

THE HEART'S REMEDY

DISEASES OF THE HEART AND THEIR CURES

Introduction

- This course is based on Mukhtasar Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn by Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī
- The book is an abridgment of Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), which itself is a reworking of Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn by Imām al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH).
- The book is divided into 4 parts, following the model of the iḥyā':
 - 'Ibādāt (Acts of Worship)
 - 'Ādāt (Daily Practices)
 - Muhlikāt (Destructive Traits)
 - Munjiyāt (Salvific Traits)
- This class focuses on the Quarter on Destructive Traits, especially diseases of the heart like riya' (showing off), ḥasad (envy), 'ujb (self-admiration), and more

The Heart: The Center of Human Value

- The heart is the noblest part of the human being
- The limbs are just servants and followers of the heart, just as slaves serve their king.
- Whoever knows their heart truly knows their Lord.
- In Surah al-Anfal, Allah says:

وَيَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ

And He intervenes between a person and his heart.” (8:24)

The Battle for the Heart

- The heart is naturally inclined toward guidance, but also susceptible to desires and temptation.
- There is constant struggle in the heart between these forces, until one side dominates.
- Shaytan enters the heart during moments of heedlessness and retreats when a person remembers Allah
- The only way to expel shaytan is through continuous remembrance of Allah.

Shaytan's Entry Points into the Heart

- The heart is like a fortress, and Shaytan seeks its gates to invade. Protecting the heart requires knowing its entry points.
- Key gateways for Shaytan include:
 - Greed and desire
 - Envy (hasad)
 - Anger and impulse
 - Love of appearances and materialism
 - Overeating
 - Greed for people's approval
 - Haste
 - Love of wealth
 - Sectarian extremism
 - Speculation about Allah's essence
 - Suspicion of Muslims

Protecting the Heart from Shaytan

- The cure for these spiritual diseases is purifying the heart from blameworthy traits.
- When the roots of these diseases are removed, Shaytan can only pass through without settling, and dhikr of Allah blocks him even then.
- Ibn al-Jawzī compares Shaytan to a hungry dog: if you carry no food, it leaves at a command; but if you carry meat, it won't leave even if you shout.

When Whispers Become Intentions

- Whispers of the self (ḥadīth al-naḥs) are excused, but deliberate planning of sin is blameworthy.
- If someone abandons an evil thought for Allah's sake, they are rewarded. If they leave it due to some obstacle, we hope for leniency.
- The Prophet ﷺ said:

إذا التقى المسلمان بسيفيهما فالقاتل والمقتول في النار

If two Muslims meet with swords, both the killer and the killed are in Hell.

- When asked why the victim, he ﷺ said: “He was eager to kill his companion.”
- This shows intention alone can bring accountability, as deeds are judged by intentions.

Types of Hearts

- The hearts of people differ in their tendency toward good, evil, or hesitation between the two. They can be categorized into three types:
 - The Enlightened Heart
 - This heart is nourished with taqwa and cleansed of vile traits
 - Such a heart becomes a receptacle for guidance
 - The Doomed Heart
 - This heart is overtaken by desires, filled with blameworthy characteristics, and suffocated by the smoke of ego.
 - Shaytan gains full control over it, while the influence of iman is weak.
 - Like an eye filled with smoke, this heart cannot perceive light or benefit from reminders.

The Struggling Heart and the Inner Battle

- The third type is the Struggling Heart, caught between the pull of desire and the call of faith.
- For example, a whisper enters the heart through Shaytan, and he may say, “Look at so-and-so, even scholars follow their desires — why can’t you?”
- Then the angelic force responds with a reminder: “Don’t be deceived by their heedlessness. You wouldn’t stand in the sun while you had access to a shaded home, so why follow people to Hell while you have the chance to seek salvation?”
- The soul sways between the two calls until one side overpowers.

The Beauty of Good Character

- The term ḥusn al-khuluq (good character) refers to the inner form of a person, just as ḥusn al-khalq refers to the outward appearance.
- Good character is a deeply rooted disposition from which good actions flow naturally and easily, without force or calculation.
- Some claim that character traits cannot be changed, just like physical features.
 - This is incorrect: if that were true, advice and reminders would be meaningless.
 - Even wild animals can be tamed, so why not human nature?
 - Some dispositions are easier to train, while others are more stubborn.

Islam Calls for Moderation

- The goal is not to eliminate desires and emotions, but to bring them into balanced moderation.
- Allah praised balanced restraint, not total suppression:

وَالْكََاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ

“Those who restrain their anger...” (Al Imran: 134)

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا

“Eat and drink, but do not be excessive.” (A‘rāf: 31)

How to Acquire Good Character

- Good character can come as a gift from Allah or be acquired through deliberate effort and practice.
- To become generous, one must act generously, even if forced at first.
- To become humble, one must imitate the actions of the humble until it becomes second nature.
- Change is gradual and requires patience and consistency, just as physical growth takes time.
- Imam al-Ghazālī says: Just as consistent writing leads to literacy, consistent good deeds shape noble traits.

The Power of Habits and Companionship

- Repeated actions, even small, have grave effects on the soul. Never underestimate consistent good deeds or consistent sins.
- Avoid laziness, as habitual negligence quickly becomes second nature and blocks the soul from good.
- Surrounding oneself with righteous companions also shapes one's character.
- The Prophet ﷺ said:

المرء على دين خليله فلينظر أحدكم من يُخالل

A person is on the religion of his close friend, so let one of you be careful whom he befriends.

Refining Character is the Health of the Soul

- Just as physical health is the body's equilibrium, balanced character is the soul's health.
- The soul, like the body, is not created complete. It matures through discipline (riyāḍah), purification (tazkiyah), and beneficial knowledge.
- Moral imbalance and bad character is like a physical illness; curing it requires focused, tailored treatment
- Moral diseases of the heart must be treated with their opposites:
 - Ignorance is treated with knowledge
 - Stinginess is treated with generosity
 - Arrogance is treated with humility

Discipline Begins with Strong Willpower

- As one endures bitter medicine and hunger for bodily health, one must endure mujāhadah and patience to heal the heart.
- The foundation of tazkiyah is strong resolve (‘azm).
- One must commit without hesitation: “If he falters, he must hold himself accountable.”
- A man once said to his soul: “Do you speak about what does not concern you? I will punish you by fasting for a year!”

The Heart's Function and Its Illness

- Every organ has a specific purpose, and its illness is defined by failure to fulfill that purpose.
- The heart's role is to know Allah, love Him, prefer Him over all desires, and worship Him.
- The sign of knowing Allah is loving Him, and the sign of that love is not preferring anything over Him.
- Therefore, a heart that prioritizes worldly desires over Allah is diseased.
- A healed heart no longer clings to wealth or dunya. It sees it like water: neutral, neither clinging to giving nor keeping.

Identifying Your Own Flaws

- Every person must monitor their own traits and gradually work to fix one flaw at a time.
- Like a child being weaned from milk, the heart may resist change at first but will adjust.
- There are 4 methods to discover your flaws:
 - Sit with a righteous, insightful teacher who knows how to diagnose spiritual illness. This is rare today but invaluable.
 - Appoint a truthful, pious friend to observe and correct you.
 - Umar (RA) said: “May Allah have mercy on the one who gifts me my flaws.”
 - Learn from your enemies. The angry eye exposes your hidden faults more than a flattering friend.
 - Reflect on others. Avoid in yourself whatever you find ugly in others.

Breaking the Two Desires: Food and Lust

- The desire for food is one of the greatest spiritual dangers; through it, Adam (AS) was expelled from Jannah.
- This desire gives rise to further desires: lust, greed for wealth, and spiritual heedlessness.
- Overeating leads to laziness, clouded thinking, and other diseases of the heart and body.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “No vessel is filled worse than the stomach. A few bites are sufficient for the son of Adam to straighten his back. But if he must, then one third for food, one third for drink, and one third for air.” (al-Tirmidhī)

Balanced Eating is Key

- True balance is eating while still slightly hungry and stopping with a little appetite remaining.
- Over-restricting food can weaken the body and hinder obligatory acts.
- Virtue lies in moderation, not extreme deprivation.
- Gradually reduce your food intake if you're used to overeating until you reach the middle path.
- Ideal: Eat just enough to maintain strength without feeling either hunger or fullness.

The Desire for Lust

- Allah placed the desire for intimacy for two purposes:
 - Preservation of lineage
 - To understand a sample of pleasure so one can long for the pleasures of the hereafter
- If not restrained, it leads to sins, heedlessness, and spiritual destruction.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: "I have not left behind a fitnah more harmful to men than women." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)
- He ﷺ also said: "A man should never be alone with a woman, for the third of them is Shaytan." (Musnad Aḥmad)

The Danger of Unchecked Desire

- Lust can lead to obsession with women, neglect of the afterlife, and even zina.
- It may evolve into 'ishq (obsessive love), which is among the most humiliating and spiritually corrupting of desires.
- One can also become obsessed with wealth, status, music, or games — all forms of addictive distractions.
- Prevention is easier than cure
 - Early restraint is much easier than trying to uproot obsession later.
 - Analogy: Redirecting a horse before it enters the wrong gate is far easier than dragging it backward after it's entered.

The Afflictions of the Tongue

- The diseases of the tongue are numerous and tempting, and they stem from inner impulses and spiritual negligence.
- Salvation from its dangers lies in silence
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever guarantees for me what is between his jaws and between his legs, I will guarantee Paradise for him.” (al-Bukhārī)
- He ﷺ also said: “A servant’s faith will not be upright until his heart is upright, and his heart will not be upright until his tongue is upright.” (Aḥmad)
- There are 8 illnesses of the tongue

Speaking Without Benefit

- Speaking about things that do not concern you is a waste of time and a sign of spiritual heedlessness.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “From the perfection of a man’s Islam is his leaving that which does not concern him.” (al-Tirmidhī)
- Luqmān was asked the secret of his wisdom. He said: “I do not ask about what suffices me, and I do not speak of what does not concern me.”
- Your time is your greatest asset. Don’t spend it on worthless speech.

Falling Into False and Harmful Speech

- Speaking about sin (e.g. recounting sinful gatherings, mocking righteousness) is dangerous and opens the door to Hell.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “A person may utter a word that displeases Allah without thinking much of it, and because of it, he will be thrown into the Fire farther than the distance between the East and West.” (al-Bukhārī)
- Related ills: arguing for superiority, pointless debating, or trying to “win” discussions for ego.
 - The Prophet ﷺ said: “The most hated person in the sight of Allah is the quarrelsome adversary.” (al-Bukhārī)

Over-Embroidery and Pretentious Speech

- Things like forced eloquence, overuse of rhyme (سجع), and dramatic intonation, are discouraged.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “The most detestable and furthest from me on the Day of Judgment are the pompous, the pretentious, and the verbose.” (Musnad Ahmad)
- Speech should be clear, sincere, and meaningful, without the need for artificiality or showmanship.

Vulgarity and Obscene Language

- Vulgar speech stems from a corrupted character and is forbidden.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “The believer is not a slanderer, nor a curser, nor indecent, nor foul-mouthed.” (al-Tirmidhī)
- Even when speaking about impure or sensitive matters (like intimacy), the righteous use dignified, indirect language.

Joking in Moderation

- A small amount of truthful joking is permissible, as demonstrated by the Prophet ﷺ
- He ﷺ once said to someone: يا ذا الأذنين - O two-eared one (a playful yet true remark).
- The Prophet's joking followed three conditions:
 - It was always truthful.
 - It was directed at women, children, or those needing encouragement.
 - It was rare and never habitual.
- Excessive or constant joking is discouraged as it reduces dignity and may lead to resentment.

Mockery and Ridicule

- Mockery involves belittling others in a way that provokes laughter—through speech, imitation, or gestures.
- This includes mimicking voices, mocking appearances, or signaling someone's flaws sarcastically.
- Such behavior is condemned in the Qur'an and Sunnah.
- Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ

“O you who believe, let not one group mock another group.” (49:11)

- True believers respect others and avoid degrading humor that causes harm or humiliation.

Revealing Secrets and Breaking Promises

- Disclosing secrets and failing to keep promises are both sinful unless under specific, justified exceptions.
- The Prophet ﷺ forbade betrayal of trust and breach of confidentiality.
- Lying is generally forbidden but permitted in limited cases:
 - To reconcile between people.
 - In warfare.
 - Between spouses to maintain harmony.
- Even in such cases, one should prefer ta'rīḍ (indirect speech) over lying.

The Purpose of Ta‘rīḍ (Indirect Speech)

- Indirect speech allows one to avoid lying while still protecting privacy or serving a good purpose.
- Example: ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah recited verses when caught by his wife instead of directly answering, and she accepted his response.
- Another scholar would tell his maid to say he was “in the masjid” to avoid being disturbed, implying spiritual retreat.
- These indirect statements are praiseworthy only when used for justifiable reasons, not to deceive or manipulate unnecessarily.

The Danger of Backbiting

- Backbiting is strongly condemned in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It is likened to eating the flesh of your dead brother.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “O those who have believed with their tongues but not yet in their hearts: do not backbite the Muslims...”
- Backbiting is describing your absent brother with something he would dislike, whether related to his body, lineage, character, clothing, or habits.
- Even non-verbal expressions like gestures, eye rolls, or written words are considered backbiting if they convey criticism.

The Worst Form of Backbiting

- The most despicable form is “pious” or “subtle” backbiting, where one masks gossip under religious language.
- Examples: “May Allah guide him. He’s really struggling these days...” or “Alhamdulillah, we aren’t tested like he is.”

The Sin of Listening to Backbiting

- The listener to backbiting is equally sinful unless they actively object to it.
- If unable to stop it verbally, they must reject it in their heart and change the topic or leave the gathering.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever has the ability to defend their brother from backbiting and does not do so, Allah will forsake them in this world and the next.”
- Umar ibn ‘Utbah said to his servant: “Protect your hearing as you protect your tongue. What is poured into your ears settles in your heart.”

Causes of Backbiting and Its Treatment

- There are 4 causes of backbiting:
 - Releasing your anger - When someone has wronged you, you release your anger by speaking badly about them
 - Social conformity - Joining friends in gossip to feel accepted or avoid conflict
 - Self-praise through others' flaws - Putting others down to appear superior in intelligence, piety, or status
 - Joking and mockery - Using others as material for humor or sarcasm
- Treatment: Reflect on your own flaws.
 - The one who reflects on their own flaws will not have time to talk about others.

The Nature and Danger of Anger

- Anger is a flame from the fire. When one becomes angry, they are closer to Iblis, who was created from fire.
- The Prophet ﷺ advised repeatedly: “Do not get angry”
- The Prophet ﷺ said: “The strong one is not the wrestler but the one who controls himself during anger.” (Bukhari & Muslim)
- Anger leads to hatred, envy, and loss of self-control, causing both physical and spiritual harm.

The Levels of Anger

- People fall into three categories with anger:
 - Excessive (ifrāt): loses intellect and religion
 - Deficient (tafrīt): lacks protective jealousy or self-respect
 - Moderate (i'tidāl): anger is channeled properly to combat evil and control desires.

Practical Ways to Calm Anger

- Reflect on the reward of patience
 - The Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever suppresses anger while able to act on it, Allah will call him before the people on the Day of Judgment and let him choose from the Hūr al-‘Ayn.”
- Fear the consequence
 - Anger may cause shame in the Hereafter far greater than shame before people.
- Visualize your appearance when angry
 - Grotesque, irrational, and far from prophetic character.
- Interrupt anger physically
 - If standing, sit. If sitting, lie down.
 - Make wudu and seek refuge from shaytan

The Roots of Hatred and Envy

- When anger is suppressed without resolution, it settles into the heart as ḥiqd, which is a sustained hatred and aversion toward someone.
- Envy (ḥasad) often stems from that hatred. It involves resenting another's blessings and wishing for their removal.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: "The disease of previous nations has crept into you: envy and hatred."
- Iblīs said to Prophet Nūḥ: "Beware of envy. It was envy that brought me to this state."
- The Prophet ﷺ also said: "Envy consumes good deeds as fire consumes wood."

Envy vs. Healthy Competition

- If you wish for a blessing to be removed, that is envy (ḥasad).
- If you simply wish to have the same blessing without it being taken from others, this is ghibṭah, which is allowed
- The Prophet ﷺ said: ““here is no envy except in two cases: a person given the Quran who recites it night and day, and a person given wealth who spends it in the way of Allah.” (Bukhārī, Muslim)
- Competing in good is praiseworthy. Allah says:

وَفِي ذَٰلِكَ فَلْيَتَنَافَسِ الْمُتَنَافِسُونَ

“So let the competitors compete in that [reward].” (Al-Muṭaffifīn: 26)

Causes of Envy

- Animosity and hatred: Wanting harm for those who oppose or surpass you.
- Arrogance: Disliking others' elevation or success.
- Love of status: Wanting to be unmatched in praise, knowledge, or wealth.
- Moral corruption: Some dislike good for others even with no rivalry.
- Envy thrives among:
 - Peers and equals (students, siblings, colleagues)
 - People of the same craft or family
- The cause is shared goals, rivalry, and comparisons.

Treating Envy

- Envy is treated by:
 - Being content with Allah's qadar and trust in His wisdom.
 - Reducing attachment to worldly matters.
 - Remembering that others' blessings often come with burdens and accountability.
 - Training the soul to love for others what you love for yourself.

Greed

- Greed (hırs) and craving (tama') are diseases of the heart, rooted in discontent and reliance on creation over the Creator.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: "Successful is the one who submits to Allah, is given just enough provision, and is content with what Allah has granted him." (Muslim)
- Greed brings disgrace, while contentment brings honor.
- The Prophet ﷺ said:

القَنَاعَةُ مَالٌ لَا يَنْفَدُ

"Contentment is a treasure that never runs out."

Curing Greed: 5-Part Treatment

- Simple Living: Limit spending to necessities. Be content with simple food, clothes, and housing.
- Trust in Allah's Provision: Do not panic about the future.
- Recognize the honor of contentment and the humiliation of greed
- Reflect on the lives of the prophets and righteous
 - While the wicked may seem wealthy and comfortable, their reward is temporary.
 - Even animals eat and enjoy more than humans, so do not glorify worldly indulgence.
- Remember the dangers of wealth accumulation
 - Wealth brings heavy accountability.
 - Look to those below you in dunya and above you in dīn.

The Pinnacle of Generosity – Ithār

- Īthār is the highest level of generosity: giving to others while being in need yourself.
- Allah praised the companions with this trait

وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ

“And they give preference to others over themselves, even if they are in need.” (al-Hashr: 8)

- Examples of īthār:
 - The Companions at Yarmuk passing water from one to another until all died before drinking.
 - A piece of meat circulated through seven homes and returned to the first.
 - A slave gave his entire meal to a starving dog and fasted the day.

Bukhl vs. Sakhā'

- Some say bukhl (miserliness) is only withholding *what is obligatory*. But this is not true.
- The bakhīl is someone who withholds what is due by:
 - Sharī'ah (e.g., zakāh)
 - Muruwwah (manners and dignity), like being stingy with guests or family
- Only fulfilling the obligatory does not make one generous. True sakhā' includes:
 - Fulfilling obligatory rights (zakāh, family maintenance)
 - Acting with generosity of spirit in daily life (hosting, gifting, leniency)

Root Causes of Bukhl

- Bukhl is rooted in ḥubb al-māl (love of wealth).
- Two main causes:
 - Desire for pleasures (that depend on money) + long-term hopes
 - Love of money itself, even without purpose
 - Example: An old man with no heirs hoards wealth he'll never use
 - This is like someone who loves the messenger (money) but forgets the message (meeting needs)
- Some people store wealth just to see it increase, forgetting its purpose and temporary nature.

Curing Bukhl

- Love of pleasure → Fight with qanā'ah (contentment) and ṣabr (patience)
- Long hopes → Cut down by remembering death often
- Worry for children → Realize:
 - Allah provides, not your wealth
 - If they are righteous, then Allah will care for them
 - If they are not righteous, then your money helps their sinning
- Whoever reduces attachment to wealth reduces heartbreak from loss - "The more attachments, the more you will grieve when they are lost."

Showing Off (Riyā')

- The Prophet ﷺ said: "The thing I fear most for my ummah is showing off and hidden desire."
- These hidden desires bypass even scholars and worshipers, manifesting as a desire to be seen and admired.
- A person may think he is sincere, yet be written in the record of the hypocrites.
 - The soul, once deprived of open sins, finds comfort in spiritual recognition.
 - As they say: "The last thing to leave the hearts of the righteous is the love of leadership."

The Virtue of Being Unseen

- True piety lies in seeking obscurity, not recognition.
- Ibn Mas'ūd said: "If you knew what I hide behind my door, not two of you would follow me."
- Abū 'Āliyah left gatherings if more than four joined.
- Khālīd ibn Ma'dān would leave if his circle became large.
- Bishr al-Hāfī said: "You will not taste the sweetness of the Hereafter if you love to be known in this world."
- Fame sought by oneself is blameworthy
- Fame given by Allah is a test, not a virtue in itself.

Curing the Love of Status and Fame

- Love of recognition leads to hypocrisy: constantly seeking praise, hiding flaws, and manipulating perception.
- The cure:
 - Knowledge: Fame brings anxiety, envy, fear of loss, and the hearts of people are unstable.
 - Action: Lower one's status intentionally, as some pious predecessors did:
 - A scholar ate greedily in front of a king so the king would stop admiring him.
 - Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī wore red clothes and sat in the market to avoid being appointed judge.

Don't Fear Blame, Don't Crave Praise

- Many people are ruined because they crave praise and fear blame.
- One's actions become dictated by others' opinions, not Allah's pleasure.
- If you are praised for something real (like knowledge), then:
 - Fear Allah and remember the end matters more than the praise.
 - Thank Allah for the blessing, not the people's approval.
- If praised for what you don't possess, then this is delusion.
- Blame is also a test:
 - If truthful, then thank the person because it's a gift.
 - If false, thank Allah for concealing worse, and make dua for the person out of mercy.

Five Types of Riyā'

- 1. Riyā' in body: Emaciation, tired eyes, soft voice to appear ascetic.
- 2. Riyā' in clothing: Dirty clothes, patched garments, visible sujūd marks to signal piety.
- 3. Riyā' in speech: Quoting hadith, soft Qur'an recitation voice, dramatic tone for impact.
- 4. Riyā' in action: Prolonging prayer, fasting publicly, dramatizing acts of worship.
- 5. Riyā' through association: Mentioning pious friends, scholars, or visits to impress.
- Both the pious and worldly fall into riyā', though the *style* differs.

Levels of Riyā' and Their Consequences

- 1st Level: Worshipping only for other people — nullified and sinful.
- 2nd Level: You want reward and people's praise, but you wouldn't do the action if you were alone — still sinful.
- 3rd Level: You equally desire Allah and people — no reward.
- 4th Level: You are sincere, but showing off increases the effort you put into the action — rewarded for sincerity, punished for the rest.
 - Example: Prolonging sujūd only when seen.

What Invalidates Deeds

- If riyā' enters after a sincere act is completed (e.g. joy at being seen): it does not invalidate it.
- If it enters during the act and affects the motive (e.g. praying longer to impress): the reward is lost.
- If the act begins with riyā', the act is null.
- If regret follows during the act, it is best to start over, especially in prayer.

Treating Riyā'

- Riyā' stems from:
 - Love of praise
 - Fear of criticism
 - Desire for what others have
- Remedies:
 - Reflect on the futility of praise and the pain of Allah's anger.
 - Remember: People's praise doesn't add to your provision or delay your death.
 - Train yourself to hide your good deeds, just as you hide your sins.

When Is It Okay to Show Good Deeds?

- Hiding good deeds protects sincerity. But showing them can inspire others.
- Conditions for showing:
 - Intention is pure
 - No love of recognition in the heart
- Strong souls can show their actions for good.
- Weak souls should hide their deeds to protect themselves from riyā'.
- Salaf sometimes disclosed deeds before death - not for riyā', but to leave an example.

Concealing Sins and Not Seeking Blame

- Hiding sins is not riyā'. It is actually an act of obedience.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever commits one of these immoral acts, let him conceal it with Allah's cover."
- Also hide sins of others and dislike their exposure.
- Similarly, avoid putting yourself in positions where people will unnecessarily blame or praise you, as it distracts the heart.

Should You Leave a Deed Due to Fear of Riyaʿ?

- If your intention is sincere, do not stop your deed fearing what people might think.
- Shaytan may whisper: “You’re just showing off.” This is another trap.
- Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī said: “If Shaytan says: ‘You’re showing off’, then make the act longer.”

Is It Riya to Be Inspired by Others in Worship?

- Not all motivation in the presence of people is riyā’.
- There’s a valid form of inspiration.
- A person might:
 - Wake at night because others are praying.
 - Fast when others are fasting.
 - Pray longer in a mosque than at home.
- This isn’t riyā’ if the motivation is sincerely for Allah and not to be seen.
- Shayṭān might whisper: “You’re doing this for people!” — But we must look at our inner intention, not just the external situation.

How to Check for Riyā'

- Imagine that you are watching people who are praying at night, but you cannot be seen by anyone.
- If you would still be inspired to pray too, then it's for Allah.
- If you would not longer have the desire to pray, it suggests a desire to be seen, and thus riyā'.
- “Riyā' is more hidden than the crawling of an ant.” So, one must constantly examine intentions.

Strengthening the Heart Against Riyā'

- Be content with Allah's knowledge of your deeds.
- Don't say: "Only the spiritually strong can be sincere. I'm too weak."
- This is a trap of the Shayṭān to stop you from working hard.

Kibr

- Arrogance is spiritually deadly. Allah says:

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

"I will turn away from My signs those who behave arrogantly on the earth without right." (Al-A'rāf: 146)

- The Prophet ﷺ said:

- "No one with an atom's weight of arrogance in their heart will enter Paradise." (Muslim)
- "Arrogant people will be gathered on the Day of Judgment like ants, trampled by people due to their insignificance."
- Arrogance was the sin of Iblīs

What is Arrogance?

- Arrogance is an internal trait where one sees themselves superior to others.
- It leads to harmful traits: envy, stubbornness, refusal to accept truth, and disdain for others.
- The Prophet ﷺ defined arrogance as: “Rejecting the truth and belittling people.”
- It is widespread among scholars, worshippers, and the righteous, who may hide it under religious guise.

Signs and Levels of Arrogance

- Arrogance manifests in:
 - Looking down on others.
 - Preferring status and attention.
 - Avoiding manual tasks or associating with the poor.
- 3 Levels of Arrogance:
 - Internal pride, masked by outward humility.
 - Arrogant behavior - like demanding honor or anger at small slights.
 - Arrogant speech - boasting, belittling, or flaunting wealth, lineage, or knowledge.
- Even sinners may act arrogantly out of false pride in their sins.

Treating Arrogance and Acquiring Humility

- The cure starts with knowing where you came from: from a drop of fluid, bound to die and decay.
- Recognize Allah's greatness through His signs and your weakness through reflection.
- Practical humility: serve others, carry your own goods, accept correction, visit the poor.
- Beware of:
 - Pride in beauty: remember your inner reality.
 - Pride in lineage: you didn't earn it.
 - Pride in wealth: it can be stolen in an instant.
 - Pride in knowledge: it increases your accountability.

‘Ujb

- ‘Ujb is when a person is amazed by themselves, thinking highly of their own worship, knowledge, or attributes.
- The Prophet ﷺ said: "Three things are destructive: obeyed greed, followed desires, and a person being impressed with themselves."
- Self-conceit leads to complacency, preventing sincere effort for growth, and often leads to arrogance (kibr).
- Ibn Mas‘ūd said: "Destruction lies in two things: self-conceit and despair."
- The conceited person may falsely assume their good deeds guarantee acceptance and reward, forgetting Allah's mercy is the true cause of success.

Curing 'Ujb

- One should remember that all ability—existence, knowledge, good deeds—is purely from Allah.
- “No one’s deeds will enter them into Paradise.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Not even I, unless Allah encompasses me with mercy.” (Bukhārī & Muslim)
- A person must continually inspect their intentions and remember the hidden flaws of their deeds.

Ghurūr (Self-Deception)

- Ghurūr is when one is deluded into feeling safe from Allah's punishment or assumes goodness in actions or conditions without basis.
- Allah criticizes such thinking:

يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الدُّنْيَا وَيَقُولُونَ سَيُغْفَرُ لَنَا

“They take the goods of this lower world and say: ‘We will be forgiven.’” (Al-A‘rāf: 169)

- Relying solely on Allah's mercy while persisting in sin is false hope. The scholars said: “Whoever fears something, flees from it. Whoever hopes for something, strives toward it.”
- True rajā' (hope) and khawf (fear) lead to action; anything that causes laziness is ghurūr, not true hope.

Examples of Ghurūr

- Some are deluded by their sins, thinking Allah is too merciful to punish them.
- Others are deceived by their lineage, assuming salvation through righteous forefathers. But:
 - Nuh's son was not saved
 - Ibrahim's father was not guided
 - Abu Talib died a disbeliever
- Some count their few good deeds and forget their many sins. One might donate a single coin from stolen wealth and think it outweighs the theft.
- They remember their tasbīḥ but forget their gossip — this imbalance in self-assessment is a trap of ghurūr.

Self-Deception Among the Righteous

- Many worshippers fall into ghurūr by prioritizing voluntary acts (e.g. excessive wudū', dhikr, recitation) while neglecting obligations like prayer or justice to others.
- Some obsess over tajwīd and proper articulation in fātiḥah while being heedless of reflection or humility.
- Some fast while gossiping or breaking fast with haram; some perform ḥajj while neglecting debts or parents.
- Others enjoin good while neglecting themselves

Self-Deception Among the Wealthy

- Some build mosques or schools but insist their names be engraved, seeking fame not Allah's pleasure.
- Some hoard wealth and only perform physical acts of worship, avoiding financial obligations
- Others give zakāh but only from inferior goods, or to people who serve their interests, not to fulfill Allah's command.
- Attending halaqah without reflection or change is also ghurūr. One may say "Allah, save us," but continue heedlessly.
- Ibn al-Jawzī likens this to a sick person sitting with doctors but refusing medicine.

Remedy for Self-Deception

- The root cure is to focus on purifying the heart and aligning intentions.
- True sincerity requires three tools:
 - Reason (‘aql): to distinguish reality from illusion.
 - Knowledge (ma‘rifah): of Allah, the self, the world, and the Hereafter.
 - Sharī‘ah-based knowledge: to know the right path and its obstacles.
- Fear of being deceived must remain until one’s final breath.