

نزك الـنفس

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

SECRET SINS

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Secret Sins

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



After our talk on hidden deeds, we'll move on to the complete opposite, which are hidden or secret sins. We said, in the last talk, that secret deeds serve as a foundation and a cornerstone for steadfastness on this Dīn. This topic is the opposite of that. Secret sins can lead to a person's relapse in their faith, just like good deeds can help one remain steadfast. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى said, *"Those knowledgeable about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى unanimously agree that hidden sins are the root cause of spiritual setbacks."* The gauge to your faith is in your hidden actions. The true measure of your faith and the extent of your love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and your reverence for Him is not determined by the public prayers nor by your recitation of the Qur'ān in front of others nor by your charitable acts that are displayed before everyone to see. The true gauge of your faith lies in your private moments when you're all alone, when you're alone and away from the gaze of everyone. If you're tempted to sin but you choose to refrain for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, that's a testament to the strength of your Īmān and your love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. If you yield to temptation and you disobey Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, it indicates weakness in your faith.

Amongst the biggest of all losers are those who show people their good deeds and then battle Allāh سبحانه وتعالى with hidden sins, and He's closer to them than their jugular veins. There are some — may Allāh سبحانه وتعالى save us all from this — when you see them in public, they're like the Awliyā' of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. They'll prolong their Salāh, they'll focus in their Salāh, it'll be on time, they're involved in charity work and in helping others, they'll help at the Masjid, they'll display books to show that they're serious students of 'Ilm, but when no one is watching, they'll skip Salāh, they'll delay it, they might be mindless in it, or they'll rush through it. They'll spend time listening and watching and saying that which is forbidden, they'll gossip and slander on social media under fake usernames thinking that nobody will know who they are, forgetting that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is watchful over everything they do. Sahnūn said, *"Don't be a friend of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in public while being his enemy in private, and don't act like you're against the Shaytān and your Nafs and your desires and temptations openly, while in*

secrecy you're on their side." In a Masjid, his behavior and demeanor reflect the qualities of the Salaf, he interacts with his brothers in a manner that's reminiscent of the Sahābah. However, when he returns to his wife, mother, and children, and he's all alone in his house, he exhibits the conduct that's similar to that of Abu Jahl. In the presence of others, he pretends to avoid and avert his gaze from that which is prohibited, but when he's by himself, he indulges in what he's supposed to avoid.

فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

Allāh has more right that you should fear him, if you are [truly] believers.

When Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنهما was asked about

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

Allāh knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the breasts conceal.

He explained it in a way that many can relate to. He said, *"It's a man who walks into the house of his neighbor, friend, or relatives, and there's a pretty woman there or a pretty woman passes by. When his friends or relatives aren't paying attention, he sneaks a look at that woman. As soon as they notice or he thinks they're going to notice, he quickly looks away. When they get distracted again, he glances at that pretty woman again. When they're about to catch him, he turns his eyes away again."* Ibn 'Abbās says, *"Allāh sees in his heart that he wishes he could see her private parts as well."*

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

Allāh knows the fraud of the eyes, and all that the breasts conceal.

Yes, individuals around you who are vigilant may be unaware of what you see and do, but Allāh سبحانه وتعالى knows the deception of the eyes and what the heart conceals.

يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا
يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا

They may hide (their crimes) from men, but they cannot hide (them) from Allāh; for He is with them (by His Knowledge), when they plot by night in words that He does not approve. And Allāh ever encompasses what they do.

سبحانه They hide their sins from men, but they can't hide their sins from Allāh
وتعالى. Last Ramadān I spoke about the verse

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَى

Does he not know that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى sees everything?

This is an essential topic, especially for Talabat Al-'Ilm and Du'āt and the Mujāhidīn. He's an absolute failure if he thinks he's going to be an 'Ālim or a Dā'iyyah or a Tālib 'Ilm or a Mujāhid, especially if he's on the pure Tawhīd, while he's persisting on committing private sins. They want to establish the most noble

missions, yet in privacy they combat Allāh سبحانه وتعالى with sins [like] looking at that which is prohibited, hearing that which is prohibited, slandering brothers and sisters under fake names for personal reasons, thinking that nobody will find out who they are and forgetting that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is watchful over them, playing with the minds of sisters in order to get them to fall in love with them so they can marry them without a Wali. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى said, *“When you combat Allāh سبحانه وتعالى with hidden sins, you will fall from his eyes.”*

I frequently echo the words of Ibn Al-Jawzi on this matter, because most of our audience consists of brothers and sisters who are dedicated Talabat ‘Ilm Inshā’Allāh, and Inshā’Allāh they’re the future leaders of this earth, or their descendants. So Ibn Al-Jawzi رحمه الله تعالى said, *“I’ve seen many people who claim to attribute themselves to knowledge,”* — Talabat ‘Ilm, Ulamā’ — *“yet they neglected how Allāh سبحانه وتعالى sees them when they’re alone, and because of that, their good reputation disappears in public. There’s no joy in seeing them and no one looks forward to meeting them. Their presence feels like they’re not even there.”* Hidden sins get one to lose his effectiveness in Da’wah, and it strips him of his reputation. Hidden sins strip the Jihād talk or speech or social media post or reminder from its effect, and that individual becomes despised by the people of the Haqq. One who’s pinned down by the Shaytān can’t fight an enemy. One who’s own Nafs defeated him can’t defeat a powerful enemy. In our previous discussion about hidden good deeds, we talked about how Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will make those good deeds visible in a person’s appearance, even though he didn’t intend that. We also mentioned that this talk is the opposite of that one. Hidden sins can be visible in a person’s appearance as well. Abu Ad-Dardā’ رضي الله عنه said, *“A person should be careful not to be cursed by the hearts of the believers without even realizing it.”* They asked him how. He said, *“When a servant commits hidden sins with Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى places that person’s hatred in the hearts of the believers, without him even being aware of that.”*

How does one stop committing hidden sins? You turn to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in Du‘ā. You ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to keep you away from those hidden sins, and to protect you from them. We often mention Du‘ā for various reasons, and as a

result, people start to overlook the importance of Du'ā and underestimate it. Never underestimate Du'ā! Be genuine and persistent in your Du'ā and ask Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to protect you from hidden sins, and والله, with sincere, truthful Du'ā, He will save you from it.

Don't spend time alone. They're called hidden sins because no one is around to see them, so don't be alone! That will be a means for you not to commit the sins. If you're married, be with your spouse. If you're not married, try to get married. I know many brothers and sisters who wanted to get married, and all the obstacles were there in front of them, there was no hope of them getting married. But they turned to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and asked Him to find a spouse for them, because they wanted to preserve themselves from Harām, and Allāh provided for them from ways they didn't even perceive. Be around people whose actions and presence remind you of the Ākhirah. Battling your desires and resisting the whispers of the Shaytān as it pertains to this topic is among Jihād An-Nafs, and Jihād An-Nafs not only involves resisting temptations, but it's cutting off avenues that lead to private sins. Among the means is what we just mentioned — having some good companions around you. Or for example, if it's your phone that's causing you to commit hidden sins, والله it's worth getting rid of it. I casually asked a young brother recently — I said, *"Why do you have an Apple iWatch and you already have an Apple iPhone? They pretty much do the same things and you have both of them with you."* A dear brother and a relative and a Dā'iyyah, may Allāh سبحانه وتعالى preserve him, gifted me an Apple Watch, and I rarely ever use it, because I don't have the need for it. I was impressed by this brother's answer. He mentioned that he needs his phone for important things, like communicating with his family and he needs it for work. But he said his phone was causing him to commit secret sins, hidden sins. He said it's the type of sins that many people normalize, like browsing social media, and browsing the internet, and seeing and hearing that which most people think is normal. He said, *"Now I wear the watch and I make sure to keep my iPhone in a different room in the house. The phone stays in one room, and I take my watch with me wherever I go. That allows me to text and call my family and my workplace while the phone is somewhere else. I'd be too lazy to get out of bed and walk to another room just to grab my phone to*

do something that's Harām.” And he said, “If I do walk to the other room and get my phone, by the time I get to my phone, the thoughts and whispers of the Shaytān would fade away.” Jihād of the Nafs means you have to do something to sever the means that are causing you to sin. Possessing the resources and means that continually lead one to sin, while at the same time asserting a desire to cease sinning, that's similar to a person surrounding himself with a large amount of flammable material next to a fire, then expressing concern about the potential of a major fire igniting. It's like someone who ties his hands and legs and dives into the water, saying he's going for a swim.

القاء في اليم مكتوفاً وقال له: إِيَّاكَ إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَبْتَلِ بِالماءِ

Ka'b Ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه was a famous Sahābi whose story was briefly mentioned in Sūrat At-Tawbah, and he himself mentioned the details of it in a Hadīth. He made a mistake رضي الله عنه, and because of it he was abandoned and shunned by the Messenger ﷺ and the Sahābah and even his wife. He made a mistake رضي الله عنه, but Īmān settled deep into his heart. In the midst of his struggle رضي الله عنه, he never lost Walā' and Barā'. He was walking in the market during the midst of his struggle and a Nabati hands him a letter from a king that hated the Messenger ﷺ. The king of Ghassan wanted to use that opportunity to get back at the Messenger ﷺ. In the letter, he said, *“It's been conveyed to us that your friend,”* meaning the Messenger ﷺ, *“is subjecting you to cruelty and he has abandoned you. You're welcome to come to us, and we'll hold you in high honor.”* What does Ka'b رضي الله عنه do? A man whose heart overflowed with love and Walā' to Allāh سبجانه وتعالى and to the Messenger ﷺ, a man who learned his Walā' and Barā' from the Messenger ﷺ. It's a lengthy, incredible story with numerous lessons. But our point right now is that he did not place the king's letter in his filing cabinet or under his mattress in case he wants to accept the offer in the future. He cut off and eliminated an avenue to a sin. He called that letter a calamity and he incinerated the letter, the means to sin or potential Kufr. He incinerated that in

the oven. Whatever is causing you to sin, part of the meaning of Jihād An-Nafs is to get rid of it and avoid it. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said,

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزِّنَىٰ

And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse.

Don't *go near* Zinā. He didn't say don't *commit* Zinā.

Pause a moment before considering the hidden sin, and remind yourself that you have the ability and resources to commit the sin. However, if you choose to abstain for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, recognize that this decision of turning away from the sin for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى while being able to commit it, that transforms that sin into a deed by the most generous Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. If we understand and truly believe that our body parts expose us and testify against us Yawm Al-Qiyāmah, we'll be mindful of our actions and we'll take precautions.

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

On the Day their tongues, their hands and their legs will testify against them of what they used to do.

We need to be extremely careful not to fall victim to this significant testimony that comes from within us and from our own limbs. We should strive with *all* our strength to ensure that our body parts testify in our favor, not *against* us. And this can only be achieved by being conscious of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and observing His commands in everything we do. To accomplish this, we must be cautious with all

our body parts, especially when we're alone. The eye that one sinned with will testify, just like in the verse that I mentioned and in several other verses.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Until, when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will testify against them of what they used to do.

The hearing testifies as well. And the Julūd in this verse, some of the Mufasssīrīn said it's the private parts. The private parts testify. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى said

الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

That Day, We will seal over their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify about what they used to earn.

The limbs articulate what the tongues conceal regarding one's actions. If someone was told, *"Your father or mother or community will know what you did in the secrecy of your room of Harām"*, that person will be in extreme distress. Imagine when it's the limbs exposing the secrets to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى.

And remember Allāh's blessings over you. You're blessed with a house, a shelter, a room, yet you use that to disobey Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in it. Food Allāh سبحانه وتعالى nourishes you with is strength that you commit hidden sins with. A phone that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى blessed you with is something you used to commit a sin with. The fingers, the eyes, the tongue that you're blessed with are used to commit a sin with. Take a moment to reflect before engaging in concealed sins, and remind yourself always of the consequences and adverse effects of hidden

sins. Ask yourself, is it really worth it? Is it worth it, regarding Allāh سبحانه وتعالى as the least significant of those who see you — fearing the door will open upon you and someone seeing you, but not fearing Allāh سبحانه وتعالى? It causes you to lose your worth in the eyes of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. It's a means for a bad ending in this Dunyā. Are you willing to risk all that? Ibn Rajab said, *"A person dies in a bad status, because of hidden, secret sins that people did not see."* We said in the past that bad endings and relapse in one's faith is usually not a change as many people see it. It's only the secret life or the secret, inner misguidance that has always been there that surfaced. In a Hadīth also, that's commonly mentioned on this topic in Sunan Ibn Mājah, it's mentioned that hidden sins turn deeds into scattered dust. It hardens the heart and darkens the face. It dries the eyes, you have eyes that don't tear at the remembrance of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى combined with a hard heart. Hidden sins strip one of sweetness in 'Ibādah and sweetness of Īmān. Hidden sins cause the loss of provision, the loss of Rizq, and then the lack of Barakah in Rizq that you have. It causes fear of people. It causes distress and depression. It disrupts your schedule and hinders your time management. It may cause Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to expose you. It destroys the heart and sickens it to the point that a person will not see the effect of the sin nor will he see the effect of a deed. It disturbs and destroys one's state of mind that he will not see truth from evil. It makes the hearts of the true believers hate you. When you leave hidden sins, you attain Taqwā, and when you attain Taqwā, you attain the benefits of Taqwā, and among them is

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

And whoever fears Allāh - He will make for him a way out.

He'll make a way out for you from every difficulty and provide for you from ways you never imagined.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا

And whoever fears Allāh - He will make for him of his matter ease.

He'll make things easier for you. And just like hidden good deeds can be used as a Wasīlah in Du'ā as we mentioned, refraining from committing hidden, secret sins for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى can also be used in the same manner. A poet summed it all up and he said

وإذا خلوت بريئة في ظلمة والنفس داعية إلى الطغيان

If you're in a darkness, alone with a sin, and you find your own Nafs inviting you to that smahrin,

فاستحي من نظر الإله وقل لها إن الذي خلق الظلام يراني

Then be ashamed of the Sight of Allāh, and tell your Nafs, "Indeed the one who created the darkness can see me."

وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم