

Introduction to the Purification of the Soul (part 2 of 2)

Description: Impediments to the purification of the soul.

By Imam Kamil Mufti (© 2016 IslamReligion.com)

Published on 07 Nov 2016 - Last modified on 01 Nov 2019

Category: Lessons > [Increasing faith](#) > [Self Purification](#)

Objectives

- Learning about two impediments to purifying the soul.
- Appreciate that sins, disbelief, and *shirk* are corruptors of the soul.
- Understand the role of materialism, Satan, and bad environment in corrupting the soul.

Arabic Terms

- *Shirk* - a word that implies ascribing partners to Allah, or ascribing divine attributes to other than Allah, or believing that the source of power, harm and blessings comes from another besides Allah.
- *Sunnah* - The word *Sunnah* has several meanings depending on the area of study however the meaning is generally accepted to be, whatever was reported that the Prophet said, did, or approved.
- *Kufr* - disbelief.

The most important impediments to purifying the soul are:

1. Desires
2. Doubts

Harmful desires confuse one's goals, leading a person to sin. Doubts, on the other hand, distort one's beliefs, making a person question what is true.



A person can be enslaved by his desires if it becomes the controlling factor in his life. Anything that reaches that level in one's life can take the role of a god or lord. Desires of the soul are of different kinds: power, authority, praise, wealth, sexual gratification, and others. Some are natural to every human being like the desire to have wealth and satisfy sexual pleasures. They must be restrained by the limits set by the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

“Have you seen him who takes his own lust (vain desires) as his god, and Allah knowing (him as such), left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. So who will guide him after Allah? Will you then not be reminded?” (Quran 45:23)

Doubts come due to lack of true knowledge. Ignorance leads people to do acts displeasing to Allah. Doubts make a person weak in conviction and confidence, hence the person cannot truly sacrifice for Allah's sake with the belief that His promises of success and pleasure are true.

Sins, Arrogance, Disbelief, and *Shirk*

Sins are of different types and degrees, but one thing for certain is that sins are harmful to the soul. The worst sins to avoid are the 'major' ones like murder, lying, stealing, backbiting, taking and giving bribes, cheating, disobeying parents, and fornication. 'Lesser' sins are also dangerous if they are repeated. Since sins are harmful to one's relationship with Allah, a believer must be always cautious of major and minor sins.

A person should dislike all acts Allah has forbidden no matter how strong the temptation of the soul.

Sins of the heart are some of the worst. Part of the reason is that they contribute to so many other acts of disobedience of Allah. Arrogance is one of the most important sins of the heart. The Messenger of Allah, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, “Whoever has a grain's weight of arrogance in his heart shall not enter Paradise.”[\[1\]](#)

Arrogance forms a barrier between a person and accepting the truth. For example, in some cases, a person will not accept the truth if it comes from people he does not like. Prophet Muhammad defined arrogance as “rejecting the truth and looking down on people.” (Muslim) Arrogance can be so strong that it prevents a person from embracing and implementing Islam in their life.

Disbelief (*kufr*) and *shirk* are the greatest sins any person can commit. They cannot be removed by prayers of another believer, good deeds, or hardships endured in life. At all costs, a person must avoid disbelief and *shirk*. In a *hadith qudsi*[\[2\]](#) the Prophet said, “O son of Adam, if you were to come to Me with sins that are close to filling the Earth and you would then meet Me without ascribing partners with Me, I would certainly (also) bring to you forgiveness close to filling it (the Earth).”[\[3\]](#)

Glitter of the World

The pleasure of this life can make a person forget about Allah and one's true purpose in life. Allah has reminded us, **“O you who believe, let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus, the loss is their own.”** (Quran 63:9)

Islam guides a person to the proper way of living and how to maintain a healthy balance between the actions of this world and the Hereafter. It also warns against making this world our ultimate goal.

Bad Companions and Environment

Your company will affect you even if it is for a short period. Whoever thinks their friends don't affect them is mistaken. Friends can make a person incline to sins, and being in constant company of sinful people will sooner or later tempt one to sin. In the modern age, the media has taken the role of companionship for many people. Like a bad friend, a person who cares about his soul must evaluate his relationship with the media.

Satan

Satan has an intense hatred borne out of envy and arrogance for all members of humanity. His goal is eternal damnation of mankind. Allah orders us, **“O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of Satan.”** (Quran 24:21) Satan uses many means to achieve his goals. He encourages people to go to extremes, gives them false hopes, and makes them procrastinate and be lazy. The greatest scheme of Satan is making evil look good. It is thereby that he was able to deceive the first human beings, the parents of mankind. Allah has informed us of their story to warn us of Satan's trick (see Quran 7:20-21). Satan plays the same trick on people today! Another way Satan leads people astray is making them believe that there are many paths that lead to God. People end up following their desire thinking they are following a 'path to God.' After the coming of Prophet Muhammad, there is only one path to God and it is the path shown by the Prophet himself. His path is wide and can accommodate all those who want to take it.

Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*

[2] A *hadith qudsi* is a *hadith* in which the Prophet directly narrates a saying from Allah, using the first person "I".

[3] *Tirmidhi*

The web address of this article:
<http://www.newmuslims.com/lessons/342>

Copyright © 2011-2012 [NewMuslims.com](http://www.NewMuslims.com). All rights reserved.

ajsultan