

'First and Foremost: Purify Yourself

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From the Desk of the Sultan, El Sheikh Syed Mubarik Ali Shah Gilani

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and Foremost: Purify Yourself'

The following are excerpts from
a Banaatun Noor International Reunion Closing Discourse on purification
of the heart, sent for the gathering by El Sheikh Syed Mubarik Ali Shah
Gilani Hashmi, Imam of the Muslims of the Americas.

Polytheism is
the worst sin, but even the lesser shirk should go. No Muslim will go to
a temple to worship idols. But yet, if we go to a doctor or if someone
takes medicine, you should not say that the medicine gave you relief.
You should say that Allah gave you healing through this medicine,
through this doctor. Shirk must be turned into complete tawwakal,
reliance upon Allah. Allah says in the Holy Quran: 'Whosoever relies on
Allah, Allah is sufficient for him!' 65:3 Your largest assets are your
supplications to Him.

The next evil is anger. The Arabic word for
anger is ghadab. You must not allow yourself to be carried away or over
powered by anger; under no circumstances. A man asked the Holy Last
Messenger, Muhammad (peace be upon him), for advice, the Holy Last
Messenger (peace be upon him), repeated thrice, 'Do not become angry
–Laa taghdab.' Once you become angry, Satan plays with you like a child
plays with a ball. You become Satan's instrument. Through you he hurls
abuses on people, attacks people, and you do not know what you are
doing. This is the biggest Satanic attack. Whenever you feel angry, sit
down if you are standing; if you are sitting, lie down and recite: Laa
hau la wa laa quwwata illa Billah. Drink water.

Next, from anger, is
jealousy. Do not feel jealous; although, it is a big struggle. You must
try your level best not to feel jealous of others. If your community has
decided to give a home and shelter to one sister who has been delayed
because of non availability of a husband and then she has been sent to
your home for your family to provide her a home and love, for the sake
of Allah, please accommodate her. Muslims and Muslimahs are sacred

people. Do not let jealousy come! A little bit will always remain, we don't deny it, but not to the extent that you always have a fire in your heart and you are always finding fault. Jealousy is a sin which burns one's worship and burns one's countenance. You can see jealousy in the faces of people who remain jealous. Turn the jealousy into friendliness; turn to the person with friendship and love. You can control the bad attribute of jealousy by turning it into love.

How do you control anger? You turn it into hilm, [the kind forbearance] which is the opposite of anger.

Do you know who you follow? The Holy Last Messenger (peace be upon him), whom Allah has set as an exemplary character for us to follow; in whom He put the highest degree of the noble conduct, or adaab. Adaab is like a perfume. If you have adaab your body will be full of perfume. This perfume will attract others to you, including the angels. "Baa Adaab Baa Maraad" — people who have adaab they always find their goal and those who do not have adaab will never find their goal.

So, anger you have to overcome and jealousy you must overcome. After jealousy is hatred, nefret. Nefertiti was the queen of one Pharaoh. She had a long neck, a very long nose, small eyes, and so much hate that hatred became known as nefret. Do not hate anyone because hatred will kill you. Anyone you feel hatred towards, show love, regard, and affection toward the person, instead.

The next evil is said to be the foundation of all the evils: the love of the world, hubb ad-dunya. If you love the world and hold worldly things dear then from this one attribute springs jealousy, hatred, miserliness, cowardliness, anger, frustration — all from the seed of hubb ad-dunya ingrained in your heart. Allah, the Most High, has not mentioned this world or worldly things save with contempt. What is life? It is only fun and play for a few days — living in this world for a few days — that is all. Its beauty and charms are like some dust that has settled on a rock and flowers have grown in that soil. When the wind comes, the soil and flowers are blown away. Do not fall victim to the charms of the world. Do not think of holding money or running after money, as this greed will destroy you.

If a person is a miser it is because he is greedy. Be

generous, not greedy. Our people open their doors for their guests and friends; serve them food and show generosity. It is said that bukhl or miserliness is a tree in Hellfire: its branches extend, grab the miser and bring him down into Jehannam. There are many non-Muslims who show generosity to all and help poor, destitute people –Allah may not throw them into Hellfire; this much we can assure you.

The next thing is too much talking –a disease call sulsalah– avoid this. Imam Ghazzali (r.a.) mentioned that a person who talks too much has nothing in his heart; it is empty.

Also, do not laugh too much. A person who laughs too much, his heart is dead.

These guidelines should affect your entire lifestyle, your way of living. As an example, Muslims love their children; we do not beat them or leave them in a corner crying and weeping. You mothers are a university and the hope of the future is that you raise good Muslims and Muslimahs. Love them [teach them adaab] and they will love you and be a support for you in your elder age. Thank Allah, as you are the only community in the Western world that retains your children and your children’s children with the same values of life.

The last, to remember always, is not to tell lies. The Holy Last Messenger (peace be upon him) said that a Muslim can be a miser but he cannot be kaazib, a liar, because lying is against haqq; it is against everything truth stands for. Therefore, save yourself.

For cleansing all these bad attributes you cannot be just barely offering Salaah. Besides the five times daily prayers, you must polish your heart with the commemoration of “Laa ilaaha il Allah;” talk less; sleep less; eat less, leaving your stomach slightly hungry; worship Allah, the Most High, more; and read more Holy Quran. Holy Quran must be read everyday: this is compulsory, an order that if not fulfilled, I will hold you responsible before Almighty Allah on the Day of Qiyamah.

First reform yourself. Then you can do anything else.

