

## PURIFYING THE SOUL

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أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَعِزُّهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ  
اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.  
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ  
وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.  
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،  
فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَوْصِيكُمْ وَآيَايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us all increase our devotion towards Allah the Almighty by performing all that He has decreed and abstaining from all that He has prohibited. Hopefully, we will be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Most Muslims comprehend the concept of *najis* (impurities) such as *mukhaffafah*, *mutawassitah* and *mughallazah*, but not many understand the inner impurities or diseases of the heart that also need to be cleansed. Imam Al-Ghazali (may Allah have mercy on him) described *Tazkiyah An-Nafs* as a process of purifying the soul from impurity caused by bad deeds. It is one of the ways to gain strength and resilience to fight the enemies within ourselves or disease of the heart. Therefore, the purification of the soul or *Tazkiyah An-Nafs* is so important that Allah the Almighty mentioned it in the Quran in Chapter 91 (*Surah Ash-Shams*) verses (*ayat*) 9 to 10:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ  
فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا . وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

**Which means:** “*The one who purifies his soul succeeds and the one who corrupts it fails.*”

Allah the Almighty has confirmed that only people who have pure souls or hearts are successful in His sight. They strive to maintain praiseworthy behavior and stay away from bad qualities. On the other hand, people who allow their souls and hearts to be filled with vile traits are losers.

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

It is important for every Muslim to purify their soul because it is a way for us to connect with Allah the Almighty and distance ourselves from all vices and diseases of the heart. Whether we are aware of it or not, our hearts are filled with shameful or vile traits such as *riya'* or showing off, envy, arrogance, pride and other negative traits that cause the wrath of Allah the Almighty and cause all our good deeds to be rejected by Allah the Almighty. The Prophet (peace be upon him [PBUH]) said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Ahmad:

إِنَّ أَخَوْفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمُ الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرَ، قَالُوا: وَمَا الشِّرْكَ الْأَصْغَرُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: الرِّيَاءُ

**Which means:** “*The thing I fear most for you is the lesser shirk (polytheism), showing-off (of good deeds).*”

The Prophet (PBUH) reminds us about arrogance in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Muslim which means:

*He who has in his heart as much pride as a grain of mustard-seed will not enter paradise.*

He also said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Abu Daud which means:

*Avoid envy, for envy devours good deeds just as fire devours firewood.*

Not only that, diseases of the heart will definitely bring damage to society if it is not treated. Isn't the damage that occurs today, such as murder, fights, accusations, swearing, sarcasm, and power struggles caused by diseases of the heart? The Prophet (PBUH) said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari:

**Which means:** Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart.

**Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

Let us try our best to purify our souls and hearts. The bad qualities that infiltrate our hearts need to be cleansed by the practice of *tazkiyat An-Nafs*. To purify the heart, each of us should start by trying to stay away from sins. Leave all vices and *mazmumah* (bad) qualities because the heart cannot be cleansed if it is still wallowing in sin. Believers recognize sin as a big factor that will destroy them. The Prophet (PBUH) said in a *hadith* narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari which means:

*“The believer sees his sins as if he was at the base of a mountain, fearing that it was about to fall upon him. The wicked person sees his sins as if flies are hitting his nose”*

One of the ways to purify the soul is to continuously repent by asking for forgiveness from Allah the Almighty. The practice of repentance will purify the dirty soul, therefore increase *istighfar* (asking for forgiveness) and remember Allah the Almighty because the heart of a person who recites *dhikr* will be calm because his heart has been cleansed from impurities. Abu Darda’ (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

*Everything has a polish, and the polish for hearts is remembrance of Allah.*

Always reflect by looking at our own weaknesses and always remember that we will stand before Allah the Almighty. The person who remembers death has a pure soul because the world is temporary and the afterlife is eternal. Always pray that Allah the Almighty makes our hearts clean and pure. Practice this prayer,

اللَّهُمَّ آتِ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَرَزِقْهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ رَزَقَاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيِّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا

**Which means:** *“O Allah, make my soul obedient and purify it, for You are the best One to purify it. You are its Guardian and Lord.”*

In conclusion, remember that our hearts are always filled with vile traits that are sins that will destroy us in this world and the hereafter. Strive for *tazkiyat An-Nafs* by eliminating vices and vile traits in the heart. Repent, recite *dhikr*, pray and do other good deeds. God willing, our hearts will be pure and clean.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُبُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُم سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِي وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ. وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ. وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ لِي وَلَكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ