

# MIFTAAH SEMINAR

## DISEASES AND CURES OF THE HEART



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### Tazkiya: Definition and Meaning

- **Literal Meaning:** Tazkiya means to cleanse and purify. It differs from other Arabic terms like *tantheef*, *tatheer*, and *tasfiya* that also mean purification.
  - Tazkiya derives from "Zuka," intense heat, akin to purifying precious metals by heating them to separate impurities.
  - Implication: Achieving Tazkiya requires stepping out of one's comfort zone, much like gold transforming from solid to liquid under heat.
- **Purpose:** Tazkiya involves changing human habits, thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, inclinations, and beliefs.
  - It is not meant to discourage but to prepare individuals for the effort needed for transformation.
  - Intention and effort are prerequisites for Tazkiya, as Allah assists those who strive sincerely.

### Outward vs. Inward Purification

- **Islamic System of Purification:**
  - Outward Purification (Tahara): Includes physical cleanliness of body, clothing, and place of prayer.
  - Inward Purification: Inner cleanliness, such as sincerity in intentions, is equally important.
  - Example: Outward Tahara cannot substitute for inner purity; e.g., praying with insincere intentions.

## The Objectives of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

### Three Key Duties:

- **Reciting Allah's Verses (يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ):**

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ

*“He is the One Who raised for the illiterate ‘people’ a messenger from among themselves—reciting to them His revelations” (Surah Al-Jumu’ah (62:2))*

- Focus on directing attention to Allah, discussing His oneness, attributes, and lessons from past peoples.

- **Purifying Them (وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ) *purifying them*):**

- Reforming beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors:

- **Beliefs:** Correcting misunderstandings about Allah.
- **Attitudes:** Transforming selfishness into generosity, arrogance into humility.
- **Behaviors:** Developing good character (*akhlaq*), a natural part of one’s being (*khuluq*).
- Emphasis on Iman and Akhlaq over worship during the early Makkan period.

- **Teaching the Book and Wisdom (وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ) *and teaching them the Book and wisdom*):**

- **Kitab:** The Quran.
- **Hikmah:** Wisdom, often interpreted as the Sunnah.

### Encouragement and Hope

- Allah’s encouragement: “Even though they were previously in clear misguidance (ضَلَّالٍ مُّبِينٍ).
- Message: If the Prophet ﷺ could guide those who were astray, change is possible for anyone with sincere intention and effort.

### Tazkia : A Lifelong Process

- **Introduction to Tazkia**

- Tazkia (purification) is a lifelong process that occurs in phases.

- It is not achieved in a day, week, month, or even a year.
- Every human being is responsible for purifying their own nafs (soul), a responsibility not limited to the Prophet Muhammad

ﷺ.

- **Understanding Nafs and Ruh**

- Nafs and Ruh Defined: In many contexts, nafs and ruh are interchangeable. They represent two aspects of our being:
  - **Physical Aspect:** The body.
  - **Spiritual Aspect:** The ruh (soul), the essence of life.
- **Life and Death:**
  - When the ruh is introduced into the body, it signifies life.
  - When the ruh is extracted, it signifies death.
- **Needs of the Ruh:**
  - Just as the body has needs fulfilled by earthly substances, the ruh has its own needs.
  - These needs are spiritual and cannot be nourished by worldly things as the ruh originates from the heavens.

- **The Origin of the Ruh**

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ

*"They ask you concerning the ruh." (Surah Al-Isra 17:85)*

- Response:

قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

*"Say: The ruh is of the command of my Lord, and you (mankind) have been given only a little knowledge."*

- Lessons:
  - The ruh is created directly by Allah's command.
  - As the ruh is not composed of earthly substances, its needs are fulfilled only through deeds and behaviors ordained by Allah.

- **Tendencies of the Nafs**

- **Dual Tendencies:**

- The nafs is inspired with both rebellion (fujur) and piety (taqwa).

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا

*"And by the soul and He Who proportioned it." (Surah Al-Shams 91:7-10)*

فَأَلَّهَمَّا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

*"And inspired it (with discernment of) its wickedness and its righteousness."*

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا

*"He has succeeded who purifies it."*

وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

*"And he has failed who instills it (with corruption)."*

- **Success in Tazkia:**

- Purification from rebellious tendencies and cultivation of piety.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى

*"He has succeeded who purifies himself." (Surah Al-Ala 87:14)*

- **The Importance of a Pure Heart**

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

*"The Day when neither wealth nor children will benefit, except for one who comes to Allah with a pure heart." Surah Ash-Shu'ara 26:88-89)*

- Tazkia is essential for presenting a pure heart to Allah on the Day of Judgment.

- **Challenges in Tazkia**

- **The Nafs:**

- Negative tendencies and habits.
- A mindset resistant to change leads to stagnation in behavior.

- **Shaytan:**

- Shaytan exploits weaknesses and encourages disobedience.
- Tactics:

- Preventing good deeds or causing procrastination.
- Compromising intentions or diminishing the quality of deeds.
- Encouraging major sins, or consistent minor sins.
- Distracting with permissible but purposeless acts.
- Manipulating perceptions, leading to arrogance (kibr).
- **Prophetic Teachings on Arrogance**
  - Hadith: "No one who has an atom's weight of arrogance in his heart will enter Paradise."
    - The Sahabah asked: "What if someone likes to wear nice clothes and shoes?"
      - The Prophet (peace be upon him) clarified: "Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance is rejecting the truth and looking down on people."
  - **Perception and Arrogance:**
    - Arrogance arises from condescending perceptions of others.
    - Even silent judgments can corrupt deeds and ruin spiritual progress.

### The Goal of Tazkia

- **Objective:** Tazkia (self-purification) is about dealing with the challenges posed by Shaytan and the tendencies of the nafs (self) through Allah's help, the guidance of the Qur'an, and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.
- **Encouragement:**
  - Even a small effort for Allah's sake leads to exponential blessings.
  - Allah rewards efforts immensely, as emphasized in the hadith: *"Whoever takes one step towards Allah, Allah moves closer by much more; and whoever walks towards Allah, Allah comes running towards them."*

- Allah's promise in the Qur'an:  
*"And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways."  
(Surah Al-Ankabut 29:69)*

## The Fruits of Good Deeds

- Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) said:

*"Good deeds bring light to the face, light to the heart, strength to the body, increase in provision, and love in people's hearts."*

- **Light on the Face (ضياء في الوجه)**
  - A person's face becomes illuminated with freshness and brightness due to their good deeds.
  - This light is independent of skin pigmentation and increases with the accumulation of good deeds.
- **Light in the Heart (نور في القلب)**
  - This is not metaphorical but a tangible reality.
  - **Concept:** A heart with light is like a room with light—it enables clarity and understanding.
    - Without light, even sharp eyesight is ineffective.
  - **Benefit:** The light of the heart helps distinguish right from wrong.
    - Qur'anic guidance: **"O you who have believed, fear Allah, and He will grant you a criterion (furqan)."** (Surah Al-Anfal 8:29)
- **Strength in the Body (قوة في البدن)**
  - Good deeds empower the body with physical and spiritual strength.
  - **Example:** Elderly individuals regularly attending the masjid for Fajr despite physical weakness show the strength derived from their iman and good deeds.
  - Historical Example: The Sahabah fought in battles despite hunger and physical hardship, sustained by their iman and

- righteous actions.
- **Increase in Provision (بساطة في الرزق)**
  - Good deeds open doors to sustenance, which can manifest as:
    - New income opportunities.
    - Increased contentment and sufficiency with existing provisions.
- **Love in People's Hearts (محبة في قلوب الخلق)**
  - Genuine love cannot be bought with wealth or achieved through popularity.
  - Qur'anic Promise: **"Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection."** (Surah Maryam 19:96)

### The Consequences of Misdeeds

Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) also mentioned:

*"Bad deeds bring darkness to the face, darkness in the heart, weakness in the body, decrease in provision, and hatred in people's hearts."*

#### 1. Darkness on the Face (سواد في الوجه)

- The removal of nur (light) due to sins results in an ominous darkness, independent of skin color.

#### 2. Darkness in the Heart (ظلمة في القلب)

- Misdeeds dim the light in the heart, creating spiritual blindness.

#### 3. Weakness in the Body (وهن في البدن)

- Physical strength diminishes as a consequence of sins.

#### 4. Decrease in Provision (نقص في الرزق)

- Opportunities for sustenance are lost due to sins.
- Hadith: "A person is deprived of provision because of a sin they commit."

#### 5. Hatred in People's Hearts (بغضة في قلوب الخلق)

- Unlike genuine love, people may dislike someone due to their misdeeds, despite their outward persona or efforts.

## Immediate Benefits of Tazkia

- Purifying the nafs benefits both **dunya (worldly life)** and **akhira (Hereafter)**.
- Righteous actions and a sincere effort to purify oneself yield immediate and tangible rewards in this world, including peace of mind, clarity, and increased barakah (blessings).

## The Heart and Its Streams

Imagine a pond, receiving water from four small streams. The streams fill the pond, and the quality of water in the pond is determined by the quality of water flowing through the streams. If one of these streams becomes contaminated, the entire pond is tainted. What was once a source of life and nourishment becomes a source of disease and harm.

Now, imagine that your heart is this pond. The four streams feeding into your heart are:

1. **The Gaze**
2. **The Ears**
3. **The Mind**
4. **The Tongue**

Each of these streams contributes to the condition of the heart. If the streams bring in good, pure water, the heart remains pure. If even one stream becomes polluted, it affects the heart negatively.

### 1. The Gaze

- What we see becomes imprinted on our hearts.
- If the gaze falls upon something morally good and correct, it leaves a positive imprint.
- Conversely, looking at something immoral or incorrect leaves a harmful imprint.

### 2. The Ears

- What we listen to has a direct effect on the heart.



- Listening to morally uplifting or correct things benefits the heart.
- On the other hand, listening to immoral or incorrect content leaves a negative mark on the heart.

### 3. The Mind

- Our thoughts and deliberations also impact the heart.
- The images and ideas we allow or force into our minds leave their marks on the heart.
- Thinking about morally good or beneficial things nourishes the heart, while dwelling on harmful or immoral ideas contaminates it.

### 4. The Tongue

- The tongue has a dual relationship with the heart:
  - **Messenger of the Heart:** The tongue conveys what is in the heart. As the poet says, "Conversations actually happen in the heart; the tongue is merely an interpreter."
  - **Influencer of the Heart:** The tongue also affects the heart. What we say shapes the condition of the heart.
- **Positive Speech:**
  - Speaking in ways that align with what pleases Allah purifies and enlivens the heart.
- **Negative Speech:**
  - Speaking in ways that displease Allah contaminates and toxifies the heart.

### Key Takeaway:

- The streams of the gaze, ears, mind, and tongue continuously flow into the heart, shaping its state. To maintain a pure and healthy heart, one must ensure that these streams carry goodness and avoid contamination. By guarding these inputs and ensuring they align with what pleases Allah, the heart can remain a source of life, guidance, and purity.

## The Sicknesses of the Tongue and Their Cures

The tongue, encompassing all forms of communication—spoken, written, typed, or messaged—holds immense potential for good and harm. Despite its small size, its crimes are monumental.

- Arabic proverb: “Its size is insignificant, but its crimes are enormous.”
- **Hadith:** “Whoever remains silent has succeeded.” (Man samata naja)

### Prophetic Guidance on the Tongue

1. **Abdullah ibn Sufyan (RA):** Asked the Prophet (ﷺ) what to be most cautious about. The Prophet (ﷺ) pointed to his tongue, emphasizing caution.
2. **‘Uqbah ibn ‘Amir (RA):** Asked about salvation (al-najā). The Prophet (ﷺ) said:
  - “Keep control over your tongue, stay in your home (avoid unnecessary outings), and weep over your sins.”
3. **Mu‘adh ibn Jabal (RA):** Asked if people would be held accountable for their words. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied:
  - “What else throws people nose-first into Jahannam except the harvests of their tongues?”
  - **Metaphor:** Words are like seeds. They yield either beneficial crops or harmful, poisonous ones.
4. **Anas ibn Malik (RA):** “A person’s faith will not be correct until their heart is correct, and their heart will not be correct until their tongue is correct.”

### Types of Speech (Imam Al-Ghazali)

- **Purely Harmful Speech**
  - Examples: Words of disbelief (kufr), shirk, lies, abuse.
  - Action: Avoid completely.

- **Speech with Harm and Benefit**
  - Example: Mentioning someone's good qualities but also backbiting about them.
  - Action: Avoid because harm outweighs benefit.
- **Speech Void of Harm or Benefit**
  - Examples: Idle chatter or unnecessary conversations.
  - Action: Abstain, as it adds no value to life in this world or the hereafter.
- **Purely Beneficial Speech**
  - Examples: Dhikr of Allah, discussing Allah's greatness, teaching or encouraging good.
  - Action: Strive to restrict speech to this category.

### The Dangers of Speech

Even beneficial speech can lead to harm if:

- **Intentions shift:** From sincerity to showing off (*riya'*).
- **Conversations divert:** From beneficial topics to backbiting or criticism.
- **Self-praise creeps in:** Boasting subtly under the guise of neutral conversation.
- **Shayṭān's influence:** Steers speech toward blameworthy elements.

### Major Sins of the Tongue

- **Backbiting (Gheebah)**
  - **Definition:** Mentioning something about a person they dislike, even if true.
    - Includes speech about their appearance, habits, possessions, family, religion, or worldly affairs.
    - Mimicking, facial expressions, or gestures mocking someone also count as backbiting.

*“And do not backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah...” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12):*

- **Hadith:** Listening to backbiting is participation in the act.
- **Cure:** Resolve to never let your tongue become a vehicle for conveying others' faults.
- **Slander (Buhtan)**
  - **Definition:** False accusations or lies about someone.
  - **Severity:** Worse than backbiting, as it combines lying and harming another's reputation.

• **Criticism and Mockery (Lamz)**  
*“Do not criticize each other openly or insult one another with nicknames.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:11):*

- **Action:** Avoid any form of ridicule, even if it could be said to someone's face.
- **Negative Assumptions (Su'u'l-Zann)**

*“Avoid much suspicion, for some suspicion is sinful.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12):*

- **Hadith:** “Avoid suspicion, for it is the most false of speech.”
- **Action:** Assume the good of others and refrain from judging intentions.
- **Spying and Monitoring (Tajassus)**  
*“And do not spy on one another.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12):*
  - **Explanation:** Avoid keeping tabs on others or looking for their faults.

## Practical Steps to Guard the Tongue

- **Be Mindful of Speech**
  - Before speaking, ask:
    - a. Is this beneficial for my dunya or akhirah?
    - b. Could this harm someone or lead to sin?

- **Maintain Silence**
  - **Hadith:** “Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let them speak good or remain silent.”
- **Engage in Beneficial Speech**
  - Dhikr of Allah, Quranic recitation, teaching good, encouraging righteous deeds.
- **Seek Forgiveness**
  - Regularly make istighfar and cry over past sins of the tongue.

