

Chapter 1: On Purification In General

As it has already been said, besides the outer appearance of the *Salat*, it has a reality, and apart from its exterior it has an interior. And as its outer form has its formal disciplines and conditions, its interior has its disciplines and conditions, too, which are to be observed by the *sālik*. Thus, purification has also its outer form and formal disciplines, the explanation of which is out of the scope of these pages.

The *faqīhs* (jurists) of the Ja'farī school (may Allah make high their words and raise their ranks) have explained them. As regards the inner disciplines and purifications, they shall be explained in general: It should be noted that the reality of the *Salat* is ascension to the Proximity, and reaching the Presence of Allah, the Almighty and Most High. Thus, to attain this great objective and ultimate goal, one should practice certain purifications, which are other than the outer purifications. The thorns of this road and the obstacles in the way of this ascension are such impurities that if the *sālik* were marked by one of them, he would be incapable of ascending to the peak and completing the ascension.

Such impurities are the hindrances in the way of the *Salat* and the plagues of Satan. But what is a help to the *sālik* in his journey and is a discipline of the Presence is the condition of this reality. The traveler to Allah has first to remove the obstacles and impurities so that he may be purified and attain purity which belongs to the world of light. Unless all the impurities, outer and inner, open and hidden, are purified, the *sālik* will have no chance of attending the Presence (of Allah).

Thus, the first kind of impurities is that of the outer instruments and powers of the soul which may be polluted with obstinacies and acts of disobedience to “the Benefactor” [*waliyy un-ni'am*] this is an apparent snare of *Iblīs*. As long as man is trapped in this snare, he is deprived of being in Allah's Presence and attaining His Proximity. No one may have the notion that without purifying the outside of his kingdom he can reach the state of the truth of humanity, or he can purify his inner heart, as this will be a Satanic vanity and of *Iblīs'* big tricks.

This is because the heart's impurity and darkness will be increased by disobediences, which mark the triumph [*ghalabah*] of nature over spirituality. Unless the *sālik* conquers the kingdom of the outside, he will remain deprived of inner conquests, which are the big objective, and no way will be opened for him

to happiness. Thus, one of the big obstacles of this *suḥūb* is the impurities of the acts of disobedience, which must be purged and purified with the water of sincere repentance.

It should also be noted that all the external and internal powers which Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed upon us from the invisible world are divine deposits free from all impurities and are purged and purified, and even illuminated with the light of the God-given disposition, and excluded from Satan's dark and impure influence.

Yet, since they have descended in the dark abode of the world of nature, and the influential hands of the devil of imagination and fancy have reached them, they have deviated from the original purity and primary disposition, and got polluted with diverse Satanic filths and impurities. So, if the *sḥūb* to Allah could, by adhering to the care of Allah's *Waḥy*, repel Satan's influence, purge the kingdom of the outside and return the divine trusts as they had been given to him with no treason, he would be forgiven and protected, and, as far as the outside is concerned, he need not worry, and then he would turn to the inside to purge it from the impurities of corrupt moralities.

This is the second kind of impurity, which is more corrupt and more difficult to cure, and thus, it is more important to the people of austerity, because as long as the inner moralities of the soul are corrupt and encircled by spiritual impurities, it will not deserve the state of holiness and “the private place of intimacy” [*khalwat-i uns*], as the origin of the corruption of the exterior kingdom of the soul is its corrupt morals and its vile habits.

And, unless the *sḥūb* changes his vile habits to good ones, he will not be safe from the evil acts. If he is successful in repentance (while still having vile habits), its stability which is a matter of grave importance cannot be achieved. So, the outer purification depends on the inner purification, besides the fact that the interior impurities cause deprivation of happiness, and originate the Hell of morals, which, as the people of knowledge say, is worse and more intense in burning than the Hell of deeds. This question has frequently been mentioned in the *Hadiths* of the infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a).

Therefore, it is a must for the *sḥūb* to Allah to carry out this purgation. After he has cleansed his soul of the corrupting impurities of the morals with the pure water of useful knowledge and lawful, good austerity, he will have to set upon purifying the heart, the capital which, if reformed, all kingdoms will be reformed, and if it is corrupt, all will be corrupt. The impurities of the world of the heart are the origin of all impurities, such as being attached to other than Allah, to oneself and to this world.

This is originated by the love of this world, which is at the head of all sins, and by self-love, which is the mother of all diseases. As long as the roots of this love are still deep in the heart of the *sḥūb*, he will see no marks of the love of Allah in it, and he will find no way to his destination and objective. So, as long as there are remnants of this love in the heart, his journey will not be to Allah, but to the self, to the world, and to Satan. So, being purged of the love of self and of the world is the first stage of purifying the journey to Allah in reality, because before this purgation the journey would not be to Allah, and it would be a sort of carelessness to refer to *sḥūb* and *suḥūb* in this instance.

After this stage there are other stages, after which there will appear a model of 'Attar's *Seven Cities of Love*, the reciter of which, as a *sālik*, could see himself at the bend of a lane, while we remain behind walls and thick veils, and think that those “cities” and “kings” are nothing but of the weavings of our presumption. I have nothing to do with Shaykh 'Attar or Maytham at-Tammār, but I do not deny the original (gnostic) stations, and I cordially love their owners, and, by this love, I hope to be relieved. You yourself be whom you may, and bind yourself to whom you like.

The pretender wanted to come to look at the Beloved [Friend], The hand of the invisible came and pushed off the stranger. 1

But I do not approve of disloyalty by brethren in faith and by spiritual friends to the gnostic friends, and I will not refrain from offering advice, which is the right of the believers to one another.

At the top of the spiritual impurities, which cannot be purged even with the seven seas, and which caused despair to the great prophets ('a), is the impurity of “the compound ignorance” [*jahl-i murakkab*], which is the origin of the incurable disease of denying the stations of the people of Allah and of knowledge, and is the source of doubting the people of the heart.

As long as man is polluted with such impurities, he will not take a step towards knowledge [*ma'rif*], or rather, this impurity so often extinguishes the inborn light [*nūr*] of disposition, which is the light [*chiragh*] for the road of guidance, and puts out the fire of love, which is the heavenly horse [*burq*] for ascending to high stations, causing man to eternally stick to the earth of nature.

Therefore, it is necessary for man, through thinking about the status of the prophets and the perfect holy men [*awliyā'*] ('a), and by contemplating their stations, to wash those impurities away from his heart, and not to be satisfied with the status he is in, because this satisfaction with the knowledge [*ma'rif*] one has, and remaining stagnant, are of the great tricks of *Iblīs* and the evil-commanding soul. We take refuge in Allah from them. Now, as this thesis is written according to the taste of the common people, I refrain from the three purifications of the holy men [*awliyā'*]. And praise be to Allah.

1. A poem by Hāfiz. In the printed copies it is stated: "...to come to the show place of the Secret."

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