

تَزْكِيَةُ النَّفْسِ

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

STEPS TO LOVE ALLAH

SPEAK ONLY WHEN THERE IS BENEFIT

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Steps to Love Allāh Speak Only When There Is Benefit

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



In the last talk, we mentioned that Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى said that you attain love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى by being around people who appear to be righteous, people who genuinely love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and remind one about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. He advised to be around them, and he encouraged taking the best lessons from all the valuable lessons they have to offer. Within the same context, Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى underscored the significance of communicating only when one's talk is advantageous to both oneself and to others. Being with people who appear to be good clearly develops love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى — we took that point, we understood it. But how does only speaking when your words benefit you and the others relate to this topic about attaining love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى?

First of all, Ibn Al-Qayyim, in this point or aspect, advised about being around people who genuinely love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and to learn from them. Being silent and listening are essential learning. Also, in these gatherings that Ibn Al-Qayyim advised about, individuals engage in conversations, and even those who are considered virtuous may get caught up in their conversations and may say that which they shouldn't. The objective of participating in these gatherings is to seek love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. That necessitates that one speaks only that which is beneficial for oneself and for others. He first mentioned the importance of being selective about what to listen to. Now, he's suggesting that you should also be careful about what you say. Another point as to how it relates to this topic is that sinful and vain talk can distance one from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and the purpose of all this is to attain love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Ibn Abi Dunyā related that Anas Ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه said,

لصمت وهو أول العبادة

Silence is the first step to 'Ibādah.

And another wisdom, and it's probably the most significant reason that Ibn Al-Qayyim cautioned against careless use of words, is that Ibn Al-Qayyim, along with other Ulamā', emphasized that practicing silence and being mindful of one's speech can foster and lead to love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. To protect your Dīn and to attain nearness to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, the tongue must be controlled in a manner akin to a sword being sheathed. Just as one secures a sword to prevent its sharp edge from causing injury, so too must one manage their speech and their tongue to avoid inflicting harm on themselves and others, and most importantly to avoid distancing themselves from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Getting involved in negative, Harām, and vain talk is risky. Being silent can bring peace to one's Dunyā and Ākhirah. That's why silence is so valuable. The tongue can be sharper than the sword. It possesses the capacity to cause significant damage, even more than a sword does. It can cause the downfall of a person who loosely wields it. It can create a distance between that individual and the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. A loose tongue is like a rope in the hands of the Shaytān. When you stay silent, you don't speak, you cut that rope and you free yourself to continue on the path to loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. When you start talking, the Shaytān can lead you with that rope wherever he wants, whenever he wants. If an individual is unable to regulate his speech, their mouth becomes a gateway for trash. That gateway leads to the heart, and that transforms the heart into a receptacle for waste. That will obstruct the path to attaining closeness to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and it will have an effect on one's 'Ibādah. Being conscious of your words positively influences your acts of 'Ibādah. A wise person who knows what happens in the Ākhirah and the weight of each word that he utters, that person will think carefully about what he says before he speaks, and he'll realize how important it is to control every word he says. If a person were to exercise control over their speech, they'd avoid many pitfalls. Like a wise person once said, *"Words are like medicine. A little bit of it can help, but too much of it can be harmful."* You don't want to overdose on talking, and it's all summarized in the short, comprehensive words of RasūlAllāh ﷺ in Sahīh Al-Bukhārī,

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ، فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

He who believes in Allāh and the Last Day must speak good or remain silent.

Silence, except when it's beneficial to speak, was a characteristic of the Messenger ﷺ and the Salaf, and it's a trait of the wise thinkers. Jābir Ibn Samurah described the Messenger ﷺ as

كَانَ طَوِيلَ الصَّمْتِ

He was characterized by prolonged silence.

Allāh سبحانه وتعالى reminded us to embrace silence except when it's beneficial, and He did so by reminding us that we will be held accountable for every word we utter.

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

He [i.e., man] utters no word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record].

When you say something, always be ready to have an explanation for what you said when you stand before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Prior to every word, prior to every statement, remind yourself of the Day where you'll stand before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Remind yourself that you will be asked, “Why did you say such a thing?” And be ready to offer an explanation for every word you uttered when you stand

before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Al-Fudayl Ibn ‘Iyyād mentioned that some of his companions spoke so little that he could memorize their words from one Friday to the next, because excessive talk can lead to a person getting carried away in his talk and it increases the likelihood of accidentally expressing thoughts that may be considered Haram, like lying, gossiping, backbiting, disparaging, or slandering others. Getting carried away in talking comes from the Nafs and the Shaytān. Once someone habitually starts engaging in these behaviors, it becomes addictive, and then it becomes tough to control what one says, and that leads to one’s destruction. Some gossiping in some gatherings may provide a momentary sense of satisfaction, but it’ll carry a significant impact when one stands before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Ibrāhīm At-Taymi said that someone who was a friend of Ar-Rabī’ Ibn Khuthaym stated that, *“For the twenty years I was with Ar-Rabī’ Ibn Khuthaym, I never heard him say one negative word.”* Khārijah Ibn Mu’sab said something similar about Ibn ‘Awn. Talhah Ibn ‘Ubaydillāh Al-Baghdādi said, *“I happened to be on a ship with Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal.”* He said he’d remain silent, and when he spoke during the journey, he’d say,

اللهم أمتنا على الإسلام والسنة

Yā Allāh! Let us die upon Islām and the Sunnah.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri said the wise person’s speech is guided by their heart. When they wish to express something, they’ll reflect upon their heart first. They’ll think first, and if the sentiment is positive, they’ll speak, and if it’s negative, they’ll remain silent. Meaning, a wise person thinks before he speaks. The ignorant individual, on the other hand, allows their heart to be at the mercy of their tongue. They speak whatever comes to mind without thinking about it.

Now, being silent from forbidding the evil, ordaining the good, teaching knowledge, doing Dhikr, or reciting the Qur’ān is, of course, not the commanded

type of silence. The Wājib type of silence is when the talk falls under what's Harām or what may lead to Harām. Some Mubāh talk has no purpose, it's better that one remains silent and doesn't engage in it. And keep in mind that the scope of this topic encompasses what has become prevalent on social media platforms. In the past, communication was restricted to face-to-face and in-person interactions. However, individuals can now engage in discussions at any time of the day or night through live broadcasts or typed messages, it can even be from the comfort of their bedrooms and cars. You notice some who engage in live broadcasts for extended periods, and one wonders before anything, how does anyone have that much time to waste? And also, during lengthy discussions, numerous verbal missteps tend to occur. Some Juhhāl issue more Fatwās per night than some of the esteemed Imāms of previous generations have done in years. Sufyān Ibn 'Uyaynah رحمه الله تعالى said,

أَجْسِرُ النَّاسِ عَلَى الْفِتْيَا أَقْلَهُمْ عِلْمًا

The individuals who are most audacious in issuing Fatwās are the ones with the least knowledge.

They bring issues, they discuss them, they analyze them, they issue decisions and Fatwas, and many times, it's founded on ignorance and slander of others. They analyze current events that seem to be important at that moment, but those current events get quickly forgotten in a day or two, or in a week or two, or in a few months. The current events fade away and become history, and all that remains are just words that one utters, words that they will be asked about before Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Don't think you have to speak about every single issue that comes up. You don't have to speak about every Mas'alah and current event that arises. Mālik رحمه الله تعالى said, *"It's a shame and an embarrassment for an 'Ālim to respond to every question he's asked about."* 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said anyone who provides answers to every question posed to them by

others is foolish. We all know the statements and the many examples of some of the greatest Ulamā' of all times who used to admit they didn't know when asked about something and how they encouraged others to do the same. Don't get that wrong. Many, if not most of them, were not clueless about the topic that they said "*we don't know*" about. In most cases, they actually had many opinions and plenty of evidence on that issue they said they didn't know about. Some mentioned that they had studied eight different opinions from various, different Ulamā' with plenty of evidence on the issue that they said "*we don't know*" when asked about it. They chose to say they didn't know because they wanted to be sure and analyze the proofs and opinions before giving an answer.

A word loosely tossed around can cost one his Ākhirah. **والله** it's not worth giving your deeds to someone you hate or taking the sins of that person who you hate. If just calling someone short can have the big impact of polluting the sea if it were mixed in it, then consider the implications for those who casually accuse others in their Dīn and those who spend their days and nights mocking and labeling both the living and the dead as Khawārij. What's said on social media nowadays is more dangerous than the face-to-face interactions of the past. If one word between two people can have the impact of polluting the sea if it was mixed in it, then imagine the impact when it's put on social media for millions to read for decades or possibly even centuries to come. If the heads of the Jews of the Qiblah taught you to call someone whose soul is, Inshā'Allāh, suspended from the 'Arsh of Allāh **سبحانه وتعالى** — if they taught you to call him a Khārijī, or someone who Allāh **سبحانه وتعالى** granted acceptance who's in prison or free — rest assured, your words will not harm him. You actually benefit him by what you say. You only harm yourself with that slander. Reflect on the oceans of reward taken from those who slander or the oceans of sins piled upon them for a simple word. This includes everything — in written posts and videos, to audios and messages — it's all included in this topic, and all that distances one from the love of Allāh **سبحانه وتعالى**.

So the summary of this talk, I'll present it in a way everyone can understand. When someone gets arrested in this country — may Allāh **سبحانه**

سبحانه وتعالى save you all from the oppression of the Kuffār and may Allāh سبحانه save you all from falling under their control — when someone’s arrested, the first thing an attorney advises his client is to remain silent, not to say anything. No matter what questions they face, they’re told to remain silent. No matter how innocent they are, they’re told to remain silent. In fact, the officers are required to inform the person they arrest about this, they’re told to inform them under the Miranda rights to remain silent, because speaking usually causes one more problems. Even if the person is actually innocent. It’s best to remain silent. So if you want peace for your Ākhirah and you want to attain love for Allāh سبحانه, then remain silent unless you’re sure it’s beneficial to you and others.

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ

No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people.

Thinking carefully about what you say will protect you from the consequences of your words when you have to answer to Allāh سبحانه تعالى on Yawm Al-Qiyāmah, and thinking about your words carefully will allow you to focus on attaining your love for Allāh سبحانه تعالى. We’ll conclude with this.

وصلی اللہ علی سیدنا محمد وعلی آلہ وصحبہ وسلم