

Three Most Important *Dhikrs* for a Sound Heart and Inner Peace

Istighfār, Al-Ḥamdulillāh, Subḥānallāh: Most Important Dhikrs for a Sound Heart

When we speak about ways to protect and nurture the heart, the first thing that may come to mind are the various prayers and spiritual *dhikrs* (remembering God). Yet among all these forms of *dhikr*, three hold a special and key place: “***Al-Ḥamdulillāh,***” “***Istighfār,***” and “***Subḥānallāh.***” These three simple and short words are considered the most important *dhikrs* for a sound heart. They not only bring deep inner peace but also act as a strong spiritual shield protecting the human heart from spiritual diseases such as arrogance, heedlessness, jealousy, and feeling entitled before God.

Their importance lies in the fact that they form the foundation of all human action. “*Al-Ḥamdulillāh*” revives the spirit of gratitude and frees a person from arrogance. “*Istighfār*” washes the heart from inner impurities and paves the way back to God and “*Subḥānallāh*” teaches us humility and the acceptance of responsibility in the face of difficulties. That is why spiritual masters and scholars have always emphasized these three most important *dhikrs* as the main pillars of a sound and peaceful heart.

The human heart is like fertile soil—if it is not guarded against inner poisons, it will dry up. Arrogance, jealousy, negligence, and excessive attachment to the world are silent toxins that slowly burn the root of the soundness of the heart. Just as the body needs vaccines and care to fight diseases, the heart needs special tools to prevent inner impurity. This is where *dhikr* finds its meaning; it is a tool that both

grants inner peace and acts as a spiritual shield, safeguarding the heart against harms and deviations.

In this article, we will explore the role of these most important *dhikrs* for a sound heart and preventing spiritual decay. We will see how these essential *dhikrs*, when practiced daily and consciously, can transform our character and turn the heart into a safe, calm, sound, and divine space.

The Importance of Most Important *Dhikrs* in Spiritual Growth

The human heart is constantly exposed to both external and internal influences. Environmental conditions, daily thoughts, social relationships, and even small habits can drive the heart toward light or darkness. If a person is left to their own devices, heedlessness and carnal temptations gradually open the door for spiritual diseases to penetrate. Jealousy, selfishness, arrogance, and excessive attachment to the world are illnesses that contaminate the heart and block the path of spiritual growth. This is where the remembrance of God is presented as a vital necessity. Without it, the heart's health quickly falls into danger.

These most important *dhikrs* are the main tools for guarding the heart against these threats. These remembrances not only keep the memory of God alive in the heart but also bring peace, purity, and serenity. A person who constantly recites these *dhikrs* with their tongue and heart is like someone who has received a spiritual vaccine, making them resilient against spiritual and psychological heart diseases. Just as the body is strengthened by physical exercise and healthy nutrition, the human soul is sustained by *dhikr* and the remembrance of God.

For this reason, spiritual teachers and scholars have always emphasized the importance of *dhikr* on the path of spiritual journey. In their view, *dhikr* is not just

a tool for inner peace; it is a way to awareness, vigilance, and the preservation of the soundness of the heart. *Dhikr* reminds the seeker to be careful that their heart does not become trapped by self-admiration or a feeling of self-sufficiency. This is because most spiritual downfalls begin from this very point. In reality, *dhikr* is both a medicine for prevention and treatment —a cure for old inner wounds and a shield for protection against new harms to spiritual health. However, if this same medicine is not used correctly, it can lead the person to conceit, arrogance, and human downfall.

***Al-Ḥamdulillāh*: Gratitude and Freedom from Arrogance**

One of the most important *dhikrs* is "*Al-Ḥamdulillāh*." This *dhikr* makes us realize that all blessings come from God, and that a human being is never the true owner of anything. When a person internalizes this meaning, they do not become afflicted by arrogance or self-admiration when praised by others or experiencing personal success [1]. They believe that everything they possess is a divine trust, and their only role is to be grateful and make proper use of these blessings.

The *dhikr* "*Al-Ḥamdulillāh*" in truth frees a person from the trap of self-centeredness. A person who has fully established this *dhikr* within themselves will not become attached to the world and its appearances, nor will they become saddened by failures. This is because they know that whatever they have or do not have is within the framework of divine wisdom and will. Such a perspective empties one's inner capacity of worldly attachments, making room for divine love and lasting peace.

The importance of gratitude is also repeatedly emphasized in supplications and narrations. Imam Ṣādiq (Peace be upon him) said: "Gratitude for a blessing prevents

its disappearance". The *dhikr* "*Al-Ḥamdulillāh*" is a clear embodiment of this truth; the more a person gives thanks, the calmer their heart becomes, and the higher their spiritual well-being rises.

***Istighfār*: Purifying the Heart from Impurities**

The *dhikr* "*Istighfār*" (I seek God's forgiveness) is the second pillar of a healthy heart. All human beings, even the prophets, are in need of seeking forgiveness [2]. Daily life, mental preoccupations, and carnal temptations constantly leave dust upon the heart. Seeking forgiveness acts like a clear rain, washing away these dust particles and making the heart transparent again.

A person who is aware of the importance of *Istighfār* does not view it merely as a verbal habit. Every time they seek forgiveness, they are, in fact, taking a step toward inner reconstruction. This *dhikr* treats illnesses such as arrogance, self-admiration, and heedlessness, and liberates the individual from *Shirk al-Khafī* (subtle polytheism) —which is seeing oneself as dependent on God's other creations. *Istighfār* is an acknowledgment of one's constant need for God, and this acknowledgment guides the heart toward humility and purity.

The Quran has repeatedly recommended seeking forgiveness. God states in Surah Nūḥ: "And I said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever Forgiving'" [3]. *Istighfār* not only removes the heart's impurities but also serves as a path to attracting divine mercy and forgiveness. Persistence in this *dhikr* places a person on a path where they can correct every minor slip-up through repentance and return, preventing any spiritual ailment from taking root in the heart.

***Subhānallāh*: Humility and Acceptance of Responsibility**

The sacred *dhikr* "*Subhānallāh*" (Glory be to God) is one of the most important remembrances and the third *dhikr* we discuss here. It is a remembrance that calls to mind God's purity and transcendence from every flaw or deficiency; when a person understands this meaning, in the face of difficulties and setbacks, instead of objecting or having a demanding attitude toward God, they first look within themselves for a flaw and a way to rectify it. The *dhikr* "*Subhānallāh*" frees a person from the trap of blaming others or blaming fate, leading them toward acceptance of responsibility and humility.

This *dhikr* changes our perspective. A person who says "*Subhānallāh*" when faced with problems is, in effect, declaring that God is free from all wrongdoing and error, and if a hardship has occurred, it is either a divine trial or the result of their own shortcomings. Such a viewpoint strengthens the spirit of self-correction and patience, preventing despair and hopelessness.

Subhānallāh connects the tongue with praise and the heart with peace. Glorification of God (*Tasbih*) is mentioned repeatedly in the Quran; for example, "Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High" [4]. Persistence in this *dhikr* makes us resilient in the face of hardships and inwardly stabilizes the heart's soundness.

How to Incorporate These Most Important *Dhikrs* into Our Daily Lives

Dhikr will not have a deep effect if it is only recited by the tongue and does not reach the heart. The art of the seeker is to transform *dhikr* from mere lip service into a lived and practical reality. This process requires awareness, practice, and persistence.

The first step is the conscious repetition of the *dhikrs* in different daily situations:

-Saying "***Al-Ḥamdulillāh***" (Praise be to God) after every success or compliment from others.

-Saying "***Istighfār***" (I seek God's forgiveness) after every slip-up or shortcoming.

-Saying "***Subḥānallāh***" (Glory be to God) when encountering any difficulty or flaw.

This simple practice gradually moves *dhikr* from the level of the tongue to the depth of the soul.

The second step is contemplating the meanings of the *dhikrs*. *Dhikrs* are not just words for repetition; every time they are recited, their meaning should be reviewed and aligned with life circumstances. This transforms the *dhikr* into an inner, corrective experience.

The third step is the application of *dhikrs* in social interactions:

-When faced with praise or compliments, "***Al-Ḥamdulillāh***" keeps us away from arrogance.

-During anger or distress, "***Istighfār***" brings peace.

-In difficult situations, "***Subḥānallāh***" transforms a demanding perspective into a responsible one.

Finally, daily journaling and recording of the *dhikrs* as a practical exercise can increase their impact. If a person reminds themselves daily how many times they have consciously used these *dhikrs*, a deeper connection forms between their tongue, heart, and actions. Another discussion point is the number of repetitions for *dhikrs*, which is not relevant to the topic of this lesson. We will address the truth and connection between the specific numbers designated for various *dhikrs* and their true inner reality in advanced classes.

References

[1]. Imam Sajjād (Peace be upon him): "Do not elevate my status among people, except that You degrade me to the same extent in my own eyes." (*Şahīfa Sajjādīyya*, supplication 20)

[2]. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him and his family): "Indeed, I ask forgiveness of Allah seventy times each day; sometimes my heart is covered with dust, so I seek forgiveness from God seventy times a day." (*Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 25, p. 210)

[3]. Quran 71:10

[4]. *Ibid.*, 87:1