

Acts of Worship from Quran and Sunnah

Allah said:

وَيَسْتَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

"And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the Rooh (the spirit); Say: "The Rooh (the spirit): It is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little." (Qur'an 17: 85)

And Allah said:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ

"So, when I have fashioned him and breathed into him (his) soul created by Me, then you fall down prostrate to him." (Qur'an 38:72)

And in yet another Verse, Allah said:

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

"Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul (created by Allah for that person), and He gave you hearing (ears), sight (eyes) and hearts. Little is the thanks you give!" (Qur'an 32: 9)

The Prophet trained his Companions to purify their souls. Through various Verses of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet, the Companions learned of ways to purify their souls, the most important of those ways being as follows:

1) Reflecting on the universe, Allah's created beings, and the Qur'an itself, so that they can appreciate the Greatness, Almightyness, and Wisdom of Allah. Allah said:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْبُقُ حَاشِيًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"Indeed, your Lord is Allah, Who, created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then He Istawa (rose over) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty). He brings the night as a cover over the day, seeking it rapidly, and (He

created) the sun, the moon, the stars subjected to His command. Surely, His is the Creation and commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists)!" (Qur'an 7: 54)

2) Contemplating the fact that Allah's knowledge is comprehensive of all that exists in the universe, in terms of both the seen and the unseen world. Contemplation of this sort fills the soul and the heart with an appreciation of Allah's greatness and purifies the soul from doubts and disbelief. Allah said:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِلَيْلٍ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا

كنتم تعملون

"And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but He knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record. It is He, Who takes your souls by night (when you are asleep), and has knowledge of all that you have done by day, then He raises (wakes) you up again that a term appointed (your life period) be fulfilled, then in the end unto Him will be your return. Then He will inform you what you used to do." (Qur'an 6: 59, 60)

3) Worshipping Allah: This is one of the most important of ways in which one purifies one's soul. Worship is the supreme form of submission, and none deserves to be worshipped but Allah, Who said:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أَيْ وَلَا نَنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honour." (Qur'an 17: 23)

There are two categories of worship:

a) The kind that is compulsory and must, according to Islamic legislation, be performed in a certain manner - such as prayer, fasting, Zakaat, and Hajj.

b) The kind that is general and so comprises of a wide variety of deeds. This category comprises of deeds that one does or abstains from and of feelings - or basically of any thought, action, or lack of action, as long as one does any of the above for Allah s, seeking His Pleasure only. So whatever one does with the intention of seeking closeness to Allah an act of worship, for which one will be rewarded.

It is extremely important for a Muslim to purify his soul through prayer, recitation of the Quran, glorification of Allah, and remembrance of Allah. For if one does not purify one's soul from impurities, and if one does not establish a connection with his Lord, then one will not be strong enough to fulfill the rest of his Islamic duties. Frequently performed worship, therefore, is the fuel a person needs to become strong enough to do other Islamic duties that are required of him, a reality that is indicated in the following Verses:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا يَصِفُهُ أَوْ انْقَصَ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَبُّ الْقُرْآنِ تَرْتِيلًا إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَنَا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَلُّ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

"O you wrapped in garments (i.e., Prophet Muhammad)! Stand (to pray) all night, except a little. Half of it, - or a little less than that. Or a little more; and recite the Qur'an (aloud) in a slow, (pleasing tone and) style. Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word (i.e., obligations, legal laws, etc.). Verily, the rising by night (for Tahajjud prayer) is very hard and most potent and good for governing (the soul), and most suitable for (understanding) the Word (of Allah). Verily, there is for you by day prolonged occupation with ordinary duties. And remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with a complete devotion." (Qur'an 73: 1-8)*

In these Verses, we learn that one should prepare for the heavy, difficult work of the day by standing up late in the night to pray. From the very early days of his Prophethood, the Messenger of Allah strove to teach his Companions to purify

their souls through worship. Purification of the soul and consequently worship are so important to the life of a Muslim that the Companions would pray even when doing so threatened their lives. At first, they would pray in the mountain passes that neighbored Makkah, so as to avoid being seen by their fellow tribesmen. Then the Prophet, knowing that the disbelievers would not allow the Muslims to pray out in the open, established a meeting place in the house of Al-Arqam, where the Muslims could go to remember Allah and perform prayer. Had purification of the soul and worship not been of paramount importance, the Prophet would have ordered his Companions to abandon the prayer since praying made them vulnerable to physical torture and punishment at the hands of the Quraish. Makkan Verses of the Qur'an encouraged Muslims to perform prayer, to stand up late in the night to pray, to remember and glorify Allah, and to perform prayer with a presence of mind and heart - as in the following Verses:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ

"Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salaat (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness. And those who turn away from Al-Laghwa (dirty, false, evil vain talk, falsehood, and all that Allah has forbidden). And those who pay the Zakaat." (Qur'an 23: 1-4)

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ شَايِتَنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِهَا حَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ وَلِيلَ نَتَجَافَى جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Only those believe in Our Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), who, when they are reminded of them fall down prostrate, and glorify the Praises of their Lord, and they are not proud. Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (charity in Allah's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them. No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do." (Qur'an 32: 15-17)

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبُنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلنَّكِرِينَ

"And perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat), at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night [i.e., the five compulsory Salaat (prayers)]. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e., small sins). That is a reminder (an advice) for the mindful (those who accept advice)." (Qur'an 11: 114)

أَمِ الصَّلَاةِ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْعَانِ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْمَانَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَنْهُودًا وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا

"Perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat) from mid-day till the darkness of the night (i.e., the Zuhur, 'Asr, Maghrib, and 'Isha prayers), and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn (i.e., the morning prayer). Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever witnessed (attended by the angels in charge of mankind of the day and the night). And in some parts of the night (also) offer the Salaat (prayer) with it (i.e., recite the Qur'an in the prayer), as an additional prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer Nawafil) for you (O Muhammad). It may be that your Lord will raise you to Maqaman Mahmooda (a station of praise and glory, i.e., the highest degree in Paradise!)." (Qur'an 17: 78, 79)

فَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ أَنَايِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَى وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ (١٣١) أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِيَفْتَنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَأَصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْتَلِكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَزْرُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى

"So, bear patiently (O Muhammad) what they say, and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun, and before its setting, and during some of the hours of the night, and at the sides of the day (an indication for the five compulsory congregational prayers), that you may become pleased with the reward which Allah shall give you. And strain not your eyes in longing for the things We have given for enjoyment to various groups of them (polytheists and disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah), the splendour of the life of this world that We may test them thereby. But the provision (good reward in the Hereafter) of your Lord is better and more lasting. And enjoin As-Salaat (the prayer) on your family, and be patient in offering them [i.e., the Salaat (prayers)]. We ask not of you a provision (i.e., to give Us something: money, etc.); We provide for you. And the

good end (i.e., Paradise) is for the Muttaqoon (pious and righteous persons)."
(Qur'an 20: 130-132)

فَأُصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ وَمِنْ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَرَ
السُّجُودِ

"So, bear with patience (O Muhammad) all that they say, and glorify the Praises of your Lord, before the rising of the sun and before (its) setting (i.e., the Fajr, Zuhr, and 'Asr prayers). And during a part of the night (also), glorify His Praises (i.e., Maghrib and 'Isha prayers), and (so likewise) after the prayers (As-Sunnah, Nawafil - optional and additional prayers, and also glorify, praise and magnify Allah - Subhan Allah, Alhamdu lillah, Allahu-Akbar)." (Qur'an 50: 39, 40)

The last of the above-mentioned Verses proves that the strength one needs to deal with calamity and hardship is derived from prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, supplication, and remembrance of Allah. Of all acts of worship, prayer has the most potent effect on purifying the soul; the following are some of the more prominent effects that prayer had on the first generation of Muslims:

1) Prayer encouraged them to answer Allah's commands and gave them the opportunity to manifest their servitude and submission to Allah.

Allah praised His believing slaves who answer His Call:

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُفْقُونَ

"And those who answer the Call of their Lord [i.e., to believe that He is the only One Lord (Allah), and to worship none but Him Alone], and perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat), and who (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them." (Qur'an 42: 38)

The meanings of true worship are not realized in a person unless he does good deeds sincerely for Allah:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

"Say (O Muhammad: "Verily, my Salaat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists). He

has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." (Qur'an 6: 162, 163)

The Companions saw in each part of the prayer a way of manifesting their servitude and submission to Allah, which had a profound effect on their souls. To see how this is so, consider the effects that different parts of prayer have on a worshipper: By reciting during prayer, "All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists)," it becomes firmly ingrained in one's mind that Allah is perfect in every sense, that one must praise Allah for having guided him to His obedience and for the blessings He has bestowed upon him. The Companions saw in each part of the prayer a way of manifesting their servitude and submission to Allah, which had a profound effect on their souls. To see how this is so, consider the effects that different parts of prayer have on a worshipper: By reciting during prayer, "All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists)," it becomes firmly ingrained in one's mind that Allah is perfect in every sense, that one must praise Allah for having guided him to His obedience and for the blessings He has bestowed upon him. One should, in a sense, perform prostration as well - feeling a sense of one's own lowness and the greatness of Allah. Despite the disparity between one being so low during prostration and Allah being Most High, one never comes nearer to his Lord as one does while he is performing prostration. During prostration, the more one feels humility and fear of Allah, the closer one gets to his Lord, which is alluded to in the following Verse:

كَلَّا لَا نُطِغُهُ وَأَسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ

"Nay! (O Muhammad! Do not obey him (Abu Jahl). Fall prostrate and draw near to Allah!" (Qur'an 96: 19)

And the Prophet said:

"A slave never gets so close to his Lord as he does when he is performing prostration, so supplicate much (while you are performing prostration)."

Saheeh Muslim, "The Book of Prayer"; chapter, "What is Said During The Bowing and Prostrating, Positions (During Prayer)." Hadeeth number: 482.

Then, finally, when one is in the seated position during prayer, one asks for

forgiveness for his sins, hoping all the while for Allah's Mercy. Thus, in each action of prayer, one manifests one's servitude and submission to Allah; at the same time, one strengthens one's faith, which is what purification of the soul is founded upon, and which is one of the greatest of fruits that one reaps from prayer.

2) Through prayer, the Companions had a way of privately communicating with their Lord as. The Messenger of Allah said, "Allah said, 'I have divided the prayer in half between Me and My slaves, and My slave will have what he asks for.' So, when the slave (of Allah) says, 'All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns, and all that exists), Allah says, 'My slave has praised Me. And when he (the slave of Allah) says, 'The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful,' Allah says, 'My slave has extolled Me.' And when he says, 'The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e., the Day of Resurrection), Allah says, 'My slave has glorified Me.' And when he says, 'You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything); guide us to the Straight Way, the Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians),' Allah says, 'This is for My slave, and My slave will have what he asks for.'"

Saheeh Muslim, "The Book of Prayer"; chapter, "It is Compulsory to Recite the 'Opening Chapter Soorah Al-Faatihah' in Every Unit (of Prayer)." Hadeeth number: 395.

The Companions learned that such private communication with Allah was from the most important of ways to purify their souls and strengthen their faith.

3) The achievement of tranquility and peace of mind: Whenever some hardship or difficulty befell the Prophet he would find solace through prayer; in fact, it is related that the delight of his eye, or in other words his greatest pleasure, was prayer. The Messenger of Allah taught his Companions many voluntary acts of worship, so that they could increase their connection with their Lord and subsequently enjoy inner peace. And so prayer is the best weapon one has at one's disposal to disburden oneself from anxiety and worries.

4) Prayer is like a barrier that prevents one from sinning. Allah said:

اَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

"Recite (O Muhammad what has been revealed to you of the Book (the Qur'an), and perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat). Verily, As-Salaat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha (i.e., great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) and Al-Munkar (i.e., disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed, etc.) and the remembering (praising, etc.) of (you by) Allah (in front of the angels) is greater indeed [than your remembering (praising, etc.) of Allah in prayers, etc.]. And Allah knows what you do." (Qur'an 29: 45)

When they prayed, the Prophet's Companions found extra strength that propelled them to do good deeds and to flee from evil deeds. The spiritual strength they gained from prayer helped them overcome desire and lust. Just as the Companions felt that prayer helped them stay away from evil deeds, so too did they realize that prayer atones for sins and raises one's ranking with Allah. Allah said:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفِي النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذَّكِّرِينَ

"And perform As-Salaat (Iqamat-as-Salaat), at the ends of the day and in some hours of the night [i.e., the five compulsory Salaat (prayers)]. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e., small sins). That is a reminder (an advice) for the mindful (those who accept advice)." (Qur'an 11: 114)

Praying of course has many other positive effects, in terms of purifying and disciplining the soul. The Prophet said:

"And prayer is light."

Saheeh Muslim, "The Book of Purification"; chapter, "The Virtues of Ablution." Hadeeth number: 223.

Prayer illuminates for one the path of guidance; also, prayer is light in the heart for a person who tastes the sweetness of faith. And prayer is light on a person's face in this world, and more so in the Hereafter, when his face will truly shine, as opposed to one who abandons prayer. Allah said:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَ كُمْ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"On the Day you shall see the believing men and the believing women - their light running forward before them and by their right hands. Glad tidings for you this Day! Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever! Truly, this is the great success!" (Qur'an 57: 12)

Prayer, as we mentioned, is one of the most important acts of worship when it comes to purifying the soul, but there are other acts of worship which, in the same regard, are also important - such as remembering Allah, invoking Allah, reciting the Qur'an, listening to Qur'anic recitation, and struggling against the evil thoughts and suggestions that occur frequently in one's heart and soul. By performing these acts of worship, the Companions found different means of communicating privately with their Lord and of manifesting different kinds of servitude and submission to Allah, both of which had the effect of raising their ranking with Allah. The Messenger of Allah said, "Allah said, I am with the thoughts of My slave about Me, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his self, I remember him in My Self, if he remembers me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering whose members are better than them (i.e., the members of My slave's gathering). If he approaches Me the distance of a hand span, I approach him the distance of a forearm. If he approaches Me the distance of a forearm, I approach him the distance of outstretched arms. And if he comes to Me walking, I come to him running." Of the different forms of remembrance mentioned above, the recitation of the Qur'an is the noblest and best. Through the recitation of the Quran, the Companions increased both their love of Allah and the degree to which they feared Allah in their hearts. The Qur'an cured the diseases that afflicted their souls:

وَنُزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

"And We send down from the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) nothing but loss." (Qur'an 17: 82)

And Allah said:

لَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْهَانًا أَتَجَمَّاءُ لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فَصَّلَتْ وَآيَتُهُ الْجَمِيعُ مِنْ وَعَرَ وَعَرَبِي قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي عَادَاتِهِمْ وَفُرْ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

"And if We had sent this as a Qur'an in a foreign language other than Arabic, they would have said: 'Why are not its verses explained in detail (in our language)? What! (A Book) not in Arabic and (the Messenger) an Arab?' Say: 'It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is heaviness (deafness) in their ears, and it (the Qur'an) is blindness for them. They are those who are called from a place far away (so they neither listen nor understand).'" (Qur'an 41: 44)

And Allah said in yet another Verse:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Qur'an 13: 28)

Supplication is also of supreme importance in the life of a Muslim, and it is one of the clearest manifestations of worship. As the Messenger of Allah said,

"Ad-Du'a (supplication) is worship."! Abu Daawood (1479).

In a single Verse of the Qur'an, Allah at once ordered His slaves to invoke Him and warned those who deem themselves above worshipping Him of a severe torment:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

"And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, [i.e., believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism)] (and ask Me for anything) I will respond to your (invocation). Verily! Those who scorn My worship [i.e., do not invoke Me, and do not believe in My Oneness, (Islamic Monotheism)] they will surely enter Hell in humiliation!" (Qur'an 40: 60)

Commenting on this Verse, Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy on him, said,

"Worship in 'those who scorn My worship,' means, those who do not supplicate to Me and do not believe in My Oneness (Islamic Monotheism)." Tafseer Ibn Katheer (4/86)

The Prophet taught his Companions that, just as the body needs nourishment for its upkeep, so does the heart need constant nourishment, of the variety of supplication, remembrance of Allah, and recitation of the Qur'an. These forms of nourishment protect the heart from all kinds of diseases that can afflict it. In order to provide them with constant protection from diseases, the Prophet taught his Companions what invocations to say at different times and during different situations - invocations for the morning and evening; for entering one's home or for leaving it; for entering the marketplace; for eating, drinking, or wearing clothing, and so on in terms of daily activities. And even if one is afflicted with a temporary inner illness - such as depression, stress, or anxiety - the invocations that the Prophet taught his Companions provide the cure, so that one's heart becomes alive again and returns to a state of peace and tranquility. One example is the invocation that the Prophet taught his Companions to say if they ever became afflicted with hardship or distress:

"None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, the Forbearing. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, Lord of the magnificent throne. None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, Lord of the heavens, Lord of the earth, and Lord of the noble throne."

The Messenger of Allah taught his Companions how to seek refuge in Allah during times of hardship and distress, so that they could find the safety and inner peace one finds when one truly believes that Allah will help one and answer one's supplications. Allah said:

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِقَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Is not He (better than your gods) Who responds to the distressed one, when he calls Him, and Who removes the evil, and makes you inheritors of the earth, generations after generations. Is there any ilah (God) with Allah? Little is that you remember!" (Qur'an 27: 62)

Standing up late at night to pray, remembering Allah, reciting the Qur'an, invoking Allah for help - each of these contributes greatly to the process of purifying the soul.