Tadabbur of the Qur'ān.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not then reflect on the Qur'ān? Or are there locks upon their hearts?

In another verse,

أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ

Then have they not reflected over the word [i.e., the Qur'ān]...?

The Barakah of the Qur'ān is in its treasures. If you pursue the treasures of the Qur'ān, you will not find those treasures without the Tadabbur of the Qur'ān. When you recite the tens of verses concerning the heavens and the earth after learning the meaning, you'll reflect on the greatness of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and you'll perceive Allāh سبحانه وتعالى's Powers in everything that surrounds you. When you recite a verse like

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ

Have you considered the semen that you ejaculate?

Have you considered that verse? Tadabbur is to realize how that semen turns into a clot, and that clot turns into a lump of flesh, the lump of flesh turns into bones that are clothed with flesh, and that's how Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, the Best of Creators, brings creation into this universe. Bishr Ibn As-Sarīy said,

إنما الآية مثل التمرة، كلما مضغتها استخرجت حلاوتها

The verse is akin to a date. The more you chew it, the more sweetness you extract from it.

If you befriend the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān will befriend you. If you abandon the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān will abandon you. How can you not love and be attached to what protects you by the Will of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى on Yawm Al-Qiyāmah? People are inclined to loving that which protects them. The Qur'ān comes to give you intercession and to defend you Yawm al-Qiyāmah by the Will of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

اقْرءُوا الْقُرْآنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْتِي يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شَفِيعًا لِأَصْحَابِهِ

Recite the Qur'ān, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for its companions.

لِلأَصْحَابِهِ, to those who befriend the Qur'ān. When one does not recite the Qur'ān on a daily basis, he should feel a sense of incompleteness in his life. He should feel a sense of irritation that persists until he gets his daily Wird of the Qur'ān completed. If someone tells you, "I'll give you ten dollars for each letter you recite of the Qur'ān," you wouldn't miss out on that opportunity. Sūrat Al-Fātihah is approximately one-hundred thirty-nine letters, multiply that by ten rewards, and Allāh سبحانه وتعالى multiplies the reward by as much as He wishes. How can you miss out on such an opportunity? The Hasanāt are worth way more than the ten dollars. They're worth more than the globe and what's in it. And I don't want to get into the topic about abandoning the Qur'ān, because that's an entirely different topic, but we can address it at a different time Inshā'Allāh.

The bottom line is that the second factor on your path to attaining the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is to befriend the Qur'ān and to recite the Qur'ān with Tadabbur. You will never be able to attain the first factor that we previously spoke about without attaining this, and you will not attain the proper love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى without reciting the Qur'ān with Tadabbur. Make it a habit to recite the Qur'ān daily, no matter what your schedule is about, because the Qur'ān will only bless your time and your life, and make it a habit to understand what you're reciting. Go back to Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr when you need to figure out the meaning of a verse, and it's available in English and in 'Arabi.

وصلی اللہ علی سیدنا محمد وعلی آلہ وصحبہ وسلم