

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All Merciful, the Ever Merciful

The Holy Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ

***O Human being,
Surely you are striving
Towards your Lord
Laboriously,
And you shall meet Him¹***

Addressed to the Human being.

The Human Being is struggling on a path

The path leads to His Lord

The struggle is laborious

He would meet His Lord

Rumi in his celebrated masterpiece, *Mathnawi* metaphorically and in a beautiful style begins by narrating the speech of the human soul who is at pain and yearns to return back to his dwelling of peace:

Hearken to the reed-flute², how it complains,

Lamenting its banishment from its home:

"Ever since they tore me from my osier bed,

My plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears.

I burst my breast, striving to give vent to sighs,

And to express the pangs of my yearning for my home.

He who abides far away from his home Is ever longing for the day he shall return.

The abode of the human being and his true home is somewhere else. He is a stranger in this world in the true sense of the word and his place is the proximity and nearness of the only Beloved. So long as he resides in the straits of this realm, the pain of separation has always to remain. It is by the wings of knowledge and action that the bird of his spirit can leave the cage of material attachment and fly to the realm of the Beloved. But he needs to know the way and style to soar to the abode of peace to which the Beloved himself invites him:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

And Allah continually Invites

To the abode of peace

And continually Guides whosoever

He wants

To the straight path³

As long as he has not deciphered the true path, which the Holy Qur'an calls "*sirat al-mustaqim*" (the straight path), he should never dream to migrate to his hometown. The Beloved, who yearned that his lovers return to His neighborhood where their homes lay, sent His messengers so that they may guide the birds of perplexity to their destination.

Among the fundamental methods that these guides of the human being taught was prayer. *Salat* – a Divinely inspired mode of prayer taught by the Holy Prophet (s)– is a method and an opportunity to fly and soar to one's destination. If the human being utilizes this opportunity that comes 5 times a day, his journey would undoubtedly commence.

Why should he allow several opportunities during his life time to go to waste? Doesn't he yearn deep in his heart for the company of the Beloved? Doesn't he realize that it is high time he should go back home and enjoy the neighborhood of the only Beloved who intensely loves his company?

Those who have tried to seek help by this vehicle of spiritual ascent may complain about its ineffectiveness, since it has not yet made them reach their destination. To them must be said that '*No imaginary vehicle can transport you to your destination.*' If the human being prays observing the outer as

well as inner etiquette of prayer he surely will attain success in comprehending his much longed abode. It is the negligence of the heart in prayer that makes the prayer devoid of its spirit and destroys the opportunity of the human being.

As we shall see in this small treatise, the presence of heart (*huduru'l qalb*) is one of the most fundamental conditions of prayer, without which the prayer lays a negative or no effect on the supplicant. Appreciating its importance, one should try to observe the same and always struggle in this noble venture. Obviously the task is challenging and difficult in the beginning, but with continual struggle and steadfastness in bridling the faculty of imagination of the human being and detaching the human soul from temporal inclinations, one can slowly and gradually attain the state of complete absorption in prayer.

This concise treatise is a humble attempt aimed at making us realize the necessity, possibility, and methodology of attaining this vital spirit of prayer. May Almighty Allah enable us achieve the same, so that we can join the flocks who are busy soaring to the realm of their Beloved and are very anxious to meet Him. If we show laxity in this sublime aspiration, 'the state of perpetual regret' in the Hereafter would be of no use to us.

All praises solely belong to Allah—the Absolute Perfect Being,

The Lord of the World of Dependent Existence.

Utterly destitute to Almighty Allah,

Abu Muhammad Zaynu'l `Abidin

Holy Proximity of Bibi Ma'suma (`a) – Qum-al-Mugaddasa

1. Holy Qur'an, 84:6

2. Reed Flute is a metaphor for the Human soul– See commentary of Mathnawi by H'aj Mulla Hadi Sabzawari– the great Shi'ite mystic–philosopher, vol. 1, p. 17

3. Holy Qur'an, 10:25