

Ilm Essentials

Purification of the Heart

Lesson 5

Diseases of the Heart

Love of This World

Understanding Love of This World

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- Love of this world can either be beneficial or harmful to the heart
 - ▣ Some aspects of this world are detrimental
 - Alcohol and music
 - ▣ Some are beneficial
 - Giving charity and loving the sunnah
 - ▣ Some are necessary
 - Food, clothing and shelter
- Vast majority can be both good and bad
 - ▣ Desiring wealth to spend in the path of Allah
 - Desiring it for power, fame and fortune
 - Or for impermissible or vain things
 - ▣ Loving one's children and parents
 - Unless it causes disobedience to Allah or neglect of the sunnah
 - ▣ Marriage which results in tranquility
 - Marriage which results in tyranny

Understanding Love of This World

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- Love of this world becomes a vice when it is directed toward those things which are sinful and vile
 - ▣ Or which lead to sinful and vile things
 - Or those aspects of this world which diminish one's spiritual yearning and taint the heart
- Excludes desiring things of this world in order to be free of burdening others with one's needs
 - ▣ And desiring those things which will help one attain success in the next life
 - Sometimes this type of love can be mandatory
 - Loving the Kabah, one's parents and the scholars, the masājīd, books of knowledge, etc.
- Also excludes that which is necessary for one's livelihood

Difficult to Control

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- Majority of times love of this world is blameworthy or misplaced
 - ▣ Exists to satisfy the nafs
 - When it should exist to satisfy Allah
 - ▣ Or the hearts are weak and good intentions are swayed by ostentation, greed and arrogance
- Nature of this dunyā is to bewitch a person and cause them to forget the next life

Tangible and Intangible

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- Love of the dunyā is not limited to tangible items
 - ▣ Includes loving leadership, praise, position, power, etc.
 - Can often be more detrimental because it causes one to leave the bounds of the sharīah
- Especially dangerous when it is not deserved
 - ▣ Or for something which is disliked by Allah
 - False praise, taking responsibility for something which you did not do or taking an undue share of the praise
- Not limited to the wealthy or well-off
 - ▣ People often love things they do not possess, but desire
 - Especially difficult in our advertising-filled societies

Excessive Desire

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- Ties in with excessive desire
 - ▣ Which is a disease in and of itself
 - Defined as a strong desire to want more and more
- Especially prevalent in wealthy, modern societies
 - ▣ And in the “elites” within any society
- 3, 5 and 7-course meals
 - ▣ Soup, salad, appetizer, main course, coffee and dessert
 - ▣ Garages and closets full of things we don’t even use
 - Yet refuse to part with
 - Resulting in an entire industry devoted to storage
 - ▣ Always trying new things simply because they are new
- Eventually leads to a lack of contentment
 - ▣ Because what one has is never enough, never good enough

Signs of Excessive Desire

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- One of its clear signs is living beyond one's means
 - ▣ Often indicated by heavy amounts of debt
- Debt is considered a humiliation
 - ▣ Because one feels beholden to the lender
 - Becomes a spiritual drag
 - Since it shifts one attention to the loan and lender
- “Whoever dies free from 3 things will enter Paradise
 - ▣ Arrogance, cheating and debt” (Tirmidhī)

Signs of Excessive Desire

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- Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was sitting and put his head in his hands and said, “Subhāna ‘Llāh, what a strict matter has been revealed to me”
 - ▣ The sahābah asked what it was and he replied, “By the One in whose hand is my soul, if a man was killed fighting for Allah, and brought back to life, and then killed again, and then brought back again and killed again, and then brought back to life and killed again, but he owed a debt, he would not enter Paradise until his debt was repaid” (Nasā’ī)
- “The soul of the believer is suspended on account of his debt until it is paid off” (Tirmidhī)

Signs of Excessive Desire

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- Another of its signs is discarding, or considering trivial, items which still have value
 - ▣ Kid's rooms full of toys and games
 - Yet most of our children tend toward ungratefulness
 - ▣ Cell phones and tablets changed regularly
 - When each is worth more than most make in a year
 - ▣ Food being thrown away
 - “There’s nothing to eat”
 - Taking for granted having meat and fresh fruits
 - ▣ Wasting water and electricity
 - When millions don’t have access to either
 - ▣ “I don’t have anything to wear”
 - Umar opened up Jerusalem in a patched garment

Treatment for Excessive Desire

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- Regularly reflecting on death and the next life
 - ▣ “Remember frequently the destroyer of worldly pleasures” (Tirmidhī)
 - This remembering entails deep reflection
 - Wherein one exerts himself
 - Can be facilitated by focusing on the different stages one passes through in death and the afterlife
- Willful restraint
 - ▣ Can be obtained by voluntary fasting or reducing one’s intake or the richness of the foods eaten
 - Does not need to be extreme hunger or deprivation
 - ▣ Āishah and Umar used to fast every day toward the end of their lives

Treatment for Excessive Desire

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- Spending time with those who have less
 - ▣ As a reminder of the blessings one has
 - And to learn patience and gratitude
 - ▣ Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was very close with the ashāb 's-suffah
 - Because they often remembered death
 - And thereby gave preference to the next life
 - Showed great restraint with their poverty
 - Due to which Allah Most High created a special place for them

Diseases of the Heart

Displeasure with the Divine Decree

Defining Displeasure

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- ❑ Showing or feeling displeasure with what Allah Most High has written for us
 - ❑ “I don’t know why this is happening” or “Why me?” or “Not again”
 - Getting depressed or feeling like nothing is going my way
- ❑ Shows a lack of recognition of why we are here
 - ❑ The purpose behind Allah creating the universe
- ❑ Lack of appreciation that we cannot choose what befalls us
 - ❑ But we can choose our response to the trials and tribulations of this life
- ❑ Lack of understanding that it is through trials and tribulations
 - ❑ That Allah purifies us and raises our ranks
 - “It may be that you dislike something, though it is good for you. And it may be that you love something, though it is bad for you. And Allah knows, and you do not know” (Quran 2:216)

Dangers of Displeasure

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- Results in excessive blame of other people
 - ▣ Stems from our need to control, or at least attempt to control, everything around us
 - Yet the Muslim ideal is the opposite of this
 - “Lā hawla wa lā quwwata illā bi ‘Llāh” or “tawakkaltu ala ‘Llāh”
 - ▣ This is the premise of insurance
 - To try and control the impact of what happens in our lives
 - The ups and downs of life are smoothed out to slight bumps
- Results in putting one’s trust in other than Allah
 - ▣ Doctor says he needs to remove a part of the body to stop the spread of the disease
 - We accept it, show gratitude and bear the difficulty with patience
 - Recognizing that it is for the greater good
 - But when Allah takes something away, do we react in the same way

Takes Away from the Essence

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- Beauty of Islām is that the affair of the Muslim is always good
 - ▣ Because he is always connected with Allah
 - He never feels like he is owed anything
- Ibn Abbās said that when a person is tested with a tribulation, he will find 3 blessings in it
 - ▣ Could have been worse than it was
 - ▣ Was in worldly matters and not in spiritual ones
 - ▣ Came in this temporary world and not the eternal one
 - We can add that we know it is from Allah
 - Who is Ever Merciful and desires good for us

Recognize and React

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- Necessary to recognize what is happening in order to react appropriately
 - ▣ At any given time a person is either receiving blessings or tribulations
- When receiving blessings
 - ▣ Response should be gratitude
 - Both to Allah and the one through whom the blessing came
 - “The one who has not thanked the people, has not thanked Allah” (Tirmidhī)
- Gratitude begins with an appreciation in the heart and acknowledgement of what one has received
 - ▣ Then grows and manifests by fulfilling the commands of Allah
 - Continues by striving in recommended and optional righteous acts
 - If one is disobeying Allah, whether it be through the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, etc., he is inherently ungrateful to Allah

Recognize and React

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- When experiencing tribulations
 - ▣ Response should be patience and fortitude
 - One should turn to Allah for strength
 - For verily there is no strength except through Him
 - Strive to avoid ill feelings and displeasure
 - Try to remember the blessings one has
- In both cases turning back to Allah is essential
 - ▣ Otherwise the blessing can be a means of arrogance and self-righteousness
 - And the trial a means of discontent and despair

Treatment for Displeasure

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- Need to learn to focus on the good and keep good opinions
 - ▣ “I am in the opinion of *My servant*” (Bukhāri)
- Problem is that we are focused on other Allah
 - ▣ So that is all we see and react to
 - “Did you see the gorilla?”
 - ▣ When you concentrate fully on one thing
 - It inhibits your ability to notice other things
 - Especially if they are opposite or contrary
 - ▣ So the believer focuses on the mercy of Allah
 - Not his anger, even though both exist and are manifest

Treatment for Displeasure

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- ❑ Reflecting on the life of the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)
 - ▣ Lost 6 out of his 7 children in his own life
 - ▣ Never met his father
 - His mother passed when he was just a boy
 - ▣ His own people turned against him
 - Threw him out of his own city
 - ▣ He saw his companions tortured and killed because they believed in him
 - ▣ He was ridiculed and physically and emotionally abused for years and years
 - Faced 13 assassination attempts
- ❑ Yet he never saw anything but good in all that afflicted him
 - ▣ Never reacted with anything except excellence, certainty and contentment

Questions and Discussion

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