

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



Imam Ali Hofioni

The Tongue (Cont.) Ascribing Goodness to Oneself

- Imam Al-Ghazali addresses this as تزكية النفس (Tazkiyatun Nafs).
 - In Surah an-Najm, Allah said:

فَلَا تُزَكُّوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اَتْقَى

So do not 'falsely' elevate yourselves. He knows best who is 'truly' righteous (53:32)

- Allah instructs us not to boast of our own purity or perfection. We should never view ourselves as superior to others, but rather recognize our own inherent faults and imperfections. We are not free from faults and defects.
- The believer's mindset is defined by constant growth. There is always room for improvement, and our energy is better spent on self-critique than on fault-finding in others.
- Literal Definition of Tazkiya:
 - تزكية (Tazkiya) is derived from the root زكا (zaka), which means to purify something.
 - For example, just as leather is cleaned of impurities under the sun, it represents a spiritual cleansing of the heart and soul to remove negative traits.
- Technical Definition of Tazkiya:
- It is a science from the many sciences within our Deen that pertains to purifying one's heart and soul.

- In the Qur'an, Allah states that those who purify themselves; by doing tazkiya, are truly successful. He used قَدْ (Qad) for emphasis (i.e. "Indeed," "Surely").
 - In Surah Ash-Shams, He said:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

Successful indeed is the one who purifies their soul (91:9)

- In Surah Al-A'la, He tells us:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

He has certainly succeeded who purifies himself (87:14)

- Engaging in tazkiya often involves experiencing discomfort, which acts as the very mechanism that purifies the soul.
 - For example, fasting is a form of tazkiya, where the discomfort of hunger is what purifies us.
- When a person thinks they are good enough and free from faults, it often leads to self-praise or self-glorification.
- Overpraising can corrupt the heart by breeding arrogance. This is why we should avoid both constantly giving praise and receiving excessive compliments, as the Prophet (ﷺ) frequently warned against this in authentic narrations.
- We should not let the praise of others inflate our ego. Since Allah knows the secrets of the heart, we should focus our efforts on pleasing Him, rather than impressing others and let our sincerity be for Allah alone.
- When we are praised for something good, the best response is to praise Allah, as it is a reminder that any goodness is a blessing from Him.
- Try to implement saying, "It is the goodness in you that you see". This phrase is an example of adab (etiquette) that reflects humility and redirects praise toward the person who offered it.

The Stomach Overeating

- The scholars are in agreement that an empty stomach brings about hikmah (wisdom).
- Wisdom is defined as the ability to act or speak in the most appropriate, ethical, and balanced manner under difficult circumstances.
- Restraining from overeating acts as a vessel for Allah to instill wisdom within us, which is why the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized fasting as a path to strengthening faith and self-discipline.
- Sufyan al-Thawri used to say that being hungry is a way to allow Allah's nur (light) to enter within an individual.
- On the contrary, a full stomach makes it easy for Shaytan to dictate a person's nafs (desires).
- The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Indeed, Shaytan flows through the son of Adam as his blood flows through him, so restrict his flow with hunger." (Kashf al-Khifa)
- Hunger subdues our desires. This is why fasting is a spiritual battle against Shaytan; we are physically weakening the enemy of Allah.
- We should extend the habit of fasting beyond just Ramadan. It is a beneficial practice that brings positive, long-lasting impacts to our physical health as well as spiritual well-being.

Tawbah

- Sincere tawbah (repentance) is defined by feeling remorse or regret for the sin committed.
 - Abdullah ibn Mas'ud reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,
النَّدَمُ تَوْبَةٌ
"Regret is part of repentance." (Sunan Ibn Majah)
- Imam al-Nawawi outlines three essential conditions for acceptance of tawbah for sins committed:
 - Feeling sincere regret and guilt for having committed the sin.

- Staying away from the environment/situation that caused the sin.
- Making a promise to Allah to abandon the sin and never repeat the sin in the future.
- The du'a of tawbah the Prophet (ﷺ) taught Aisha to recite during the final nights of Ramadan:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُورٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

Allahumma innaka 'afuwwun, tuhibbul-'afwa, fa'fu 'anni.

Meaning: O Allah, indeed You are the Pardoning One, You love to pardon, so pardon me.

- Some narrations include the word 'Karimun' (Generous), making it: Allahumma innaka 'afuwwun karimun tuhibbul-'afwa fa'fu 'anni.
- It is highly recommended to memorize and frequently recite this specific du'a to sincerely repent from our sins and seek a clean slate from Allah during the last nights of Ramadan.