

# Ilm Essentials

## Purification of the Heart

### Lesson 1 1

# Means of Purification

# Purification Through Dhikr

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- Tasawwuf achieves purification through dhikr
  - ▣ “For everything there is a polish and the polish of the heart is the dhikr of Allah” (Bayhaqī)
- “Most surely, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find calm” (Quran 13:28)
- “So remember Me; I will remember you” (Quran 2:152)
- “Surely the one who has purified himself has succeeded. And he remembers the name of his Lord and so he prays” (Quran 87:14-15)

# Purification Through Dhikr

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- “Whomever is hostile to a friend of Mine I declare war against. My slave approaches Me with nothing more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him, and My slave keeps drawing nearer to Me with voluntary works until I love him
  - ▣ And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes and his foot with which he walks
    - If he asks Me, I will surely give him, and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will surely protect him. I do not hesitate from anything I shall do more than My hesitation to take the soul of the believer who dislikes death, for I dislike displeasing him” (Bukhāri)

# Purification Through Dhikr

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- ❑ “Every word uttered by the son of Ādam will be held against him and not in favor of him, except enjoining good, forbidding wrong and the remembrance of Allah” (Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah)
- ❑ “Shall I not inform you of the best of your deeds and the purest of them in the sight of your Lord, and the most exalted of them in rank, and what is better for you than spending gold and silver, and better for you than encountering your enemy in battle, where you strike them and they strike you?” They said, “Yes, indeed!” He said, “Remembrance of Allah” (Ahmad and Tirmidhī)
- ❑ “The example of the one who remembers his Lord in comparison with the one who does not remember his Lord is that of the living and the dead” (Bukhāri and Muslim)

# Best Times for Dhikr

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- Sunnah schedule has certain “ideal” times for dhikr
  - ▣ After Fajr until the sun rises
    - Since no other prayers can be offered during this time
      - And the day’s events have not yet begun
        - ▣ And one is more focused on the āakhirah during this time
      - Allows one to also attain the virtues of ishrāq
    - Ibn Taymiyyah considered this to be his breakfast
  - ▣ After Asr until Maghrib
    - Since no other prayers can be offered during this time
      - Day’s work is generally coming to a close
        - ▣ Helps one to reset themselves
    - In the winter after Maghrib until Ishā can replace this time
- In general the best time is when one can be undisturbed and focused on Allah

# The Need for Consistency

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- Purification is not a state, rather it is an ongoing process
  - ▣ Must be nurtured and maintained
- “The most beloved actions to Allah are those which are consistent, even if they be few” (Bukhāri and Muslim)
  - ▣ Primary reason students don’t see benefit is a lack of commitment and consistency

# Ultimate Goal of Tasawwuf

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- Goal of tasawwuf is not to have a person continually increase in dhikr
  - ▣ Without any end or limit
- Rather it is to increase such that the true love for Allah enters one's heart
  - ▣ And dominates it
- So that we can go out and do the work of the dīn
  - ▣ “And do not follow one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance” (Quran 18:28)
    - This is the way of the anbiyā
      - Spend time in purification, then do the work



# Focus on the Sharīah

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- “On the Day of Judgment we shall be questioned about the sharīah, not tasawwuf
- ▣ The purpose of sending the prophets is to preach the sharīah. Hence the greatest virtue lies in preaching the sharīah and in reviving its provisions that have been neglected, particularly at a time when its manifestations and hallmarks are in ruin
- At such a time to spend millions in the way of Allah is not equal to reviving a single rule of the sharīah. For in doing so one does the work of the prophets and participates in their mission. They are the best of creation and the greatest honor is reserved for them
  - Moreover, when you practice the sharīah you conquer the self, for the sharīah is designed to subdue the self”

# Focus on the Sharīah

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- “Do not venture near one who lays claim to a condition that brings about transgression of the limits of the sharīah” (Abu ‘l-Hasan Nūrī)
- “Do not be deceived if you see a performer of supernatural feats flying through the air. Measure him by the standard of the sharīah” (Bayāzīd Bastāmī)
- “He who adheres to the sharīah, obeys its commands and refrains from transgression progresses in spiritual rank. All progress depends on adherence to the sharīah” (Mū’īn ad-Dīn Chishtī)

# Focus on the Sharīah

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- Essentially there is you, everything around you and the sharīah
  - ▣ The sharīah is what tells us how to interact with everything around us
- So why don't we follow the sharīah then
  - ▣ Because our base nafs is still argumentative
    - At this stage the sharīah is being formed and fashioned by Allah
      - But our nafs is being formed and fashioned by shaytan
- So we are outwardly manifesting the sharīah
  - ▣ But inwardly we are in disobedience and transgression
- Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī said the sharīah has a form and a reality
  - ▣ So our salāh, sawm, dhikr, duā, etc. is on the form of the sharīah
    - But not on its reality

# Nurturing the Nafs

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- In addition to the emphasis on dhikr
  - ▣ And keeping good company (suhbah)
  - ▣ Each tarīqah also focuses on nurturing the nafs
    - “As for the one who transgresses and prefers the life of this world, Hell is his abode
      - And as for the one who fears the standing before his Lord and refrains his nafs from passions, Paradise is his abode” (Quran 79:37-41)
    - “The intelligent one is he who has subdued his lower self and who has worked for what comes after death” (Tirmidhī)

# Nurturing the Nafs

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- Most aim to achieve this through zuhd (abstinence)
  - ▣ “A comprehensive treatment plan for the heart’s diseases is to deny the self of its desires
    - Enjoin hunger, keep vigil in the night, silence and meditation in private
      - And keeping company with good people who possess sincerity, those who are emulated in their states and statements” (Imām Mawlūd)
  - ▣ But this requires a level of commitment and discipline that the average person doesn’t have
    - And a consistency which is rare
- When our mashāikh saw this among the masses
  - ▣ They started making duā to Allah

# Purification Through Sunnah

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- The Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was the best example of moderation
  - ▣ By implementing the sunnah in our lives, we can also achieve moderation
- “None of you truly believes until his desires are in accordance with what I have brought” (Hadīth)
- “Indeed in the Messenger of Allah there is an excellent model for you; for whoever is hopeful of Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much” (Quran 33:21)
- “Say: If you truly love Allah, follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful” (Quran 3:31)

# Purification Through Sunnah

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- “All paths besides the strict following of the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) are closed to mankind” (Junayd al-Baghdādī)
- “Whoever acquires the wealth of arrival (i.e. attaining the love of Allah) has acquired it by virtue of following the sunnah” (Ashraf Alī Thānawī)
  - ▣ But doesn't everyone say to follow the sunnah

# Purification Through Sunnah

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- Goal of the believer is to connect with Allah
  - ▣ And we know that Allah has an essence (dhāt)
    - And attributes (sifāt)
- A seeker attains perfection or moves toward perfection
  - ▣ By connecting with the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)
    - Because he has a direct, perfect connection with the essence and attributes of Allah
  - ▣ Sahābah perfected their connection with Allah
    - By their perfect emulation of the sunnah
      - If they didn't need the sunnah, then why couldn't they connect before prophethood began



# Nurturing the Nafs Through Sunnah

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- We said that our lack of following the sharīah is tied to the base nafs
  - ▣ Which makes itself known by saying “I”
    - Affirms your own individual unique existence
      - “I” is tied to self-awareness
        - My car, my wife, my house, my kids, etc.
  - ▣ So everything is tied back to you
    - We view another person, who is an independent entity, who existed before our relationship with them, relative to ourselves
      - By extension we do the same with Allah and the sharīah
        - Essentially juxtaposing ourselves against the Divine

# Nurturing the Nafs Through Sunnah

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- Extreme of this is to reject Allah and affirm only yourself
  - ▣ “It doesn’t make sense to me”
    - “That doesn’t seem right to me”
      - We build our own world view and claim it to be reality
- “None of you truly believes until his desires are in accordance with what I have brought”
  - ▣ Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has an “I-ness”
    - But it is 100% inline with what Allah desired of him
- True faith is to affirm only Allah’s authority
  - ▣ True actions are done only for Allah’s “I-ness”
    - Not our own

# Nurturing the Nafs Through Sunnah

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- So if I am not me, then who am I?
- Only Allah has the right to say “I”
  - ▣ Everything else is under His “I-ness”
    - So when you say “I am a husband”
      - You are saying that I act like a husband, the way the Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) acted like a husband
- So covering yourself in the sunnah is the key to being able to say “I”
  - ▣ Without it being a manifestation of kufr or hypocrisy on some level

# Questions and Discussion

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