

تَزْكِيَةُ النَّفْسِ

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

STEPS TO LOVE ALLAH SAFEGUARD YOUR HEART

Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril حفظه الله

Spiritual Purification Retreat | Ramadan 1446

Steps to Love Allāh
Safeguard Your Heart

Ash-Shaykh Al-Imām Ahmad Mūsā Jibrīl (حفظه الله)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



The next aspect to cultivate love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله mentioned is safeguarding the heart from anything that obstructs its connection with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. To love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, you must distance your heart from anything that creates a barrier between the heart and Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. You need to have a clean, pure heart in order to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Therefore, it's important to protect your heart from all harm, from flaws, from corruption, and anything that goes against what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves. You steer clear of anything that can damage your heart and push you away from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Understand the issues you face. Diagnose your heart ailments so you can heal them, and consider it Tawfīq from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that you're diagnosing your heart, that you know your heart ailments, and that you're working on them. A diseased heart distances one from loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and it ruins one's Dunyā and Ākhirah. The Messenger ﷺ, the purest heart to ever beat, used to ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى for a sound heart. He used to say,

وَأَسْأَلُكَ قَلْبًا سَلِيمًا

Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ

The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

But only one who comes to Allāh with a sound heart.

When the importance of the heart is mentioned, some tend to think that deeds have nothing to do with ‘Ibādah or they diminish their importance. Some go to the extent of saying, “*All that matters is what’s in my heart*”, and that’s absolutely wrong, as we know. If one truly had Īmān, the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and love of the Messenger ﷺ in his heart, it would show in one’s deeds and actions, like the Hadīth in Sahīh Muslim,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ إِنَّمَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى أَعْمَالِكُمْ

Allah does not look at your forms or your wealth, rather He looks at your deeds...

Allāh سبحانه وتعالى looks to your hearts and deeds. We emphasize the heart because it’s significant. It represents the place where belief, Tawhīd, and intention reside. Having a pure intention is important for deeds, otherwise, a person might end up among those whose deeds lead them to Jahannam, والعياذ بالله. There’s a Hadīth in Sahīh Muslim that mentions the first three groups of people that will be judged, and one of them is someone who was seen as a martyr; he actually sacrificed his life, but the intention was not right. Another is someone who studied and taught, what’s referred to as a “Shaykh” nowadays. The intention wasn’t right. The last one is one who gave in charity, but the intention wasn’t right, so the result was they were dragged on their faces into Jahannam والعياذ بالله. It’s what appeared to be a deed that caused them entry into Jahannam because of a wrong intention.

The heart plays a crucial role. Its health influences the overall wellbeing of deeds.

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

There's a piece of flesh in the body. If it's healthy, the entire body is healthy, if it's corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. It is the heart.

The heart is the foundation of our actions, so it needs to be protected. Our deeds are the result of what's in the heart. In addition to the intention residing in the heart, Tawhīd, as I said, also resides in the heart. It's deeply rooted in the heart, but it shows in one's deeds and actions. That's why we put a lot of emphasis on maintaining pure Tawhīd. The stronger, the sounder, and the purer the Tawhīd is in the hearts, the more steadfast, the more consistent, and the more sincere the actions will be. Actions that help us attain love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. In order to have a pure heart, it's essential to sweeten the heart with certain matters while purging it of others. In order to maintain and attain a sound heart, always recognize that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is the Truth. Always remind your heart of that. Always remind your heart that the day of Judgement, Yawm Al-Qiyāmah, is certain to come. Always remind your heart that you and everyone else will be resurrected from your graves and you will stand before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The afflictions of the heart start to manifest when the heart is oblivious to those facts and realities. A heart that knows Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and a heart that focuses on the Ākhirah will not be a diseased heart. Keep in mind that sins, Shahawāt (desires), and Shubuhāt (which are doubts) — those two are the biggest destroyers of the heart. They distance one from loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Ibn Al-Mubārāk or possibly Ibrāhīm Ibn Adham, or possibly both of them, said,

رَأَيْتُ الذُّنُوبَ تَمِيتُ الْقُلُوبَ. وَيَتَّبِعُهَا الذَّلَالُ إِدْمَانُهَا. وَتَرُكُ الذُّنُوبَ حَيَاةُ الْقُلُوبِ. وَخَيْرُ لِنَفْسِكَ عَصِيَانُهَا

Sins lead to the death of the heart, and persistence on sins is followed by humiliation. Abandoning sins is essential for a lively, healthy heart, and resisting the Nafs and the sins is beneficial for the soul.

Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said, “The heart is like the king, and the body parts are like the soldiers. When the king is good, his soldiers are also good. When the heart is corrupt, his soldiers become corrupt as well.” The limbs, the actions, and the deeds become corrupt as well. Sins and doubts are wounds to the heart, and some of those wounds can kill. They create a thick barrier that blocks one from guidance, from goodness, and from loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. To discourage someone from smoking, what do they usually do? They’ll bring a picture of a heart and lungs, or they’ll actually show them a heart and lungs that have been harmed and damaged by smoking. That way, they can really understand the impact smoking has on their body. If a sinner was able to see the black spots on the heart from the effect of his sins, he would know that there’s no illness worse than sins. Sins upon sins continue to weaken the heart until they eventually kill it.

إن العبد إذا أخطأ خطيئة، نكتت في قلبه نكتة سوداء

Verily, when the slave (of Allāh) commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart.

When someone experiences even a little bit of pain, they quickly go to the doctor. However, not many people think about the impact of sins or doubts on their hearts and how they darken it. Black spots on the heart from sins weaken a person’s journey towards loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. They may even become a barrier; they may cause that person to stumble on the path of loving Allāh سبحانه or to hinder it or to halt it completely. Sometimes, the black spots on the heart can be so extensive that they may even turn one away from the path of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى completely. That’s disastrous. Failing to purify the heart and

freeing it from what obstructs its connection from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will cause you to drift away from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, making it tough to get back on the path of loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

The sister disease of sins of desires is Shubuhāt, doubts. Both lead to the violation of the limbs, and both distance one from loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The hearts are fragile, and Shubuhāt are deceiving. That's why Ibn Taymiyyah advised his student Ibn Al-Qayyim not to allow his heart to absorb doubts like a sponge. He told him to treat his heart like a solid glass bottle. How so? A solid glass bottle, you see through it. You let the doubts pass over the surface of the glass without settling in. If one's not alert, the heart will absorb the doubts that come its way, and the heart will become a sanctuary of nothing but doubts. Instead of Yaqīn in the hearts, as it should be, now it's all doubts.

The Qur'ān is the best cure to both the Shubuhāt and the Shahawāt and other ailments as well. The undeniable proofs in the Qur'ān distinguish the truth from falsehood, and it eliminates Shubuhāt that can corrupt the hearts. The Qur'ān allows the people to see things as they truly are. The Qur'ān heals and cures the disease of desires and the disease of doubts. The Qur'ān offers wisdom and advice. There are encouragements and there are warnings, Targhīb and Tarhīb. The Qur'ān urges people to focus less on worldly matters and more on the Ākhirah. The stories and parables of the Qur'ān are a valuable lesson that inspires a healthy heart by teaching what benefits one in Dunyā and in Ākhirah. The stories and parables of the Qur'ān help one turn away from everything harmful, and it leads one to a pure heart that loves Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and what's right and dislikes what's wrong.

The bottom line is in order to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, you must work on a pure heart that distances your heart from anything that creates a barrier between the heart and Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. And I'll conclude with a statement by Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله تعالى. Ibn Taymiyyah, on this matter, said, *"Loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and filling the heart with the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is the mightiest path to a sound, pure heart."* Walā' and Barā', loving what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى loves and

hating what Allāh سبحانه وتعالى hates. With that statement, you'll come to the conclusion that loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and purifying the heart are two aspects that nurture one another. It's similar to what I said about Nawāfil. It's like a reciprocal relationship in which each one bolsters and improves the other. The more a person fills his heart with love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, the purer their heart will be. The more one purifies his heart and works on it, the more the love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى increases. Hearts are like glass containers. As long as they're filled with water, air cannot enter in them because the space is occupied. They need to be filled with Īmān, Yaqīn, and Qur'ān.

وصلی اللہ علی سیدنا محمد وعلی آلہ وصحبہ وسلم