

[The Remembrance of Allah is Integral to Faith](#)

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In this special month of introspection and of re-aligning our connection with the Divine, Shaykh Sadullah Khan focuses on the Dimensions of *Dhikr*.

Qur'an & Dhikr

The Qur'an undoubtedly emphasizes the need for dhikr: O Believers! Remember Allah with much remembrance and glorify Him early and late [[Qur'an 23:41](#)] Remember your Lord in your heart with humility and due respect [[Qur'an 7:205](#)] The Qur'an itself is referred to as al-dhikr (The Remembrance) in [[Qur'an 15:9](#)]. Allah furthermore states: We have made the Qur'an easy to remember (and an easy mode of remembrance), are there any who care? [[Qur'an 54:17](#)]

Tafakkur wa Tadabbur

Tafakkur means thinking on a matter, constructively, purposefully and in earnestness. *Tafakkur* (reflection) is the lamp of the heart, the food of the spirit, the spirit of knowledge and the soul and light of the Islamic way of life. Without reflection, the heart is darkened, the spirit becomes exasperated and Islam is lived at a superficial level devoid of meaning and profundity.

Reflection is such a light in the heart that good and evil, harm and benefit and beauty and ugliness can be discerned and distinguished from each other through it. Again, it is through reflection that the universe becomes a book to study and the verses of the Qur'an disclose their meaning and secrets more deeply. The quality of our thought is a very serious and important subject for any Muslim to consider.

The more we reflect on the grand design of the universe, the more we are reminded of the Designer. How many forces must come together with perfect coordination before a seed can sprout? What keeps this immensely complex universe working so flawlessly, from the simplest to the most complex things? There are indeed pointers to the Creator in every atom of everything in this universe: In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed Signs for people of understanding – people who remember Allah, standing, sitting and lying down. They realize that Allah did not create all this without purpose. Glory to Allah! [[Qur'an 3:190-191](#)]

In this verse Allah, the Most High,

- speaks highly of the *ulul albab* or literally the “possessors of mind” or those who “reflect”/“contemplate”. This quality of thinking (reflection/contemplation) is mentioned in the Qur'an precisely because Muslims are expected to imbibe them. This kind of “quality thinking” formed an integral part of the texture and culture of Muslims since the time of the Prophet. A saying attributed to Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas documented by Imam Qurtubi in his tafsir states “*tafakkur* for an hour is

better than a whole night's prayer." This ability and capacity to think deeply about things is the light of a Muslim.

- Makes reference to the second important attribute of this level or quality of Muslim is remembrance (*dhikr*).

Tadabbur implies pondering over something while giving careful consideration to its consequences. In fact, one of the primary purposes of revelation is for humankind to engage in *tadabbur*, to ponder and be mindful, (This is) a Book that We have revealed unto you (O Prophet), full of lasting Blessing that people may ponder upon its messages and that those who have understood may take them to heart and be mindful. [[Qur'an 38:29](#)]
We note a distinctive reference to *tadabbur* and *tazakkur* in this verse.

Need for *Dhikr*

There are over 150 references in the Qur'an to words from the root dh-k-r (to remember, to mention, to invoke). Our focus here is specifically on *dhikr* (whether *qalbi*, *'aqli*, *lisani*, *'amali*, whether singularly or in congregation) as it pertains to ways in which Allah is remembered (by name or in essence) as the Supreme Being.

To pronounce words reflecting the attributes or glory of Allah is *dhikr* by tongue. To understand and reflect on Allah's Majesty is *dhikr* by heart. Both these desirable modes of remembrance reinforce each other; so conscious oral repetition engraves the words in the heart while understanding and reflection gives meaning and life to the spoken word.

Together they assist us in focusing on our destination while journeying through life in this world.

All forms of *dhikr* help us develop and reinforce our relationship with the Divine. Keep in remembrance the Name of the Lord and sincerely devote yourself wholeheartedly to Him. [[Qur'an 73:8](#)] The Holy Prophet reported that Allah informs: I am with the thought of My servant and am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I too remember him in My heart. If he remembers Me in an assembly, I too recollect him in an assembly, and this assembly is better than human assembly. [Bukhari]

Genuine *dhikr* by True Believers

Dhikr is the companion and spirit of actions. See how Allah has paired it with *salah* which is the best of all acts of worship, and made *dhikr* the very reason for it, when He says, Establish *salah* (prayer) for My *dhikr* (remembrance) [[Qur'an 20:14](#)]. Going through rituals of prayer without the essential element of remembering Allah reflects strands of heedlessness and hypocrisy. Behold, the hypocrites seek to deceive God – the while it is He who causes them to be deceived [by themselves) and when they rise to pray, they stand reluctantly, only to be seen and praised by people, hardly remembering Allah God but seldom. [[Qur'an 4:142](#)].

(True) believers are only those whose hearts tremble when the name of Allah is mentioned, and who, when His Signs are recited to them, have their faith increased thereby, and who put their trust in their Lord. Who observe Prayer and spend out of that which We have provided for them. These it is who are true believers. They have grades of rank with their Lord, as well as forgiveness and an honorable provision." [[Qur'an 8:2](#)]

The above verses from Surah Anfal make reference to the signs of true Believers (*mu'minuna haqqa*) and this includes ...

- Remembering Allah (*dhikr*) and its effect on them
- Reading the Qur'an (*tilawah*) and its effect on them
- Their dependence on Allah (*tawakkul*)
- Their pursuance of spiritual and moral welfare through prayer (*salah*)
- Their pursuance of social and economic welfare through charity (*infaq*)

Dhikr and Itminan

The word *mutma'innah* occurs in related forms in thirteen places in the Qur'an. The noun from this word is *tuma'ninah*. *Tuma'ninah* means calmness, serenity, peacefulness and tranquility. It signifies a state of composure and equanimity. It implies a feeling of total security, of having complete peace of mind, being at ease with oneself; a state so sought after yet rarely experienced in this age. That pleasant and noble state (*itminan*) of the heart is attained through (*dhikr*)remembrance of Allah, Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in dhikr-Allah (the remembrance of Allah), such find contentment. [[Qur'an 13:28](#)]

The great spiritual luminary, Hasan al-Basri, commenting on the above verse said: "You should seek joy in three things: performance of prayer, the Qur'an and the remembrance of Allah)." Furthermore, forgiveness and reward from Allah are promised to those men and women who remember Allah... and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Allah much – for such has Allah prepared forgiveness and immense reward. [[Qur'an 33:36](#)].

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