

271206 - What is meant by muraaqabah (awareness that Allah is watching)?

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What is muraaqabah (awareness that Allah is watching)? Are there any hadiths or Qur'anic verses that speak of muraaqabah?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Muraaqabah (awareness that Allah is watching) means the Muslim's bearing in mind in all circumstances and situations, and believing with certainty, that Allah sees him and knows what he is earning of good or bad deeds with all his faculties, and that He knows what is hidden in his thoughts and in his heart.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Muraaqabah means always being aware and being certain that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is constantly watching what is visible of his deeds and what is hidden.

Constantly knowing that and being certain of it is muraaqabah (awareness that Allah is watching); it is the result of knowing that Allah, may He be glorified, is watching him, looking at him, listening to what he says, knowing all that he does at all times and all moments...

End quote from Madaarij as-Saalikeen (2/1489).

This is one of the central tenets of faith. There are many religious texts that speak of this idea, such as the following verses:

“And know that Allah knows what is within yourselves, so beware of Him. And know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing”

[al-Baqarah 2:235]

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah , through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer”

[an-Nisaa’ 4:1].

According to a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, Jibreel (peace be upon him) asked the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about ihsaan. He said: “It is to worship Allah as if you can see Him, for although you cannot see Him, He can see you.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (50) and Muslim (9).

Muraaqabah is one of the outcomes of belief in the beautiful names of Allah, such as al-‘Aleem (the All-Knowing), as-Samee’ (the All-Hearing), al-Baseer (the All-Seeing).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Muraaqabah means to worship Allah on the basis of the knowledge that He is ar-Raqeeb (the Watchful), al-Hafeez (the Preserver), al-‘Aleem (the All-Knowing), as-Samee’ (the All-Hearing), al-Baseer (the All-Seeing). Whoever understands these names and worships Allah on the basis thereof will attain this awareness that He is always watching (muraaqabah). And Allah knows best.

End quote from Madaarij as-Saalikeen (2/1493).

This muraaqabah is essential for every Muslim, because by means of it he will attain sincerity in his acts of worship, will do them properly, and will avoid that which is haraam.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “It is to worship Allah as if you can see Him, for although you cannot see Him, He can see you...”

The purpose behind these words is to encourage the Muslim to be sincere in worship, and to remember that his Lord, may He be blessed and exalted, is always watching him, so that he might develop proper focus and humility, and so on.

People of knowledge and devotion recommend keeping company with righteous people, so that that might protect him from falling into some shortcomings, out of respect for them and feeling shy before them. So how should one behave who believes that Allah, may He be exalted, is constantly watching him and sees what he does in secret and openly?

End quote from Sharh Saheeh Muslim (1/158)

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Righteous people are agreed that being aware that Allah, may He be exalted, knows every thought that crosses a person's mind is a means of protecting him from falling short in what he does. The one who bears in mind the fact that Allah is watching his thoughts and his heart, Allah will protect him from falling short in what he does both in secret and openly.

End quote from Madaarij as-Saalikeen (2/1492)

For more information on the true meaning of muraaqabah and its benefits, please see the following article by Shaykh Dr. Khaalid as-Sabt:

<https://khaledalsabt.com/cnt/slaselm/2534>

And Allah knows best.