

The Effects and Indications of Invocation (Dhikr)

As it was explained earlier that invocation (*dhikr*), witnessing (*shahood*), and countenance (*laqa*), are esoteric positions; and are genuine spiritual perfections, whereby a wayfarer really attains an exalted rank of existence which was not accomplished by him earlier.

If it is said: the position of witnessing is real and similarly, if it is said: the position of love, the position of compliance, the position of desire, the position of union, and the positions of countenance are not metaphorical, rather are real positions; it means that the relevant position represents a rank and degree of a real existence, which naturally should be accompanied with new effects and indications, so that the existence of that perfection could be identified through them. Here, we would describe the details of the following effects:

1. Commitment for God's Obedience

When some one attains a position whereby in his esoteric essence witnesses God's Beauty and sees himself in His presence, without any doubt will obey His commands absolutely. Whatever, he has been commanded to do will be performed by him and will refrain himself from things made forbidden for him.

If, a human being wants to know whether he has attained that position or not, he must evaluate his commitments towards Divine positive and negative commands and in accordance to his performance may determine his relative rank. It is not possible that a human being would have attained the exalted position of love and witnessing and would not have a total commitment towards Divine commands. Imam al-Sadiq has defined the invocation (*dhikr*) as follows:

قال أبو عبدالله عليه السلام: (في حديث إلى أن قال) ولكن إذا ورد عليك شيء أمر الله به أخذت به وإذا ورد عليك شيء نهى عنه تركته.

“Invocation is meant that when some one encounters an act which has been made mandatory by God–Almighty he performs it and if it is forbidden, he refrains from it.”¹

Imam al Husayn (a.s.) in his prayer of Arafah said:

يا من اذاق احبائه حلاوة المؤمنة فقاموا بين يديه متملقين و يا من البس
اوليائه ملابس هيبته فقاموا بين يديه مستغفرين.

“Oh God–Almighty! Thou are the One Who has poured the sweetness of Your love inside your friend's mouths so that they should stand in prayer in front of You and must adore You with humility. Oh Thou are the One Who has dressed your saints with the robe of fear so that they should stand and repent in front of you.”²

God–Almighty said in Holy Qur’an

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ

“Say: If you do love God follow me: God will love you. (3:31)

Imam al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: من كان ذاكر الله على الحقيقة فهو مطيع ومن كان
غافلا عنه فهو عاص.

“Whoever becomes a sincere invocator of God–Almighty, will also become truly obedient to Him, and whoever is negligent, will be a sinner.”³

2. Humility

Whoever witnesses the Power and Majesty of God–Almighty would naturally humiliate himself in front of him, and will continuously lower his head in regret while realizing his omissions and negligence.

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) had narrated in a tradition:

قال الصادق عليه السلام (في حديث الى قال) ومعرفتك بذكره لك يورثك
الخشوع والاستحيا والانكسار.

“Your enlightenment because of your being paid attention by God–Almighty will result in your becoming humble, modest and prudent.”⁴

3. Excitement for Worshipping

One of the indication of attaining the position of witnessing is the strong liking for worshipping and feeling intense pleasure during its performance, because, some one who has witnessed the Majesty and Splendor of the Lord of the Worlds and considers himself in the presence of God–Almighty –the Fountainhead of All Magnanimity and Perfection –would prefer the pleasure of hymns and humming communications with Him over any other enjoyment.

Those who are deprived of spiritual pleasures keep themselves amused with transient worldly amusements which in reality are no more than a pain killer, but those who have tasted the real pleasure of worshipping and hymns of the Lord of the Worlds would never exchange their pleasant state and beauty with any other enjoyment.

These are the purest God's servant who worship him only for the sake of his worthiness to be worshipped and not for the sake of any reward and punishment. In this regard, you must have heard about the melting and burning worshipping and intimate humming communications of the Holy Prophet (S) Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) Imam al–Sajjad and other Imams of Prophets (Ahlul Bayt) with their Lord.

4. Tranquility and Assurance

The world is a place of pains, sorrows, and sufferings, which can be classified into the following three categories:

- **First type:** Tragedies like sickness of self or relatives death of self or next of kills, oppression, prejudices, injustice, discard, and interference etc.
- **Second type:** Regret and annoyance for lack of worldly things which are beyond one's reach.
- **Third type:** Fear of loosing whatever have been accumulated, fear of theft or loss of wealth, fear of loosing children because of accidents, and fear of getting sick and possibility of death.

All of the above most probably takes away ease and comfort from a human being, whose roots could be traced to strong attachments to world and avoidance of God's remembrance. God–Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا

“But he who turneth away from remembrance of me, his will be a narrow life. (20: 124)

But God's sincere servants who have reached the Source of all Blessings and Perfection, have witnessed the Absolute Beauty and Splendor, are contented because of God's Remembrance and Affection. They are free from all sort of worries and sorrows, because of their having God–Almighty, they possess every thing.

They do not become annoyed or it worried for lack of worldly things because they do not have any inclinations towards them, instead, they have attached themselves to the Fountainhead of all Blessings and Perfection, which lacks nothing. Imam al–Hussain (a.s.) in his prayer of Arafah had said:

أنت الذي أزلت الأغيار عن قلوب أحبائك، حتى لم يحبوا سواك، ولم يلجئوا إلى
غيرك أنت المونس لهم حيث أوحشتهم العوالم، وأنت الذي هديتهم حيث
استبانتم لهم المعالم ماذا وجد من فقدك؟

وما الذي فقد من وجدك؟ لقد خاب من رضي دونك بدلا ولقد خسر من بغى
عك متحولا كيف يرجى سواك وانت ما قطعت الاحسان وكيف يطلب من
غيرك وانت ما بدلت عادة الامتنان.

“Oh Lord! Thou are the one who has removed the love of others from the hearts of your favorite saints, so that they are not attached to any body except You, and do not seek any other shelter except You. While encountering terrible calamities they seek refuge in You. If Your Enlightenment and Nearness have been achieved by them –it was only because of Your–Guidance.”

“Whosoever does not find You what else there remains to be found? And whoever has found You what else would he be lacking? How much looser is the one who chooses other than You and how unfortunate is the one who deviates from You. How can a human being expect thing from others while Your Favors never get cut off from him? How could one pray for his need before others, while knowing that Your Generosity and Benevolence surround him.”⁵

Any how, the most important effect of one's attaining the position of invocation, witnessing, and love is the attainment of heart's peace and tranquility, because, in principle, nothing can rescue the heart's boat inside the stormy oceans of the life except God's Remembrance. God–Almighty said in Holy Qur'an:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of God. Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest!” (13:28)

The stronger will be the belief of a person the greater will be his heart's degree of assurance and tranquility.

5. God's Attention towards the Servant

When a God's servant remembers God–Almighty, reciprocally He too bestows special favor and blessing upon His servant. This matter has been mentioned in the following verses and traditions, God–Almighty said in Holy Qur'an:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرْكُمْ

“Therefore, remember me, I will remember you. (2: 152)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام: قال الله عزوجل: يا بن آدم! اذكرني في نفسك اذكرك في نفسي, يا بن آدم! اذكرني في خلا اذكرك في خلا, يا بن آدم! اذكرني في ملا اذكرك في ملا خير من ملاك. وقال: ما من عبد ذكر الله في ملا من الناس الا ذكره الله في ملا من الملائكة.

“God–Almighty had said: 'Oh son of Adam! Remember me in your self so that I would remember you in My Self; Oh son of Adam! Remember me in solitude so that I may remember you in solitude; Oh son of Adam! Remember me in congregation so that I remember you in a congregation much better than yours,” and said: 'Every servant who remembers God–Almighty among the human beings, God–Almighty remember him among the angels.’”⁶

God's attention and special blessings towards a servant is not a metaphorical thing, rather is a reality whose reasons may be explained as follows:

First Reason

When a servant remembers God–Almighty and with this means makes himself ready for acceptance of His special favors, God–Almighty increases the level of his perfection and elevates him into higher spiritual positions.

Second Reason

When a servant recites God’s invocations and spiritually migrates towards Him, he is blessed with God's attention and special favors, whereby He bestows upon him exalted spiritual positions and takes over the control of his heart, The Holy Prophet (S) said:

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله قال: قال الله تعالى: إذا علمت أن الغالب على عبدي الاشتغال بي نقلت شهوته في مسألتي ومناجاتي ، فإذا كان عبدي كذلك فأراد أن يسهو حلتُ بينه وبين أن يسهو - وهذا معنى العصمة - أولئك أوليائي حقاً ، أولئك الأبطال حقاً، أولئك الذين إذا اردت ان اهلك اهل الارض عقوبة زويتها عنهم من اجل اولئك الابطال.

*“God Almighty said: ‘When I find a servant sincerely engaged in my invocation –makes him further interested into hymns and worshipping, and if occasionally negligence dominates over him, I prevent such occurrence, These are my real saints and heroes, If I want to annihilate all the earthly creations, it is because of their distinguished existence that My punishment does not descend towards earth.”*⁷

6. God's Love towards the Servant

One of the effect of invocation is the God's love towards the servant. It has been inferred from various Qur’anic verses and traditions that when a person engages himself in God's remembrance and obeys His commandments, He too reciprocates and starts loving that person, The Holy Qur’an said:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ

“If you love God, follow me, God will love you. (3:31)

Imam al–Sadiq had narrated from the Holy Prophet (S):

عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من أكثر ذكر الله أحبه الله ومن ذكر الله كثيراً كتبت له برأتان برائة من النار و برائة من النفاق.

“Whoever offers lots of God's invocation will achieve God's affection towards him, whoever continuously remembers God–Almighty will have two letters written for him letter of immunity from Hells' fire, and letter of immunity from discard.”⁸

God's affection towards a servant is neither a ceremonial act nor it could be compared to the meanings of love as related to human beings. In case of human beings love is meant as heart's attachments and inclinations towards a desirable object, but for God such interpretation of love is not correct.

Love of God must be interpreted as His special favors and graces which further enhance a servants sincerity, attention, and worshipping, towards Him, and through these means attracts him towards the higher stages of perfection and nearness. Because, He loves the servant and likes hearing his humming hymns –bestows upon him the special favor of motivating further towards prayer, invocation, worshipping, and supplications.

Since, He likes servant's nearness, accordingly provides the required means for his perfection, and in nutshell because of His affection towards the servant –takes over his heart's control, thus, providing him the opportunities for better and speedy ascent towards His nearness.

7. The Most Important Effects

At this stage the wayfarer is blessed with most special benefits and privileges whose explanation is not possible through the pen and tongue of strangers, and except the recipient of these positions no one knows any thing about these affairs.

Because, of the effects of self–purification, esoteric cleansing, worshipping, asceticism, thinking, and continuous recital of invocation, the wayfarer attains on exalted spiritual rank where, by means of his esoteric eyes and ears is able to see and hear the most sublime realities which can not be seen and heard by the apparent eyes and ears. Sometimes he hears the praise and hymns of other creatures including angels and joins them.

While he lives in this world and socialize with its people but in his esoteric essence looks towards upper horizons living in an another world as though he does not belong to this world. In that World he witnesses the Hell and Paradise and keeps in touch with angels and spirits of God's righteous saints. He is familiar with other World, and utilizes its blessings but does not want to speak about it, because such persons prefers seclusion and strictly sustain themselves from fame and popularity.

The higher Divine learning are descended upon the gnostics heart, and mystical-sciences which are not customary with conventional learning are witnessed by him. The wayfarer ultimately achieves an exalted spiritual position whereby he forgets everything including his self and does not pays attention towards anything except the Holy Names and Characteristics of God-Almighty. He sees the Lord of the Universe as Over seer of every thing and every where, Who had said:

هو الاول والاخر والظاهر والباطن.

"I am the first, the last, the hidden and the apparent."

He sees the world as a manifestation of God's characteristics and considers every perfection and beauty from God-Almighty. The depravity of essence of all creatures, the absolute richness of the Self Existent (*Wajib al-Wajood*) becomes apparent for him and in witnessing the Supreme Source of Absolute Beauty and Perfection feels fascinated and absorbed.

Here it should be pointed out that the position of annihilation (*fana*) in itself consists of various degrees and ranks, and it would be appropriate if this deprived servant should better refrain himself from entering into these privileged positions.

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1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93. p-155.
 2. Iqbal al-Amal-Prayer of Arafah.
 3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-158.
 4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-158.
 5. Iqbal al-Amal, Prayer of Arafah.
 6. Wasail al-Shi'a, vol 4, p-1185.
 7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol, 93, p-162.
 8. Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 4, p-181.

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