
Purification of Nafs

Lesson 2

Insha-Allah, starting this week, we are beginning a new series of lessons on “Purification of Nafs”.

In the previous series on Human Nature, we learned, among other things, that giving into the temptations of nafs causes a person great many problems in his personal, family and social life. It also dulls his higher cognitive abilities and weakens his motivation.

Allah (swt), our Creator and our Guide, has taught us the ills of Nafs and commanded us to purify it.

In this series, therefore, we will focus on these ills of Nafs, their symptoms, etiology, and treatment.

Allah (ﷻ) says in the Holy Qur'an about this Tempting Nafs:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا هِ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

Truly he succeeds that purifies it, And he fails that corrupts it! (91:9-10)

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- The two basic component of Nafs, in Freudian terminology, are ID and EGOTISM.
 - In its primitive and baser state, Nafs functions very much like Freud's ID.
 - Operates on Pleasure Principle – Immediate Gratification, and Tension Reduction.
 - Consists of instincts and insatiable and ever growing wants and desires.
 - Does not grow from this state on its own unless disciplined and controlled.
 - Never loses its primitive nature even when disciplined, and may regress to it any time the controls are loosened.
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■ Egotism

- ❑ It is narcissistic and self-centered.
 - ❑ Expects to be served by all.
 - ❑ Likes total freedom.
 - ❑ Does not like responsibility
 - ❑ Imposes its will on the self and others
 - ❑ Does not tolerate opposition
 - ❑ Keeps fighting back and seldom gives up
 - ❑ Even when retreats, keeps looking for opportunities to strike back and gain control.
 - ❑ Not easy to reason with.
 - ❑ Must be controlled by force and strict discipline.
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- Lots of people regardless of their age, education, and beliefs remain stuck on this primitive mode of existence.
 - Many don't see anything wrong with this level of existence.
 - This often results in personality, character, emotional, and social-psychological disorders.
 - Often the person suffering from these disorders do not seek treatment because they don't believe there is anything wrong with them.
 - Besides, these disorders are often not treatable except by teaching the person to learn to discipline and control the Nafs.
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Insha-Allah, we will continue to explore how an undisciplined and uncontrolled nafs gives rise to different disorders.
