
Purification of Nafs

Lesson 3

In the last lesson, we looked at the nature, make-up and some of the characteristics of the Tempting Nafs.

In this lesson, Insha-Allah, we will begin to look at the various character disorders resulting from blindly obeying it and fulfilling all its demands.

It is important that you follow these lessons in proper order to maintain continuity and progressive understanding of the topic.

What happens to a child when his parents unconditionally fulfill all his whims and desires to keep him happy, and meet all his demands a.s.a.p. in order not to anger or displease him?

The child gets royally spoiled.

What happens to this child's character, behavior, emotions and social relations once he is so spoiled?

The very first thing that appears in this child's character is 'self-centeredness'. 'I', 'Me', 'Mine' and 'Myself' become the most important words in his vocabulary, his attitudes, his thought processes and his dealings with others.

This 'child' within a person is his Nafs. When a person blindly and unconditionally obeys this child within, and fulfills all its desires and wishes, his Nafs becomes spoiled, more and more demanding, and in control.

As a result, the person becomes self-centered – devoid of all human consideration for others around him.

“What is in it for me?”, becomes the primary criteria for everything he does and in all his dealings with others.

Look around you and notice how many people you see and meet who live such a self-centered life.

Look within you and take a note of your own life-style and values. Is the child within you, your Nafs, leading you by the nose in serving its will, wishes and desires?

Look at the younger generation. Are they generally living a life which is mainly self serving without a sense of responsibility and obligation towards others?

Are we all largely stuck with 'I', 'Me', 'My needs', 'My wants', 'My freedom', 'My pain' and 'My displeasures'?

Self-Centeredness is one of the early consequences of giving into the Tempting Nafs, which further leads to a number of character and personality disorders.

Insha-Allah, we will continue to explore the ills of the Tempting Nafs in the future lessons.

But, since the holy month of Ramadhan (the fasting month) is just around the corner, we will look at the benefits of fasting on disciplining the Nafs.
