

عَشْرُ قَوَاعِدَ  
فِي تَزْكِيَةِ النَّفْسِ

Ten Principles Concerning  
Purification of the Soul



Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzāq al-'Abbād



Ten Principles Concerning

# Purification of the Soul

Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Badr

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## Introduction

The praise is for Allāh, Lord of all the creation. May peace and blessings be upon the noblest of Prophets and the seal of the Messengers; our Prophet and role-model, the coolness of our eyes, Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdullāh; the trustworthy guide; and upon his family and companions, altogether; as well as whoever traverses upon their guidance until the Day of Recompense. To proceed:

The affair of the soul, which is within the body of the person, is tremendous and its status is great. Allāh has sworn by many of His magnificent created beings, indicating His greatness. Within Sūrah al-Shams He swears by the successful soul and by the unsuccessful soul. Allāh (بَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) says:

﴿ وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا ۝١ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَتْ ۝٢ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰهَا ۝٣  
وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰهَا ۝٤ وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَىٰهَا ۝٥ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَىٰهَا ۝٦  
وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا ۝٧ فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا ۝٨ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ  
زَكَّاهَا ۝٩ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ۝١٠ ﴾

“By the sun and its brightness; And by the moon as it follows it; And by the day as it shows up (the sun’s) brightness; And by the night as it conceals it (the sun); And by the heaven and Him Who built it; And by Nafs (the soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion; Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him; Indeed he succeeds who purifies it. And indeed he fails who corrupts it.”

[Sūrah al-Shams 91:1-10]

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said: **“Indeed he succeeds who purifies it.”** The origin of *al-Zakāt* الزكاة is to increase in good. What is intended by the verse here is that whoever strives to purify and rectify his soul and to elevate it by way of doing an abundance of acts of obedience and good deeds and staying away from evils and sins, then he will have actualized its success.

[Concerning] His statement in which He said: **“And indeed he fails who corrupts it,”** the origin of corruption التدسية is to conceal. For the sinner has concealed his noble soul by way of committing sins and he has buried it by way of despicable and lowly acts. He has suppressed and destroyed it by committing inequities such that it came to be a dirty, lowly, and vile soul, due to which it is deserving of destruction and loss, and the refuge is with Allāh.

(Ibn al-Qayyim said):

“Noble souls are not pleased except with lofty things; the best of things which have the best outcome. Lowly souls linger around lowly things and fall into them just as flies fall upon filth. The noble and lofty soul is not pleased with oppression, lewdness, theft, or deception. This is because it is greater and nobler than that. The lowly, despicable, and wretched soul is the opposite of this. So each soul will incline to that which is appropriate for it and that which it suits it.”<sup>1</sup>

Since purifying the soul has this level of importance, it is obligatory upon each Muslim who desires good for himself to give great importance to it and to struggle against his soul within his life in actualizing this praiseworthy goal; in order that he may be successful in his worldly life and his hereafter, and so that he may enjoy true happiness.

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<sup>1</sup> *Al-Fawā'id* by Ibn al-Qayyim (pg. 178)

The soul has a right upon the Muslim, as the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has said:

وإن لنفسك عليك حقًا

“And indeed, your soul has a right upon you.”

He has erred who believes that the right of the soul is that one is harsh upon it and deprives it of its rights that Allāh has created it with an innate need for. Likewise, he has erred who believes that the right of the soul is that one is negligent and neglectful of its management and leaves it drowning in its lusts, and the likes.

Purification of the soul is totally different from the likes of this. Rather, purification of the soul is by way of the legislative methods, balance, and moderateness, such that there is neither negligence nor exaggeration. Instead, it is by clinging to the guidance of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his firm methodology.

I will mention, within this concise work, ten important principles which will assist the Muslim in purifying and strengthening his soul as well as cleansing it from everything which would sully and defile it.

I ask Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) to purify our souls, and to rectify our actions and to make our statements upright. (I ask Him) to enlighten us with the truth and to provide us with adherence to it; and to guide us to the best of character and deeds. (I ask Him) to turn evil (character and deeds) away from us and to keep us away from Fitnah; that which is apparent and that which is hidden.

May Allāh bestow blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and companions.

# The First Principle: Tawhīd Is the Foundation with which the Souls Are Purified

Indeed, *Tawhīd* is the objective for which Allāh created us and brought us into existence. As Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ ﴾

“And I (Allāh) created not the Jinn and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).” [Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt 51:56]

It is also the basis of the call of the Prophets and Messengers. As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا  
الطَّاغُوتَ ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

“And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): “Worship Allāh (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Ṭāghūt (all false deities).” [Sūrah al-Nahl 16:36]

*Tawhīd* is the first of that which is obligatory upon the person in order for him to enter into the religion of Islām. It is likewise the first thing which the caller to Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) must teach the people. As

the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to Mu‘adh Ibn Jabal (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) when he sent him to Yemen:

إنك تقدم على قوم من أهل الكتاب، فليكن أول ما تدعوهم إلى أن يوحدوا الله تعالى

“Indeed, you are going to a people of the People of the Book. Therefore, let the first thing you call them to be to single out Allāh (in worship).”<sup>2</sup>

Allāh has threatened those who do not purify their souls by way of *Tawhīd* and *Īmān* [faith] with a severe punishment on the Day of Judgment. Allāh (عَزَّجَلَّ) said:

﴿وَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ

﴿هُم كَافِرُونَ ﴿٧﴾﴾

**“Woe to al-Mushrikūn (the polytheists); Those who give not the Zakāt and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.” [Sūrah Fussilat 41:6-7]**

Ibn Taymīyah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) in explanation of the aforementioned verse:

“This is the *Tawhīd* and *Īmān* [faith] with which one purifies the heart. For it comprises negation of the right of worship and divinity for other than al-Ḥaqq (i.e. Allāh) and affirmation of divinity and the sole right to worship for al-Ḥaqq [the Truth] within the heart. This is the reality of (the statement) *Lā Ilāha illa Allāh* (none has the right to be worshiped except

<sup>2</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 7372)

Allāh); and this is the foundation with which the hearts are purified.”<sup>3</sup>

Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“The majority of the exegetes from the *Salaf* and those after them have said that this verse is in reference to *Tawhīd*; the testimony that none that the right to be worshiped except Allāh and *Īmān* [faith] by way of which the heart is purified...and it is the foundation of purification and development.”<sup>4</sup>

Just as *Tawhīd* is the foundation with which the souls are purified and cleansed, *Shirk* [worshipping other than Allāh] is the worst of that which sullies and defiles the souls, and it is that which invalidates every action. As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكَ لَئِن أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ

عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

“And indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muḥammad), as it was to those (Allāh’s Messengers) before you: If you join others in worship with Allāh, (then) surely (all) your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers.” [Sūrah al-Zumar 39:65]

It is the sin which Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) will never forgive for the person who dies upon it, as Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

<sup>3</sup> *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (10/97)

<sup>4</sup> *Igāthah al-Lahfān* (1/79)

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ﴾

“Verily, Allāh forgives not that partners should be set up with him in worship, but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He pleases.” [Sūrah al-Nisā‘ 4:48]

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has forbidden Paradise for everyone who associates others as partners with Him. As He, Exalted be He, has said:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَبْنَىٰ إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَن

يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَهُ النَّارُ وَمَا

لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ ﴿٧٢﴾

“Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allāh, then Allāh has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the polytheists there are no helpers.” [Sūrah al-Mā‘idah 5:72]

So if the servant actualizes *Tawhīd*, he will have attained complete purification and he will have attained complete guidance and safety in the *Dunyā* [this world] and the Hereafter. As Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has said:

﴿ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا ءِيمَانَهُم بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ ءَأْمَنٌ وَهُمْ

مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

**“It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with *Zulm* (polytheism), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided.” [Sūrah al-An‘ām 6:82]**

Hence, when the servant sincerely submits to Allāh and loves Him, his actions will be purified and corrected, and his soul will be purified and good. And when that which would sully it, from the filth of polytheism, is made to enter into it, then the filth and dirt will enter in proportion to this.

There is no purification for the soul except by actualizing *Tawḥīd* and singling out Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) in worship and making one’s actions sincerely for Him. As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ﴾

**“Surely, for Allāh is the pure religion.”**

[Sūrah al-Zumar 39:3]

There is no purification for the soul except by freeing it from *Shirk* in all of its types and by freeing it of everything which nullifies and weakens *Tawḥīd*.

﴿ \* \* \* ﴾



## The Second Principle: Du‘ā‘ [Supplication] Is the Key to the Purification of the Soul

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

ليس شيء أكرم على الله تعالى من الدعاء

“There is nothing nobler with Allāh than *Du‘ā‘* [supplication].”<sup>5</sup>

*Du‘ā‘* is from the best acts of worship with Allāh, because it contains displaying inability, need, submissiveness, humbleness, and acknowledgement of the power and ability of Allāh, His richness and self-sufficiency; His grandeur and His strength to overpower His enemies, not to mention (His power over) His virtuous loved ones and friends.<sup>6</sup>

It has a tremendous effect in opening the doors to good, as Shaykh al-Islām said within his advice to Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī:

“*Du‘ā‘* [supplication] is the key to every good.”<sup>7</sup>

Every good which you hope for and desire for yourself, from the good things of this world and the Hereafter, seek it with Allāh and resort to Him in (striving to) attain and acquire it.

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<sup>5</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhī within *al-Jāmi‘* (no. 3370) and Ibn Mājah within *al-Sunan* (no. 3829) and al-Albānī declared it *Ḥasan* within *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘* (no. 5392).

<sup>6</sup> *Mirqāt al-Mafāṭīḥ Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* (4/1527)

<sup>7</sup> *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* (10/661)

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has promised the one who turns to Him that He will respond to Him.

He, Exalted be He, has said:

﴿ وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ﴾

“And your Lord said: Invoke Me, I will respond to your (invocation).” [Sūrah Ghāfir 40:60]

The Chief of the Believers ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“Indeed, I do not consider the most important thing to be the response, but I consider it to be the *Du‘ā’* [supplication]. For if I am inspired to make *Du‘ā’*, the response will come along with it.”<sup>8</sup>

On the authority of Muṭarrif ibn al-Shikhhkḥīr, who said:

“I pondered about what is inclusive of (all) good, for indeed abundant good is within fasting and prayer. And it is within the Hand of Allāh (عِزِّهِ); and you are not able to attain what is within the Hand of Allāh unless you ask Him and He gives you. Therefore, that which is inclusive (of all) good is *Du‘ā’*.”<sup>9</sup>

In the field of purification, it is authentically reported from the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) that he said within his supplication:

اللهم آت نفسي تقواها وزكها، أنت خير من زكها أنت وليها ومولاها

<sup>8</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhī within al-Jāmi‘ (no. 3370) and Ibn Mājah within *al-Sunan* (no. 3829) and al-Albānī graded it *Ḥasan* within al-Targhīb (2/270).

<sup>9</sup> Reported by Imām Aḥmad within *al-Zuhd* (no. 1344).

“O Allāh, give my soul its *Taqwá* [piety] and purify it; for You are the best to purify it. You are its Guardian and its Patron.”<sup>10</sup>

Within this supplication lies an indication and it draws attention to the fact that the purification of the soul is in the Hand of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى); the All-Knower of the Unseen.

Likewise, that the greatest key to it is supplication and (a sense of) need for Allāh, the Exalted. Due to this, the supplication which the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said the most was:

يا مقلب القلوب ثبت قلبي على دينك

“O Turner of the Hearts, make my heart firm upon Your religion.”

When the heart of the slave is focused, his needs and aims are genuine, his hope is strong, his expectation for a response is not hasty and he seeks out those virtuous times, then his supplication will almost never be rejected.

The greatest of that which will aid you with *Du‘ā‘* is knowing that the purification of your soul is in the Hand of Allāh. Allāh is the One who purifies whomever He wills and the entirety of the affair belongs to Him and is under His will. As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿بَلِ اللهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ﴾

“Nay - but Allāh purifies whom He pleases”.  
[Sūrah al-Nisā‘ 4:49]

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<sup>10</sup> Reported by Muslim within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 2722).

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) likewise says:

﴿وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ﴾

“And had it not been for the Grace of Allāh and His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been purified. But Allāh purifies whom He wills.” [Sūrah al-Nūr 24:21]

Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said in explanation of the statement of Allāh, the Exalted:

“Not one of you would ever have been purified,”

“Meaning, none of the creation would have been guided to any good with which he can benefit himself and he would not have been protected from any evil (that he wants to) repel from himself.”<sup>11</sup>

Meaning, all of this is only by the bounty of Allāh.

Al-Barā‘ (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) on the Day of the Confederates, was moving dirt along with us, and the dust covered the whiteness of his belly. He was saying:

وَاللَّهِ لَوْلَا اللَّهُ مَا اهْتَدَيْنَا وَلَا تَصَدَّقْنَا وَلَا صَلِّينَا

“By Allāh, were it not for Allāh, we would not have been guided;

<sup>11</sup> Reported by Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī within his Tafsīr (17/222).

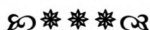
Nor would we have given charity or prayed.”<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, guidance, *Īmān* [faith], and goodness are all within the Hand of Allāh Alone. The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to instill this affair within the souls of his companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) and continuously emphasize it. He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would begin his sermons by saying:

من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادي له

“Whomever Allāh guides there is none to misguide and whomever He misguides there is none to guide.”<sup>13</sup>

This principle is the greatest of the doors to purification of the soul. Therefore, he who knows that rectification of his soul, its purification and uprightness is in the Hand of Allāh, he will take refuge with Him and devote himself to its means by way of *Du‘ā‘*, hoping and desiring from Him the attainment of the purification of his soul and its salvation and success in this life and the hereafter.



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<sup>12</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 4104) and Muslim within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 1803); and this is his wording.

<sup>13</sup> Reported by Muslim within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 868) from the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ). Abū Dāwūd likewise reported it within *al-Sunan* (no. 1097) as well as al-Tirmidhī within *al-Jāmi‘* (no. 1105) and al-Nasā‘ī within *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (no. 3277) and Ibn Mājah within *al-Sunan* (no. 1892); all being from the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ).

## The Third Principle: The Noble Qur‘ān Is the Spring and Source of Purification of the Heart

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا  
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ ۖ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ﴾

“Indeed, Allāh conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muḥammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur‘ān), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book and al-Ḥikmah (the wisdom and the Sunnah).” [Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān 3:164]

The greatest of that with which the souls are purified is the Noble Qur‘ān, which is the book of purification, its source, its spring, and its origin. Therefore, he who desires purification for his soul then let him seek it within the Book of Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ).

Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“Allāh has guaranteed, for he who follows the Qur‘ān, that he will never go astray in this life nor will he be miserable in the hereafter.” Then he recited:

﴿فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى﴾

“Then whoever follows My Guidance shall neither go astray, nor fall into distress and misery.” [Sūrah Ṭā-Hā 20:123]<sup>14</sup>

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾  
 ﴿٥٧﴾

“O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord and a healing for that which is within your breasts, - a guidance and a mercy for the believers.” [Sūrah Yūnus 10:57]

Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“The *Qur’ān* is the complete healing from every sickness of the heart and body and the diseases of the *Dunyā* [the worldly life] and the hereafter.”<sup>15</sup>

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

﴿الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ﴾

“Those to whom We gave the Book recite it as it should be recited (i.e. followed), they are the ones that believe therein.” [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:121]

<sup>14</sup> Reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah within al-Muṣannaf (no. 35926).

<sup>15</sup> *Zād al-Ma’ād* (4/119)

(His statement):

“Recite it as it should be recited,” means: They recite it, they memorize it, they understand it, they contemplate it, and they act upon it; as the companions and the *Tabi‘ūn* have explained it.

Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“When one of us would learn ten verses he would not go beyond them until he knew their meaning and acted upon them.”<sup>16</sup>

Reciting the *Qur‘ān* without understanding its meanings or acting upon that which has come within it is not considered reciting it as it should be recited.

Due to this, Fuḍayl Ibn ‘Iyād (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

“*The Qur‘ān has only been revealed to be acted upon. Yet, the people have taken its recitation as its implementation.*”<sup>17</sup>

If Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has favored His slave with the recitation of the *Qur‘ān*, contemplation upon it, and striving against his soul to act upon it, then he will attain a large portion in the purification of the soul.



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<sup>16</sup> Reported by Aḥmad within *al-Musnad* (no. 23482).

<sup>17</sup> Reported by al-Ājurri within *Akhlāq Ḥamalah al-Qur‘ān* (no. 41).



# The Fourth Principle: Taking The Prophet as an Example and Role- Model

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ  
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾

“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allāh (Muḥammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allāh and the Last Day and remembers Allāh much.” [Sūrah al-Aḥzāb 33:21]

Ibn Kathīr (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

“This noble verse is a tremendous foundation for emulating the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in his statements, actions, and (one’s) condition.”<sup>18</sup>

Al-Ḥasan (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

“A people during the time of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: ‘Indeed, we love our Lord; so Allāh sent down this verse:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

<sup>18</sup> *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (11/133)

“Say (O Muḥammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to mankind): “If you (really) love Allāh then follow me, Allāh will love you.” [Sūrah Āl- ‘Imrān 3:31]<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, following the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and taking him as an example is a proof for the truthfulness in the love of Allāh, the Exalted. This is because following and taking the example of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and traversing upon his firm methodology is the reality of purification, and it is not possible to attain it without that which the Messenger came with.

The heads of deviation in every time invent evil paths which they claim will purify the souls, cleanse the hearts, and strengthen the connection with Allāh – and the other claims that are made. They advise to cut off society and seclude oneself in dark places whilst repeating specific statements of remembrance and certain phrases which supposedly will purify, cleanse, and cultivate the souls; and other than this from the false claims.

The ‘Allāmah Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ) said:

“The purification of the souls is more difficult and challenging than treating the bodies. He who purifies himself by spiritual practices, struggling, and seclusion which the Messengers did not come with is similar to the sick person who treats himself with his (own) opinion. How does his opinion measure up to the cognizance of a doctor?!

The Messengers are the doctors of the hearts. There is no path to purifying them and rectifying them except by way of them

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<sup>19</sup> Reported by al-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr* (6/322).

and at their hands, and by pure submission and compliance to them. And Allāh's Aid is sought.”<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, every action which is not in accordance with the affair of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is rejected for the one who does it. As the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has said:

من عمل عملا ليس عليه أمرنا فهو رد

“Whoever does an action which is not from this affair of ours, then it will be rejected.”<sup>21</sup>

Meaning, rejected for the one who does it.

The Imām Sufyān Ibn 'Uyainah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said:

“Indeed, the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is the greatest scale; things are subjected and compared to him, to his character, way, and guidance. That which corresponds to it is the truth, and that which contradicts it is falsehood.”<sup>22</sup>

Due to this, it is obligatory upon the one who desires purification of his soul that he strives against himself to follow (the *Sunnah*), and to follow his example, and take the messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) as a role-model. He must also beware of religious novelties, innovations and the innovated paths which their figureheads claim will purify the souls.



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<sup>20</sup> *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (2/300)

<sup>21</sup> Reported by Muslim within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 1718).

<sup>22</sup> Reported by al-Khaṭīb within the introduction to his book *al-Jāmi' li Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa Adāb al-Sāmi'* (1/79).

## The Fifth Principle: Purification Is Through Removal [of Contemtable Traits] and Adorning with Righteous Deeds

The reality of *Tazkīyah* [purification of the soul] is that it is by liberation of the soul, firstly, by purifying it of lowly things, disobedience, and sins. Then adorning it, thereafter, by doing acts of obedience and that which will bring one near to Allāh. Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿ خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾

“Take *Ṣadāqah* (alms) from their wealth in order to purify them and sanctify them with it, and invoke Allāh for them.” [Sūrah al-Tawbah 9:103]

The statement of Allāh: “...in order to purify them,” is alluding to removing sins by way of purifying them of their iniquities.

The statement: “...and sanctify them with it,” is alluding to adornment with virtuous deeds and righteous actions.

Meaning, cleansing [of corruption] before purification is from the perspective of mentioning removal before adornment [with righteous deeds]. It is a must for the one who wants purification of his soul that that he abandons, firstly, the sins and iniquities that defile the heart and cover it from the light of guidance and *Īmān* [faith].

As the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

إن العبد إذا أخطأ خطيئة نكتت في قلبه نكته سوداء فإذا هو نزع واستغفر وتاب  
سقل قلبه وإن عاد زيد فيها حتى تعلق قلبه وهو الران الذي ذكر الله: كَلَّا بَلْ زَانَ  
عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

“When a servant commits a sin, a black dot is placed upon his heart. If he withdraws from it, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart is cleansed. But if he returns to it then it is increased until it consumes his heart. This is the *Rān* (stain or covering) that Allāh has mentioned:

﴿ كَلَّا بَلْ زَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾

“Nay! But on their hearts is the *Rān* (covering of sins and evil deeds) which they used to earn.”  
[Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn 83:14]<sup>23</sup>

One must then strive against his soul to do an abundance of righteous actions which purify the soul; as Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾

“As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths. And verily, Allāh is with the Muḥsinūn (good doers).” [Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt 29:69]

Ibn Taymīyah (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

<sup>23</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhī within *al-Jāmi‘* (no. 3334) al-Albānī graded it *Ḥasan* within *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tarḥīb wa al-Tarḥīb* (2/268).

“The basis of purification is growth, blessing, and increase in goodness. This is only achieved by the removal of evil. Due to this, purification combines between these two affairs.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (10/97)

## The Sixth Principle: Closing Off the Paths Which Take the Person Away from Purification and Distance Him from Virtue and Cause Him to Fall into Vile Things

The servant is in dire need of cutting off the means to the defilement and sullyng of his soul. An example is mentioned within the Sunnah which will clarify the danger of the servant entering into that which causes him to lose his religion. Within the *hadith* he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

ضرب الله مثلا صراطا مستقيما وعلى جنبتي الصراط سوران فيها أبواب مفتحة وعلى الأبواب ستور مرخاة وعلى باب الصراط داع يقول أيها الناس ادخلوا الصراط جميعا ولا تتفرجوا وداع يدعو من جوف الصراط فإذا أراد يفتح شيئا من تلك الأبواب قال ويحك لا تفتحه فإنك إن تفتحه تلجه والصراط الإسلام والسوران حدود الله تعالى والأبواب المفتحة محارم الله تعالى وذلك الداعي على رأس الصراط كتاب الله عز وجل والداعي فوق الصراط واعظ الله في قلب كل مسلم

“Allāh has struck an example; a straight path. On the sides of the path there are two walls with open doors. Upon each door there are curtains. There is a caller at the entrance of the path, saying: ‘O people, all of you enter the path and do not depart from it.’ There is a caller above the path; whenever one wants to open any of those doors, he says: ‘Woe to you! Do not open it, lest you be destroyed.’ The straight path is Islām. The two walls are the set limits of Allāh, the Exalted. The open doors are the sanctities of Allāh. The caller at the opening of the path

is the Book of Allāh and the caller above the path is the admonisher of Allāh within the heart of every Muslim.”<sup>25</sup>

Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“He who departs in this world from uprightness upon the path and opens the doors of the impermissible matters, which are within the curtains to the right and left of the path, and he enters into them—whether the impermissible matters are from lusts or from doubts—the hooks which are to the right and left of the path will snatch him. This is in accordance with that which he embarked upon and entered into from the impermissible matters in the life of the world.”<sup>26</sup>

From this is the statement of Allāh, the Exalted:

﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ  
أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ﴾

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things) and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.). That is purer for them. Verily, Allāh is All-Aware of what they do.” [Sūrah al-Nūr 24:30]

Abū Hayyān al-Andalusī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

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<sup>25</sup> Reported by Imām Aḥmad within *al-Musnad* (no. 17909).

<sup>26</sup> *Majmū' Rasā'il Ibn Rajab* (1/206)



“Lowering the gaze is mentioned before protecting the private parts because the gaze is the gateway to fornication and the predators of wickedness. The calamity (caused by) it is more severe and abundant.”<sup>27</sup>

Shaykh al-Sa’dī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“He who safeguards his private parts and gaze from that filth which defiles the people of lewdness, and he purifies his actions due to him abandoning the impermissible things which the soul desires and calls to; then whoever abandons something for Allāh, Allāh will replace it with that which is better than it.”<sup>28</sup>

Due to this, from the excellence of a person’s Islām is that he leaves that which is of no concern to him, from unnecessary speech, looking (at impermissible things) and other than this.

Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“Most sins result from unnecessary speech and looking (at impermissible things). They are the broadest entrance for *Shayṭān*. The predator of these two things never gets bored and is never satisfied.”<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, the slave should be intelligent and wise. He should ask Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) for patience and success, and to cut every path which will lead to the loss of his soul and its corruption. For his religion is

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<sup>27</sup> *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* by Ibn Ḥayyān al-Andalusī (8/33).

<sup>28</sup> *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān* (pg. 660).

<sup>29</sup> *Badā’i’ al-Fawā’id* (2/820).

his most valuable possession and, in its loss, lies the loss of the worldly life and the hereafter.

Especially in this time of ours, where tribulations befall the people like rain falling upon them, and in which the doors of doubts and desires are opened by way of modern devices, dubious websites, and deviant programs which have lead many people astray and diverted them from guidance. We ask Allāh for security and wellbeing.

## The Seventh Principle: Remembrance of Death and the Meeting with Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ)

Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَتَنْظُرُوا نَفْسَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لِغَدٍ ۖ﴾

“O you who believe! Fear Allāh and keep your duty to Him. And let every person look to what he has sent forth for the morrow.” [Sūrah al-Hashr 59:18]

The Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

أَكثَرُوا ذَكَرَ هَادِمِ اللَّذَاتِ

“Frequently remember the destroyer of desires (i.e., death).”<sup>30</sup>

Death is the divider between this abode and the abode of permanent residence; it is the separator between the time of action and the (time of) recompense for the action. It is the distinguishing line between sending forth provisions and the meeting of one’s reward.

So there is no opportunity, after it, for repentance and seeking forgiveness for sins. Nor is there opportunity, after it, for increasing in good deeds. As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

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<sup>30</sup> Reported by Ibn Mājah (no. 4258) and al-Albānī graded it *Ḥasan* within *al-Irwāʿ* (3/145).

﴿وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا

حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْتَنَ﴾

“And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: Now I repent.” [Sūrah al-Nisā‘ 4:18]

It will, inevitably, catch up and meet with every person, without doubt. As Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has said:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ﴾

“Say (to them): Verily, the death from which you flee will surely meet you.” [Sūrah al-Jumu‘ah 62:8]

Allāh, likewise, said:

﴿أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ﴾

“Wheresoever you may be, death will overtake you even if you are in fortresses built up strong and high!” [Sūrah al-Nisā‘ 4:78]

In addition to this, it comes to people unexpectedly.

﴿فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً﴾

**“When their term is reached, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment).” [Sūrah al-A‘rāf 7:34]**

How often does a person leave his home, driving his car and returns being carried in shrouds?! How many people said to their family: Prepare some food for me, yet died without eating it?! How many people put on his *Thawb* and *Izār* and none removes his *Izār* and *Thawb* except the one washing his body?!

In a person’s remembrance of death lies tremendous benefit. For by way of this, the heedless hearts are awakened, and the dead hearts are given life. The servant (by way of this) perfects his devotion to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) and heedlessness and turning away from the obedience of Allāh ceases.

Sa‘īd Ibn Jubayr (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said:

“If the remembrance of death were to leave my heart I am afraid that my heart will be corrupted.”<sup>31</sup>

The slave is continuously in a state of goodness as long as he bears in mind his standing before Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) on the Day of Judgment after his death, and his final destination after death.

Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyainah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said:

“Ibrāhīm al-Taymī said: ‘I imagined myself in Paradise, eating its fruits, drinking from its rivers, and hugging its virgins. Then I imagined myself in the Fire, eating from its *Zaqqūm* (a repulsive, horrid tree), drinking from its *Ṣadīd* (i.e. the evil drink of the people of the hellfire), and struggling with its

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<sup>31</sup> Reported by Imām Aḥmad within *al-Zuhd* (no. 2210).

chains and fetters. I said to my soul: ‘O soul, which of these do you want?’ It (my soul) said: ‘I want to return the worldly life so that I may do righteous deeds.’ So I said: ‘Now, you are in a state of safety; therefore, do (good) deeds.’”<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, say to it (your soul): ‘O soul, if I die who will pray for me after my death? Who will fast for me? Who will repent for my sins and lapses for me?’

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<sup>32</sup> Reported by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā within *Muḥāsabah al-Nafs* (pg. 26).

## The Eighth Principle: Choosing [Righteous] Friends and Selecting [Good] Companions

**A**llāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ  
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ، وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدَ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا  
نُطِغَ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ، عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾ ﴿٢٨﴾

“And keep yourself (O Muḥammad) patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e. your companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, etc., and other righteous deeds, etc.) morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter of the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost.” [Sūrah al-Kahf 18:28]

Al-Sa‘dī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said:

“This verse contains the command to accompany the best people and to struggle against one’s soul to accompany and mix with them, even if they may be poor. For indeed accompanying them contains benefits that cannot be enumerated.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān* (pg. 548).

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

الرجل على دين خليله، فلينظر أحدكم من يخالل

“A man is upon the religion of his friend. So, you are to look closely at the one whom you befriend.”<sup>34</sup>

Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said:

“His statement: ‘A man is upon the religion of his friend,’ means: Do not befriend except he whom you are pleased with his religion and trustworthiness. For indeed if you befriend him he will drive you to his religiosity and way. Do not expose your religion to danger and do not expose yourself to harm, and thus befriend one who is not pleasing in his religion and way.”<sup>35</sup>

Due to this, Ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“Consider the people by way of their friends. For a person will only befriend one who pleases him.”

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

إنما مثل الجليس الصالح والسوء كحامل المسك وناخ الكير فحامل المسك إما أن  
يخذيك وإما أن تتباع منه وإما أن تجد منه ريحا طيبة وناخ الكير إما أن يحرق ثيابك  
وإما أن تجد ريحا خبيثة

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<sup>34</sup> Reported by Abū Dāwūd within *al-Sunan* (pg. 4833) and al-Albānī graded it *Ḥasan* within *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (2/634).

<sup>35</sup> *Al-Uzlah* (pg. 56).



“The example of the righteous companion and the evil companion is like that of the perfume seller and the blacksmith. The perfume seller will either gift you some perfume, or you may buy some from him, or you will smell from him a sweet aroma. As for the blacksmith, either he will burn your clothing, or you will find from him a foul odor.”<sup>36</sup>

Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād (رحمة الله) said in explanation of this *Ḥadīth*:

“This contains advice to avoid evil companions and sitting with evil people, as well as the people of innovation and those who backbite the people. This is because all of these have an effect upon the one who sits with them. It (the *Ḥadīth*) likewise encourages sitting with the people of goodness and taking knowledge, manners, excellent guidance, and praiseworthy character (from them).”<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, it is upon the servant to choose friends who will aid him upon good; for they are from the greatest means to purifying and rectifying the soul. Likewise, one must beware of evil companions and corrupt friends; for indeed they are more dangerous for a person than scabies.



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<sup>36</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 5534) and Muslim within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 2628).

<sup>37</sup> *Ikṃāl al-Mu'allim bi-Fawā'id Muslim* (8/108).

## The Ninth Principle: Beware of Self- Amazement and Being Deluded by Oneself

As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) has said:

﴿فَلَا تُرْكُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ انْتَفَى﴾

“So ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who has *Taqwā*.” [Sūrah al-Najm 53:32]

Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) has prohibited praising oneself with that which indicates its purity and righteousness. This is because the place of *Taqwā* [piety] is the heart. Also, because this praise of oneself is a reason for self-amazement to enter into (the heart) and *Riyā* (showing off), which invalidates one’s deeds.

However much the believer strives to do righteous deeds and avoid the impermissible things, he will continuously fall short and wrong himself. Abū Bakr al-Siddīq (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) was the best of this *Ummah* and the best of all people after the Prophets and Messengers. When he asked the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to teach him a supplication with which to supplicate to Allāh with in the prayer, he taught him to say:

اللهم إني ظلمت نفسي ظلماً كثيراً، ولا يغفر الذنوب إلا أنت، فاعفري مغفرة من  
عندك وارحمي إنك أنت الغفور الرحيم

“O Allāh, Indeed I have wronged myself greatly, and none forgives sins except You. So forgive me with a forgiveness

from Yourself and have mercy upon me. Indeed, You are Oft-Forgiving and Merciful.”<sup>38</sup>

How about those who are less than him?

When the mother of the believers, ‘Ā‘ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) asked about the statement of Allāh, the Exalted:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾﴾

“And those who give that (their charity) which they give with their hearts full of fear because they are sure to return to their Lord (for reckoning).” [Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn 23:60]

She said:

“Are they those who drink alcohol and steal?” He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

لا يا بنت الصديق. ولكنهم الذين يصومون ويصلون ويتصدقون وهم يخافون أن لا تقبل منهم

“No, O daughter of al-Ṣiddīq. Rather, they are those who fast, pray, and give charity. Yet, they are afraid that it will not be accepted from them.”<sup>39</sup>

‘Abdullāh Ibn Abū Mulaykah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

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<sup>38</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī (no. 834) and Muslim (no. 2705).

<sup>39</sup> Reported by al-Tirmidhī within *al-Jāmi‘* (no. 3175) and al-Albānī graded it *Ṣaḥīḥ* within *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 126).

“I met thirty of the Companions, each of them fearing hypocrisy for himself.”<sup>40</sup>

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“The believer combines *Iḥsān* (doing good in the best manner) and fear. The hypocrite combines evil and feeling safe (from Allāh’s punishment).” Then Ḥasan recited:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُتَّقُونَ ﴾

“Those who live in awe for fear of their Lord.” [Sūrah al-Mu‘minūn 23:57]<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as a comment (no. 834).

<sup>41</sup> Reported by al-Ṭabarī within his *Tafsīr* (17/68).

## The Tenth Principle: Knowing the Soul

From that which is incumbent in the affair of purification of the soul is knowing the reality of this soul and knowing its characteristics, so that it is easy to tend to it, care for it and treat it from the sicknesses that afflicted it.

Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) described the soul within His Noble Book with three well-known characteristics. These three descriptions are respective of the conditions of the souls.

They are:

**Al-Nafs al-Mutma‘innah** (The Content Soul). This is the soul that is content with *Īmān*, the remembrance of Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) worshipping Him, and being devoted to Him in the most excellent manner. As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ  
تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾ (٢٨)

“Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allāh, Verily, in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find rest.”  
[Sūrah al-Ra‘d 13:28]

Allāh also said:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (٢٧) أَرْجِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً (٢٨) فَادْخُلِي  
فِي عِبَادِي (٢٩) وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي (٣٠)﴾

“It will be said to the pious: O content soul, come back to your Lord, Well-pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing unto Him. Enter you, then, among My honored slaves, and enter you My Paradise!” [Sūrah al-Fajr 89:27-30]

**Al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah** (The Self-Reproaching Soul). This is the one which criticizes the person for his errant actions, or for falling short in the obligations or being negligent in acts of obedience.

As Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said within Sūrah al-Qiyāmah:

﴿وَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ﴾

“And I swear by the self-reproaching person (a believer).” [Sūrah al-Qiyāmah 75:2]

**Al-Nafs al-Ammārah Bi al-Sū’** (The Soul which Commands with Evil). It is that which encourages the person to do the prohibited acts and to commit sins. It drives him to places of evil and areas of lewdness. It pushes him to commit atrocities and despicable acts. As has come within Sūrah Yūsuf:

﴿وَمَا أُبْرِيْ نَفْسِيْ ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ ۗ إِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ ۚ﴾

“And I free not myself (from the blame). Verily, the soul drives toward evil, except when my Lord bestows His Mercy (upon whom He wills).” [Sūrah Yūsuf 12:53]

These three descriptions for the soul are in reality the states connected to the soul. Due to this, these states alternate and change in accordance with the things which come in contact with the soul.

Perhaps (all of) these three descriptions exist with a person in one day, in accordance with the condition of the soul.

The people of knowledge have given examples for this soul, which clarifies its condition with the person in order to make it easy to fathom for the Muslim so that he may strive thereafter to rectify and purify it. I will suffice here with two examples by two eminent Imāms:

**The First Example:** It was mentioned by Imām Al-Ājurri (رحمة الله) within the book: *Adab al-Nufūs*. He said:

“I will mention an example for you, the affair of which is not hidden from you, if Allāh wills. Know that the example of the soul is like that of a beautiful colt [young male horse]. One who looks at it is impressed by its beauty and its splendor. The people who have insight into its affair say: ‘It cannot be benefitted from until it is trained in a goodly manner and disciplined well. Then it can be benefitted from and used for pursuit and flight, and the rider will appreciate its discipline and training. However, if it is not disciplined its beauty and splendor will be of no benefit and its rider will not praise its results when he needs it.’

If the owner of this colt accepts the advice of the people of advice and insight, he will know that this is a correct statement, and he will take it to a trainer so that it can be trained.

Moreover, the trainer should only be one who is knowledgeable and proficient in training and he has patience in that which he has from knowledge of training. If he has this, along with the training, and his sincere work, the person will benefit (from the steed trained by such a person).

If the trainer does not understand how to train [a horse] and does not know how to discipline horses, he will corrupt this colt and wear himself out, and the rider will not be pleased with the results.

If the trainer has understanding of training and disciplining horses; however, despite his understanding of this he is not patient with the difficulty of training, he wants things to be easy for himself and he is negligent regarding that which is binding upon him, from sincerity in the training, he will corrupt this colt and be mean to it. Thus, it will not be suitable for pursuit or flight. So it will have a (good) look but no substance.

If its owner is the trainer himself, he will regret his relaxation on a day upon which regret will be of no benefit. He will look at someone who is in pursuit of something and catches that which he is pursuing, and when it is time for them to take flight they swiftly do so and are safe. Yet, he will pursue something and not catch that which he is in pursuit of, and he will take flight from something, but he will not be safe. All of this is due to his laxity and his lack of patience, despite his understanding of this affair.

Then he will blame and censure himself, saying: ‘Why were you negligent? Why did you fall short? Due to my scanty amount of patience, everything which I dislike has come to me.’ And Allāh’s Aid is sought.

Be intelligent, may Allāh have mercy upon you, and know this example and understand it, and you will be successful and safe.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Adab al-Nufūs* by al-Ājurrī (pg. 261).



In this first example, Imām Al-Ājurī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) clarifies the condition of the soul and that it is like a colt which is in need of training and patience in doing so, and that one must be upon knowledge regarding the affairs that will rectify and purify the soul; and that if the person is negligent regarding this knowledge and this training, he will have the utmost regrets at the end of this journey.

**The Second Example:** This was mentioned by Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ). He said:

“The soul is like a large, difficult mountain upon the path that leads to Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). For every traveler, there is no path except by way of this mountain. So he must come to it. However, from them there is he who struggles upon it and from them there is he for whom it is easy. And it is easy for the one whom Allāh makes it easy for. Within the mountain there are valleys and trails, (mountain) passes and ravines, prickles and thorns, and twining bushes and shrubs. There are also robbers who block the pathways for those who traverse upon it, especially those who do so at night, traveling at nightfall. If they do not have the readiness of *Imān* [faith] and the lanterns of certainty, which burn by way of the oil of humility – indeed, (if they lack these things) – these hinderances will take hold of them and the impediments will obstruct them and stand between them and their journey.

Most of the travelers who travel through this mountain are not able to overcome and defy its obstacles. *Shayṭān* is at the top of the mountain, meaning its highest point, warning the people against climbing and elevating upon it, frightening them from doing so. So, the difficulty of the climb is combined with the sitting of this frightener at its highest point, along with the weakness of the resolve and the intention of the traveler, which results in cessation (of travel)

and return (i.e. giving up on the journey). The safe one is he whom Allāh makes safe.

Every time the traveler climbs the mountain, the cry of the hinderer, his warning, and (attempt to) frighten intensifies. If the person climbs the mountain and reaches the top, all those things which frightened him are turned into safety, and at that point the journey becomes easy. The impediments in the path and the difficulty of the mountain passes are removed and he sees the path to be wide and safe. By way of this mountain, he is taken to dwellings and springs, and upon it are signpost and there are abodes that have been prepared for the honored guests of Ar-Rahman [the Most Merciful].

Between the servant and happiness and success is the strength of resolve, a time of patience, courageousness of the soul, and firmness of the heart; and the bounty is in the Hand of Allāh. He gives it to whom He wills. And Allāh is the Owner of a tremendous bounty.”<sup>43</sup>

This example also makes clear to us the state of the soul and that it requires from the person attention, treatment and healing. If one does not struggle against in the legislated method and be patient with this, then it will escape him and be lost.



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<sup>43</sup> *Madārij al-Sālikīn* by Ibn al-Qayyim (2/10).

## Conclusion

After that which has preceded from the clarification of these principles which will assist the servant in purifying and cleansing his soul, it is clear that the soul needs to be called to account, while the individual is living in the abode of leisure and action [i.e. this world], before the person stands before Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) on the Day of Judgement. One may be negligent with the rectification of his soul and this will be a reason for his destruction.

The pious predecessors would remind the people and advise them regarding the necessity of calling one's soul to account and rectifying it before it is too late, and death overtakes him.

At the end of this treatise, it is befitting to transmit some of the advices which have come from them in this regard. At the head of them are the four rightly guided *Khalīfahs*:

The Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* Abū Bakr al-Siddīq (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“Know, O slaves of Allāh, that you are traveling and setting out for an appointed term, the knowledge of which is unknown to you. So if you are able be such that your life ends whilst you are doing actions for Allāh, then do so. You will not be able to do so except with (the help of) Allāh. So hasten [to perform righteous deeds] within this period of respite prior to your appointed time and before your life ends and you brought back to [face] the most evil of your actions. For indeed, a people devoted their lives to others and they forgot about themselves. So I forbid you from being like them. Therefore, hasten, hasten, then be safe, be safe. For behind you there is large stalker; his pace is quick (i.e. death).”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah within *al-Muṣannaḡ* (no. 35572).

The Second *Khalīfah* ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“Call yourselves to account before you are called to account. Weigh yourselves before you are weighed. Beautify yourselves before the great presentation on the day whereupon you will be presented and nothing from amongst you will be hidden.”<sup>45</sup>

The Third *Khalīfah* ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“O son of Ādam, know that the Angel of Death who has been entrusted with you has continued to bypass you and go towards someone else since you have been the in this world. (Now) it is as if he has bypassed others and is coming for you and is focused upon you. So beware and prepare for him. Do not be heedless (of him), for indeed he is not heedless of you.

Know, O son of Ādam, that if you are heedless of your soul and you do not prepare for it then no one else will prepare for it on your behalf. The meeting with Allāh is inevitable. Therefore, take (precautions) for your soul and do not entrust it to someone else.”<sup>46</sup>

The Fourth *Khalīfah* ‘Alī Ibn Abū Ṭālib (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

“O people, that which I fear the most for you is long hopes and the following of desires. As for long hopes, it causes one to forget the Hereafter. As for following desires, it causes one to deviate from the truth. Indeed, this world has turned away to depart and the Hereafter is coming, and for each there are children. So be children of the Hereafter and do not be

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<sup>45</sup> Reported by Ibn Abī Shaybah within *al-Muṣannaf* (no. 35600).

<sup>46</sup> Reported by Abū Bakr al-Dīnawrī within *al-Majālis wa al-Jawāhir* (no. 207).

children of this world. For indeed today, there are actions with no recompense and tomorrow there will be recompense with no (time to do) actions.”<sup>47</sup>

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“The believer is in authority over his soul. He calls his soul to account. The reckoning on the Day of Judgement will be lightened for the people who called their souls to account in this world; and the reckoning is made difficult on the Day of Judgement for people who embarked upon this affair without calling their souls to account.”<sup>48</sup>

Maymūn Ibn Mihrān (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

“A person is not a *Taqī* (pious) until he is harder in calling himself to account than a (business) partner is with his (business) partner.”<sup>49</sup>

Due to this, it was said:

“The soul is like a treacherous business partner. If you do not call him to account he will run off with your money.”<sup>50</sup>

This matter is extremely important in these times where tribulations and diversions that hinder from good are abundant and the evils which entice and beautify falsehood to the souls are many and great.

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<sup>47</sup> Reported by al-Bukhārī within his *Ṣaḥīḥ* as a note before *Ḥadīth* (no. 6417).

<sup>48</sup> Reported by Ibn al-Mubārak within *al-Zuhd* (no. 307).

<sup>49</sup> Reported by Wakī within *al-Zuhd* (no. 239).

<sup>50</sup> Refer to *Iḡhāthah al-Lahfān* (1/133) Ibn al-Qayyim.

'Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) who was from the eminent scholars of the *Tabi'ūn*, said during his time:

“The righteous people in times past were such their souls willfully pulled them toward good. Our souls do not pull us except compellingly. So it is a must that we compel them (i.e. our souls).”<sup>51</sup> So how about the state within our time!

We ask Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) by His beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes to rectify for us our religion, which is the pinnacle of our affair, and to rectify for us our *Dunyā* which contains our livelihood; and to rectify for us our hereafter in which is our return. And to make life an increase for us in every good and death a rest from every evil.

اللهم آت نفسي تقواها وزكها، أنت خير من زكاها أنت وليها ومولها

O Allāh, give my soul its *Taqwā* [piety] and purify it; for You are the best to purify it. You are its Guardian and its Patron.

May blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, his family, and companions.



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<sup>51</sup> Reported by Ibn al-Jawzī within *Dhamm al-Hawā* (pg. 47).

