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## Chapter 7: Some Cordial Disciplines For Removing Filth And Purifying Impurities

Be aware that removing the *hadath* (impurity), as already stated, is getting out of I-ness and selfishness and parting with carnality [*nafsiyyat*] or rather it is complete separation from the house of the soul, since, as long as there are remnants of a servant's self, he will be polluted with *al-hadath al-akbar* (the major impurity) and the worshipper and the worshipped in him are Satan and the soul. If the stages of the journey of the people of the Road and *sulṭk* were for getting ranks and ascension to high degrees, they would not be out of the intrusion of Satan and the soul, and the journey and *sulṭk* are justified [*mu'allal*].

Thus, the *sulṭk* is within the stages of the self, and the journey in the very inside of the house. Such a *sṭlik* is not a *sṭlik*, not a wayfarer, nor is he an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger, and he has not yet been purged from the major impurity, which is “the servant himself” [*'ayn-i 'abd*]. Should he become completely purified from this *hadath*, the worshipper and the worshipped would be the *Haqq* [Allah], and “I would be his ear (hearing) and his eye (seeing),”<sup>1</sup> which is the result of the proximity by the *nṭfilah* (supererogatory act of worship), would take place.

Therefore, as far as purification from the *hadath* is concerned, the *ghusl* of the whole body is necessary, because as long as “the very servant” [*'ayn-i 'abd*] is still there in a way, the *hadath* is not yet removed, as “under each hair there is a *janṭbah*.”<sup>2</sup>

So, purification from the *hadath* is purification from the *hudṭh* [novelty] and perishing in the sea of ancientness [*qidṭm*]. Its perfection is in getting out of the multiplicity of names, which is the interior of the 'tree'. By this getting out he will get out of Adam's infectious sin, which is the origin [*asl*] of the offspring.

So, the *hadath* is of the spiritual impurities, and its purification is of the inner invisible affairs and is a light. *Wudu'* is a limited light, while the *ghusl* is an absolute light. “Which *Wudu'* is purer than the *ghusl*?”<sup>3</sup>

But removing the external filth and impurities has no such position, because it is a superficial cleaning and an external purification. Its cordial discipline is that the wayfarer servant, who wants to be present in the Presence of Allah, is to know that with Satanic filth and impurity one cannot find his way there, and unless he comes out from the big moral dispraised acts, which are the source of the corruption of the human utopia, and the origin of the external and internal sins, he will have no way to the wanted goal.

Satan, who was in the neighborhood of the world of sanctity and was regarded of the cherubim, yet, at last, because of evil inclinations, he was dismissed from the position of the favorites, and was cursed by:

***“Then get out of it, for surely you are accursed.”*** (Ṣrah Ṣd 38:77 and Ṣrah al-Hijr 15:34).

So, we, the survivors of the caravan of the invisible world, the sinking ones in the deep pit of nature, and the returned to the lowest of the low, how can we, with our Satanic, evil inclinations, deserve being in the Presence of His Sanctity and in the neighborhood of the godly and the companions of the favorites?

Satan became self-conceited, recognized his being of fire, then said:

***“I am better than him...”***<sup>4</sup>

This self-admiration led to self-worship and arrogance, which drove him to despise and insult Adam (‘a), and said:

***“...and him you created of dust,”***

And made a false analogy. He did not see Adam's goodness or his perfect spirituality. He looked only at Adam's appearance, his being of clay and of dust, while of himself he looked at his being of fire, disregarding his polytheism of egoism and egotism. Self-love prevented him from discerning his shortcomings and hid his faults from his eyes. This selfishness and self-conceit led him to self-love, arrogance, ostentation, hypocrisy, obstinacy, and disobedience, driving him from the sacred ascension down to the desert of the abode of darkness of nature.

So, it is on the wayfarer to Allah, as he cleans himself from external filth, to purify himself from the origins of vileness and internal Satanic impurities, and thoroughly cleanse, with the divine water of mercy and lawful austerity, his utopia, his virtuous city, and purify his heart, the place of divine manifestation, and to take off the shoes of ambition and loving pomposity, so as to become worthy of entering the sacred valley of *ayman* and of being a place for the Lord's manifestation.

Unless he is cleaned from evil filths, purification from impurities [*ahḍth*] cannot take place, as purifying the exterior is a preliminary step to the purification of the interior. Unless a complete, mundane and visible *taqẉ* according to the instructions of the pure *shaṛ'ah* happens, no cordial *taqẉ* will take place; and unless the cordial *taqẉ* is brought about by the already named affairs, no real, secret and spiritual *taqẉ* can happen. All the stages of *taqẉ* are preliminaries to this stage, which is neglecting everything other than Allah.

As long as there are in the *sālik* remnants of selfishness, his heart will not discern Allah's manifestation. It is, however, possible that sometimes, owing to the precedence of (Allah's) mercy and the prevalence of the “near-to-Allah” [*yalīlillāh*] aspect, invisible help is extended to the *sālik* such that the remnants of his I-ness are burnt out by the Divine firebrand [*jadhwah*].

It is probable that in the way Allah manifested His glory to the mountain, crushing it to pieces and in the falling down of Moses senseless, there are references to what has been said; and there is a similar difference between the *sālik-i majdhūb* (the *sālik* attracted by Divine Grace), and the *majdhūb-i sālik* (the attracted one who is traveling to Allah). The people of truth understand from this an important point worthy of knowing, since knowing nothing about it would be the cause of many errors, goings astray and deviations from the right path. No one of those who are in quest of truth is to ignore it or be unaware of it.

It is this: The *sālik* who is in quest of truth must declare himself innocent from the extremities of some ignorant Sūfis and some negligent phenomenalists, so that it may become possible for him to travel to Allah. As a matter of fact, some sects of the first group believe that the external knowledge and act are formal, and stuffed moulds, intended for the ignorant and the common people, and that those who are the people of the secret, heart and truth, and are of good background, need not practice such acts, and that the external acts are required for the purpose of acquiring cordial truths and attaining the looked-for destination, and so, when the *sālik* reaches his destination, practicing those preliminaries will be departing, and engaging in the multiplicities will be a veil.

The second group, on the other hand, rose to face the first group and went to the other end of extremity by denying all the spiritual stages and divine secrets, and rejected all affairs, except the mere external appearance and the superficial form, alleging that everything else is nothing but imagination and fancy. These two groups are still in dispute and argument, each one accusing the other of being against the *sharā'ah*. In fact, both groups have somewhat exceeded the limits and they have gone to the extremes. In my *Sirr as-Salat* I have referred to this point, and I show, here, a moderate and middle way, which is the straight path.

It should be noted that the formal rituals and the external worships are not only for acquiring perfect spiritual characters and cordial truths, but that is actually one of their fruits. To the people of knowledge and of heart, all worships transfer the divine knowledge from the inside to the outside and from the secret to the public.

And as the blessing of mercy of the Beneficent [*ar-rahīm*], or rather of the Compassionate [*ar-rahīm*], covers all human cordial and formal growths [*nashā'at*] and each one of these stages has a share of the general divine blessings, each has to do a part of praising Allah, and thanking Him for the beneficent and merciful favors of His Absolute Necessary Being. As long as the soul has a share of the formal mundane growth [*nashā'at*] as well as of the visible life, the carpet of multiplicity will not be completely rolled away, and the shares of nature will not be done with.

As the traveler to Allah must not engage his heart with other than Allah, he is also not to make use of his bosom, imagination and nature in other than Allah's way, so that his *tawhīd* (monotheism) and glorification may become firm in all the growths [*nasha'at*]. And if the spiritual attraction has any result other than serving Allah and submission to Him, it will indicate that there are still some remnants of selfishness, and the *sālik's* journey is inside the house of the soul, and not to Allah.

The goal of the journey of the people of Allah is to color the nature and the kingdom of the body with Allah's color. There is a noble *hadīth* in which Allah, the Great and Almighty, says: "I am Allah! I am *ar-Rahmān* (the Beneficent)! I created *rahīm* (the womb, relationship) and derived its name from mine. So, whoever observed it (i.e., observed kinship relations), I would observe him, and whoever severed it, I would sever him."<sup>5</sup>

One of the interior concepts of this *hadīth* is, perhaps, this severing the nature, which is the mother of the spirits, off the original homeland, and observing (connecting) it is its austerity and returning it to its homeland of servitude. Abū 'Abdullāh (as-Sādiq) ('a) is quoted to have said: "I advise you to take care of your aunt, the date-palm, as it was created of Adam's clay."<sup>6</sup> This noble *hadīth* refers to that kinship relations mentioned before.

In short, taking out the kingdom of the exterior from the homeland of servitude, and leaving it to itself, is a deep ignorance of the stations of the people of knowledge, and is of the temptations of the accursed Satan who deviates each group from Allah, the Exalted, in a particular way. At the same time, denying the stations and blocking the way to knowledge, which is the delight of the eye of the holy men [*awliyā'*] ('a), and confining the divine laws to the exterior, which is the world's share.

The kingdom of the self and the animal state, and disregarding the inner secrets and disciplines of worship which result in purifying the inside, reforming the heart and developing the interior are utmost ignorance and negligence. Both of these two groups are far away from the way of happiness and the straight path of humanity, and both are cut off from the stations of the people of knowledge.

The one, who is aware of Allah and knows the stations, must observe all the inner and outer rights and help everyone who has a right to get it. He must purify himself of exaggeration, fault and going to the extremes, remove the filth of denying the outside of the *shar'ah*, which is, in fact, limitation, and remove the filth of denying the inside of the *shar'ah*, which is restriction, and both of which are of the temptations of Satan and his treacheries, so that the road of traveling to Allah and attaining the spiritual stations become easy for him.

Thus, one of the stages of removing filth is removing the filths of the false fancies, which prevent Allah's proximity, and the ascension of the believers. One of the concepts and positions of the universality of the ultimate prophethood, or rather, of the proofs of the finality of the prophethood, is that he (the Last Prophet) attained, in all the spiritual states to all their rights and shares as regards all the affairs of the *shar'ah*. As in the knowledge of the affairs of the Lordship, the Glorified, He is known in the highest

height and in the nearest nearness to the state of universality:

***“He is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden,”***<sup>7</sup>

***“Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth...,”***<sup>8</sup>

“If you are lowered down with a rope to the lowest of the earth, you will come down onto Allah,”<sup>9</sup> and

***“... Wherever you turn, there is Allah's Face...,”***<sup>10</sup>

Through which the knower of the divine knowledge, attracted by the divine attractions, feels invisible delight and divine ecstasy. Similarly the practical-cordial monotheism is permeated into the last stage of the horizon of the nature and the corporeal body, and no being is deprived of a share of knowing Allah.

In short, the people of Sufism unknowingly speak of ʿĪsāʿ (Jesus') wisdom, while the phenomenologists speak of the wisdom of Moses. The *Muhammadans*, however, are, by limitation, innocent of both of them. To expand on this brief is out of the question and does not suit these pages.

## Connection

Quoting Imam as-Sʿādiq (ʿa) it is narrated in *Misbāḥ ash-Sharʿiyyah*, thus: “The *mustarḥ* (washing closet or toilet where one relieves oneself) is called so because the people are relieved there from the weights of the filths, and they clear out there the dirt and impurities. The believer learns from this that the pure of the ephemeral things of this world (i.e., food) will finally have such an (impure) end. Then, he will be relieved by abandoning this world and turning away from it. He empties his soul and his heart from being engaged with it, and disdains collecting and possessing it, as he disdains the impurities, the feces and filth. He thinks, of himself, how he is honored in an instance and feels humiliated in another.

He then realizes that adhering to contentedness and *taqwā* gives him relief in both worlds, that comfort is in neglecting this world, in refraining from enjoying it and in removing the impurity of (wanting) the unlawful and the doubtful, and so, he closes the door of arrogance to himself after knowing it, runs away from sins, opens the door of modesty, remorse and shyness, strives to carry out His commands and to refrain from the forbidden, hoping for a good return and a delightful proximity. He imprisons himself in the prison of fear, patience and abstinence from (satisfying) the desires until he arrives, with Allah's custody, in the eternal abode, and tastes His pleasure, as this is what is reliable (counted), and everything else is nothing.”<sup>11</sup> This is the end of his noble speech.

In this noble speech there is a comprehensive order for the people of knowledge and *sulḥ*, and it is that a conscious person, on his journey to the Last Abode, must, in whatever state he may be, demand all the spiritual pleasures, and not neglect, in any condition, to remember his ultimate goal and return. That is why the wise men have said: “The Prophet serves the (divine) decree [*qad*] as the physician serves the body.”

As the great prophets and holy men [*awliyy*] ('a) have no care whatsoever except for Allah's decree [*qad*] and the “near-to-Allah” [*yalillih*] aspect, and the heavenly Kingdom [*malak*] of the divine decree governs their hearts, they believe that the management of all affairs is in the hands of Allah's angels, who are the divine soldiers, while the physical physician, being far from this stage and discarded from this valley, ascribes the running of the affairs of nature to the natural powers.

In brief, a *s*lik should, in all conditions, make use of all the aspects of his *su*l<sup>u</sup>k. So, as he sees that the trivial matters and the pleasures of the visible world are destined to annihilation and change, and realizes that their fate is corruption and vanishing, he will easily have his heart turn away from them and free his heart from thinking of them and being engaged with them, and he will be disgusted with them as he is with filths. The inside of the world of nature is filthy. Filth and dirt seen in a dream which is a door of revelation [*muk*shafah] are interpreted to mean worldly positions and wealth, and, according to the revelations [*muk*shafah] of 'Alī ('a), this world is but a carrion.<sup>12</sup>

So, as the believer empties himself from the loads and excretions of nature and relieves the natural town from their harm, he is also to relieve his heart from being attached to it (nature) and getting engaged with it. He is to remove from his heart the burden of loving the world and position, and empty the spiritual utopia and relieve it from those impurities. Let him think how being engaged in the world will, after few hours, humiliate the honorable soul and force it to undergo the worst and most disgraceful state.

Let him know that to busy the heart with the world, after a while, when the curtain of visibility is drawn up and the veil of nature is pushed aside, will humiliate man and bring him to the reckoning and punishment. He is to know that adherence to *taqw*' and contentment brings comfort in both worlds a comfort which is a result of neglecting the world, by slighting it and rejecting its pleasures and entertainments. Having purged himself of the formal filths, he is also to purify himself from the impurities of the *har*m (the unlawful) and the doubtful cases.

Having understood himself and recognized the humility of his need, he has to close to himself the door of arrogance and haughtiness, to run away from recalcitrance and sin, and to open to himself the door of modesty, remorse and shyness. He is to strive to obey Allah and refrain from disobedience, so as to return to Allah good and well, and to attain Allah's proximity with purity and serenity of the soul.

He is to imprison himself in the prison of fear and patience and curb his soul of its desires, so as to be saved from the prison of Allah's punishment, and to join Allah's custody in the eternal abode, and, thus, to taste Allah's contentment. This is the ultimate hope of the people of *su*l<sup>u</sup>k, and everything else is nought.

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1. Refer to footnote 21.

2. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 78, “Book of Purification,” sec. on “The Incumbency of the Ghusl of Janabah,” hadīth 23, p. 51.

3. Jāmi' Ahādīth ash-Shāh, “Book of Purification,” sec. on “The Ghusl and its Regulations,” ch. 12.

4. "I am better than him. You have created me of fire, and him You created of dust." (Sūrah Sūd 38:76).
5. Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 71, p. 95, quoted from Ma'ānī al-Akhhār, p. 302.
6. Ibid., vol. 66, p. 129, quoted from al-Mahāsīn, p. 528.
7. Sūrah al-Hadīd 57:3.
8. Sūrah an-Nūr 24:35.
9. 'Ilm al-Yaqīn, vol. 1, p. 54.
10. Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:115.
11. Misbāh ash-Sharāh, ch. 9, on "Privy".
12. Nahj al-Balāghah, edited by Fayd al-Islām, sermon 108: "They fell upon a carrion by eating of which they were exposed." Or as in sermon 151: "They are falling upon an easy carrion."

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