

Introduction

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفاً وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Surely I have turned my face to Him

Who originated the heavens and the earth, being upright;

and I am not of the polytheists. 1

Attention is the concomitant of conversation. Every sound human being enjoys attention when transmitting his thoughts to his addressee. Such attention neither requires laborious thought processes nor any kind of exertion for the control of the movement of the mind. When one wishes to convey something, the mind translates it to its respective words and the tongue reveals the same. One, however, would need to bridle his tongue to avoid uttering all what is forbidden or futile.

Most of the speech in prayer is from a Divine source, and hence bridling does not make any sense. Instead, the *musalli* is required to ensure that his attention is continuously focused on the act of worship or the Worshipped One, and that the words of his prayer originate from the depths of his heart and the heights of his mind.

This is where many are overcome by the bird of imagination, which has habituated itself to fly from one branch of the tree of material attachments to another. Consequently, the worshipper gets deprived of the progress and spiritual development he could acquire through this most effective means of attaining God's proximity.

It is difficult for one to immediately achieve and maintain this praiseworthy and necessary state of attention in prayer. One has to cross certain levels of attention before enjoying a natural conversation with the Beloved.

In the present treatise we shall briefly try to discuss the following vital issues concerning attention in prayer:

Sections Covered

1. The necessity of attention in prayer
2. The possibility of attention in prayer
3. Levels of attention in prayer
4. Hurdles on the way to attention in prayer and their removal.
5. Suggested methods of achieving attention in prayer.
6. The effect of maintaining one's attention in prayer.

1. Holy Qur'an, 6:79

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