

The Station of Muraqabah

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Taken from Madârij as-Sâlikeen (“The Steps of the Followers”)

Murâqabah is knowing that Allâh is watching over us. Allâh, subhânahu wa ta‘âla, says, **“And know that Allâh knows what is in your minds, so fear Him.”** [2:235] **“And Allâh is Ever a Watcher over all things.”** [33:52] **“And He is with you wherever you may be.”** [57:4] There are many other similar verses stating the same concept.

In the hadîth of Jibrîl, when he asked the Prophet about ihsân (goodness and excellence), the Prophet replied, *“Thsân is to worship Allâh as if you see Him, but since we do not see Him we should know that He sees us at all times.”* (Bukhârî and Muslim) The meaning of this hadîth is the definition of murâqabah. Namely, the endurance of the servant’s knowledge and his conviction and certainty that Allâh is watching over his internal and external affairs. To have this knowledge and certainty at all times is called murâqabah. It is the fruit of the servant's knowledge that Allâh is his Watcher, Over-seeing him, Hearing his utterances, and Observing all of his deeds at all times.

Al-Junaid said, “The one firm in murâqabah fears the waste of even a moment for other than his Lord.” Dhun-Nun said: “The sign of murâqabah is to favor what Allâh has sent down (of the revelation), to glorify what Allâh has glorified, and to despise what Allâh has despised.”

Ibrahîm Al-Khawâs said: “Murâqabah is the sincerity of both the internal and external to Allâh.” It has been said that “The best that man may cling to on this road to Allâh is muhâsabâh (reckoning of the self), murâqabah, and governing his conduct with knowledge.”

The people of true knowledge have unanimously agreed that having murâqabah for Allâh in one’s hidden thoughts is a means for it to manifest in the deeds and the behavior externally. So, whoever has murâqabah for Allâh in secret and internally, Allâh will preserve him in his actions and behavior, both internally and externally.

One of the finest definitions for murâqabah is the following: murâqabah of Allâh is being on the way to Him at all times with over-whelming glorification, inciting nearness and urging joy. The over-whelming glorification is to have the heart filled with glorification of Allâh. Such a state makes the servant unconcerned with glorifying others or paying attention to others beside Allâh. A servant should always have this state, especially when he is remembering Allâh. To be with Allâh provides one with intimacy and love. If these are not associated with glorification, they may take one outside of the limits of servitude. Any love that is not

associated with glorification of the Beloved One is a reason to distance him away from the Beloved and lose His respect.

The overwhelming glorification includes five components: walking towards Allâh, constantly walking towards Him, presence within the heart for Him, glorification of Him, and being overwhelmed by His glorification to be concerned with others. The inciting nearness is the closeness to Allâh that incites the servant to have these five components. This closeness makes him glorify Allâh in a manner that he pays no attention to himself or others. The closer the servant becomes to Allâh, the more he glorifies Him and the less mindful he will be for others. The urging joy is happiness and glorification. It is the delight one finds in this nearness. There is nothing in this world comparable in any way to the joy and happiness of the heart and the delight of the eye with Allâh and His closeness. This is one of the states in Paradise. A knowledgeable person said, "There are times when I would say that if the people of Paradise can be in a state like this, they are indeed living a good life." This joy, no doubt, urges him to be constant in walking to Allâh and doing his best to seek Allâh's Pleasure. If one didn't achieve this joy or even a portion of it, then one should doubt their faith and deeds. Faith has grace and sweetness. If one has not tasted it, then one should go back and achieve the true faith and its sweetness.

The Prophet mentioned the sweetness of faith in many ahâdîth, including: *"...tasted the taste of faith, those who take Allâh as their Lord, Islam as their religion and Muhammad as a Messenger."* (Muslim and Ahmad) He also said: *"Whoever possesses the following three qualities attains the sweetness of faith: To have Allâh and His Messenger dearer to him than anything else, to love a person only for the sake of Allah, and to hate to return to kufr after Allâh has rescued him from it like he hates to be thrown into fire."* (Bukhârî & Muslim) I heard Shaykhul-Islâm Ibn Taymiyyah saying: "If you don't find sweetness and joy in the deed you perform, then doubt its sincerity, for Allâh is Shakûr (Most Appreciative and Rewarding)." He meant that Allâh will certainly reward His servant for his deeds in this world as long as the servant is delighted and happy with his deeds. But if he doesn't find the delight and the joy in his heart, then his deed is imperfect, defective."

This imperfection and defectiveness is the reward of what the servant receives for his deeds. Deeds have consequences and effects that return to the servant that performed them, affecting his life and all of his affairs. Salâh, for example, prevents the servant from unlawful and evil deeds. It also refines his morals and brings him up in the best manner that Allâh loves.

Siyâm strengthens his will and enlightens self-reproach and insight, so the person may see the straight path and become among the righteous. Such are all the good and righteous deeds, they have a reward that affords prosperity in all of man's affairs. As a result, family life and the society become joyful and prosperous. The evil deeds have their consequences as well. Allâh said, **"For**

those who have done good is best (reward).” [10:26] and “The evil was the end of those who did evil.” [30:10]

The opposition in people is of three kinds. Only those that Allâh protects are free from these. The first kind is the opposition to His Names and Attributes by presenting false and unclear matters. These falsities are negated because of what Allâh and His Messenger have ascribed for Him. These people have ascribed to Allâh what He negated for Himself. By doing so, they became loyal to His enemies and enemies to His Allies. They changed the words from the correct status and have abandoned, as a result, a great part of what was sent to them.

They are those that have divided their religion into differing sects with each group rejoicing in its belief. The only thing that protects from this is the pure submission to the wahî (Divine inspiration). When the heart submits to the wahî (revelation), it will witness its soundness, realize intellectually and in the light of fitrah (sound nature) that it is the truth. Such a submissive person submits by way of hearing, the mind, and the fitrah. This is the most perfect faith.

The second type of person is the one who is in opposition to His Message and Command. These people can vary slightly and can be further categorized. Some may oppose with their opinions and analogies. They make lawful what Allâh has made unlawful, and make unlawful what Allâh has made lawful. They void what Allâh has made obligatory and make obligatory what Allâh has voided. Another type amongst these people are those that oppose the facts of faith and the Message with their visions, personal experiences, and false devilish inspirations. These compose a religion that Allâh has not allowed, invalidate the religion that Allâh sent to His Messenger, and oppose the facts of faith using the devil’s tricks. These people have religions to worship other than Allâh’s religion and place these before Allâh’s religion. Because of their analogies, opinions and personal experiences, the entire world could have been ruined and the pillars of the religion destroyed. But Allâh has preserved this religion and promised to protect those that will preserve and protect it from the plots of these plotters.

Another group of those in opposition are those that oppose the Law of Allâh with their unjust rules. They put their rules before the rules of Allâh and His Messenger . Thus they suspend Allâh’s Law, justice and His Hudûd (legislated punishments).

The third type of opposition is of those who oppose Allâh’s actions, decrees and ordinances. This opposition comes primarily from ignorant people. It has many forms, some are clear and some are not. This kind of opposition exists within many souls. If we were to contemplate our utterances, actions and desires, we would see this clearly. Most of us have some kind of opposition to Allâh’s decree and His portioning of livelihood.

The ones that are free of this type of opposition are those that know Allâh with a true knowledge and accept Him with complete satisfaction.