

Purity of body and soul

The manufacture of detergents and cleansing materials is a highly profitable business. Millions are spent on advertising soaps, shampoos, bleaches, washing powders, etc. families that maintain clean, wholesome and healthy homes also ensure that their bodies, clothing, bed linen, soft furnishings and houses are kept clean. That cleanliness is of such utmost importance and is illustrated by a tradition of Allah's final Messenger in which he said, 'Cleanliness is part of faith'.

The question is – why do we assume such traditions refer only to bodily cleanliness when purification of the soul is the very objective of our existence?

Many Ayat (verses) of the holy Quran refer to purification of the soul as the essential element in the attainment of prosperity.

Successful is he who purifies himself. (87:14)

Successful is he who purifies it. (91:9)

This is realised in two ways – one positive, one negative. The negative is to keep away from sin, the positive is to pray.

The 'true believer' may achieve inner wisdom and knowledge of spiritual truths through her/his inner heart. The heart and 'inner heart' are closely linked. The difference between them is that the heart 'knows' while the inner hear 'sees'. When knowledge and vision combine, the unseen becomes visible and certainty is achieved.

This was the goal of the Prophet Ibrahim when he saw 'Malakut' (kingdom) of the heavens and the earth referred to in Qur'an.

Thus We showed Abraham the empire of the heavens and the earth, that he might be one of those with certainty. (6:75)

There is no point in knowledge without vision, nor in vision without knowledge. It is analogous to visiting a foreign country without understanding its language, history or customs.

The Prophet said: Worship Allah as if you see Him for even if you do not, He truly sees you.

Once, when the Prophet explained the significance of daily prayer to his companions, he asked, 'Do you think traces of filth adhere to the body of a person who has a flowing spring at the entrance of his house and is able to wash five times a day?' His companions thought not. He continued, 'in like

manner' the five daily prayers remove dirt, filth, corruption and uncleanness from souls.

When we have decided where we want to go, and have agreed to adhere to the regulations that govern that course, we may become comfortably established – in the 'carriage' of prayer – and be transported to our destination as it travels.

The heart's presence during prayer

Prayer is a celestial formula and 'Divine Electuary'. Every part contains a hidden 'Mystery'. Prayer is an expression of love, communication, and remembrance of the Lord of the Universe. It is the most excellent channel for spiritual perfection, ascension, and nearness to Allah. In one tradition, prayer is referred to as being the believer's 'Heavenly Journey'