

What is Khushu?

Khushū' is one of the actions of the heart. Linguistically, khushū' means to sink, to be low, to be subservient and to be still. Technically, it refers to the heart that stands with complete humility, lowliness and full concentration towards Allah. Khushū' resides within the heart and is manifested through the limbs and organs.

With khushū' your heart softens, becomes still, and humbles itself to its Lord. Your heart submits and focuses on Allah to such a degree that everything else retreats into insignificance. Your limbs and organs then follow the heart, and they too are humbled. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "There is a lump of flesh in the body: if it is sound, the whole body will be sound but if it is corrupt, the whole body will be corrupt. Truly, it is the heart" (Bukhārī).

A humble heart results in the humbling of the ears, eyes, head and face. This is why the Prophet ﷺ would say in his rukū', "My hearing, sight, mind, bones, and nerves are humbled to You" (Muslim). Your hearing submits to Allah, and you only listen to what He has permitted. Your eyes do not glance at the ḥarām. Every interior and exterior part of your body humbles itself and obeys its Creator.

Khushū' extinguishes the 'fires' of lust and desire and illuminates your heart with the 'light' of Allah's greatness. You become fully aware that Allah is looking at you, and this fills your heart with His reverence.

Khushu: In and Outside Your Salah

Although the focus of this series is khushū' within ṣalāh, it is important to note that you should also strive to experience khushū' outside of ṣalāh. Imām al-Ghazālī (raḥimahullāh) described khushū' as the fruit of īmān and the result of a firm conviction in the greatness of Allah. If you are blessed with this, you will enjoy khushū' in and outside of ṣalāh – even when alone and away from others. Continuously remembering that Allah sees you, being in awe of His greatness, and recognising your own deficiencies will lead to a constant state of khushū'.

Khushū' is a state in which you constantly weigh up your sins against the greatness of Allah, leaving you overwhelmed with humility and a desperate need for Him.

Khushū' magnifies and multiplies the rewards of good deeds. Ibn Taymiyyah (raḥimahullāh) explains that even though there is a great reward in reciting Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ (as it equates to one third of the Qur'ān), if one was to read any other āyah with khushū', the reward of it would be greater.

The Quickest Route to Allah's Pleasure

Khushū' is one of the easiest and quickest routes to attaining the pleasure of Allah. One of the pious predecessors said, "I have tried coming closer to Allah by entering all the doors of worship. But every time I came close to a door, I found that it was crowded with people; thus, I was unable to enter until I approached the door of humility and desperate need for Him. I found that it was in fact the nearest and widest of all doors to Allāh; there were not any crowds at it nor were there any barriers. As soon as I placed my foot inside, He took my hand and admitted me inside."

"Khushū' is the humility of the heart and the subservience of the limbs and organs." [‘Aṭā’ al-Khurāsānī (raḥimahullāh)]