

The Pitfalls of Self Indulgence

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Thought-provoking speech of weekly
sunnah-inspiring ijtimia

(For Islamic Brothers)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
 أَمَّا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ط

The pitfalls of self-indulgence

وَعَلَى الْإِلَهِ وَأَصْحَابِكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللَّهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

وَعَلَى الْإِلَهِ وَأَصْحَابِكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ

نَوَيْتُ سُنَّتَ الْإِعْتِكَافِ

Translation: “I have made the intention of Sunnah *i'tikāf*.”

Dear Islamic brothers, whenever you enter a masjid, make the intention of *i'tikāf*, for you will continuously gain the reward of spiritual retreat as long as you stay in the masjid. Remember, inside a masjid, there is no permission from Islamic law to eat, drink, sleep, have suḥūr or ifṭār, and not even to drink Zamzam water or the water which has been blown upon after the recital of the Quran or litanies. However, if the intention of spiritual retreat is made, all these acts will become permissible. One should not make the intention of spiritual retreat only to eat, drink or sleep, but rather he should do it for pleasing Allah Almighty.

It is stated in *Fatāwā Shāmī*:

“If someone wants to eat, drink or sleep in a masjid, he should make the intention to observe spiritual retreat and engage in the remembrance of Allah for some time. Then, he may proceed as he wishes (i.e. now if he wants to eat, drink or sleep, he can do so).”

Excellence of sending *ṣalāt* upon the Prophet ﷺ

The final Prophet of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ صَلَاةً صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ عَشْرًا بِهَا مَلَكَ مُوَكَّلٌ بِهَا حَتَّى يُبَلِّغَنِيهَا

“Allah sends ten mercies upon whomever sends *ṣalāt* upon me once.
An appointed angel conveys said *ṣalāt* to me.”¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated: **أَفْضَلُ الْعَمَلِ النَّبِيَّةُ الصَّادِقَةُ**, “A truthful intention is the best action.”² O devotees of the Prophet! Make good intentions before every action, as this can be a means of entering Paradise. Before listening to the speech, make good intentions. For example:

- You will listen to the entire speech to gain the knowledge of Islam.
- You will sit in a respectful manner.
- You will refrain from acting lazy during the speech.
- You will listen to the speech to reform yourself.
- Whatever you hear and learn, you will try to convey it to others.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

¹ *Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*: 7,611

² *Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr*: 1,284

Can illness itself become a cure?

As quoted in the first volume of *‘Uyūn al-Ḥikāyāt*, a renowned shaykh in the Qādiriyyah Razawiyyah spiritual chain, Abū Qāsim Junayd Baghdādī

رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said:

There was once a night I was extremely restless. I busied myself with worshipping Allah, yet I was not destined to find peace in this at that time. As much as I tried to focus on my acts of worship with *khushū* and *khudū*, I could not do so.

I then began reciting the Quran. Yet again, I could not focus fully for some reason, and I was not destined to receive peace from it that time. I was extremely confused as to why I could not concentrate on my worship, and why my heart was not finding the serenity it normally does from these actions.

Before morning arrived, I wrapped my shawl around my shoulders and left my home. I walked a while and came across a man also wrapped in a shawl. As I approached him, he raised his head and asked, “Why are you so worried? Has the Day of Judgement begun?”

“Has its appointed time arrived?”, I responded.

“No”, the man explained, “I’m simply asking if you were worriedly searching for the peace your heart desires.”

I exclaimed, “Yes! I have left my home in search of peace for my heart, yet I also want to know the reason behind me feeling so restless tonight. But for now, tell me, is there anything you need?”

“Yes, there is, Abū Qāsim”, he said. “Please explain to me, is there any situation in which an illness itself becomes a cure?”

“Yes, there is one situation in which this happens”, I began to say. “Listen carefully. When you fight against the desires presented to you by your *nafs*, every disease of the heart will be taken away, and the very same illnesses that once plagued it will become a cure.”

The man heard this and let out a solemn sigh. “I have received this answer seven times tonight, but I wanted to hear this from you. By the grace of Allah, this wish was fulfilled, and I have now received from you an answer to my question.” After saying this, the man left, and I never saw him again.¹

Dear Islamic brothers! The renowned saint Junayd Baghdādī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ gave the man an excellent remedy for the inward, spiritual diseases of the heart. If you fight against your desires, this will dispel all these diseases, and they will become a cure for you instead.

We also learn how falling into self-indulgence, following one’s desires and fulfilling the wishes of the *nafs* are hugely damaging diseases. They lead to the heart becoming packed with the filth left behind after sin.

Now think, is this why good words have no effect on us? Is this why our hearts are not drawn to acts of worship? The incident we have just heard should teach us a profound lesson. Instead of ruining ourselves by chasing desire after desire, we should try our best to act upon the sunnah and lead righteous lives instead.

Obedience of Desires

Following one’s desires means to act out every wish of the *nafs*, without caring for what is allowed and what is not.² Categorically, there is

¹ ‘Uyūn al-Ḥikāyāt, p. 194

² Batini Bemarion ki Malumat

nothing but harm in chasing fleeting desires. The bad outcomes associated with this can be learnt through this hadith.

Three things that lead to ruin

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Three things will lead you to ruin: remaining lost in greed, fulfilling desires of the *nafs* and a person being prideful over himself.”¹

Dear Islamic brothers! ان شاء الله! If we are successful in overcoming our *nafs*-related desires, we will find ourselves cleansed from greed and able to abstain from many forms of sin. Our inward state will become pure. Ultimately, we will then be granted the huge bounty of having our acts of worship impact our hearts positively - ان شاء الله.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Dear Islamic brothers! A person’s desires never come to an end. Day by day, they increase in number. Nowadays people go to extreme lengths to fulfil them. Whether they must put themselves in debt or do something haram, they do not care for this at all. They just single-mindedly seek to fulfil desire after desire.

Let us now discuss select verses of the Quran, which condemn following one’s desires. Let’s also learn of the harms brought about by obeying the *nafs*. In Sūrah Maryam, Allah declares:

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهْوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيَاً ﴿٥٩﴾

Translation from Kanz al-Īmān: “So, after them in their place came those unworthy successors who missed salah and pursued their lusts;

¹ Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ: 5,754

so, they will therefore soon encounter the jungle of Ghayy in Hell (i.e. a dreadful valley in the Hellfire).”¹

Writing in commentary of this verse, Imam Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī al-Shāfi‘ī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ narrates the following incident, in which the Companion ‘Uqbah b. ‘Āmir رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

I heard Allah’s Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ say, “Soon, the People of the Book and the People of Laban from my *ummah* will be destroyed.”

I asked, “O Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, who are the People of the Book?”

He replied, “Those who learn the Book in order to argue and dispute with believers.”

“O Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, who are the People of Laban?”, I further asked, to which he explained, “Those who follow desires and waste salah.”²

Ibn Ash‘ath رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reports how Allah sent a revelation to Prophet Dāwūd عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, declaring, “The heart connected with worldly desires is indeed distant from Me.”³

Allah also states in the Quran:

¹ Al-Quran, 19:59

² Tafsīr Al-Durr al-Manthūr, vol. 5, p. 527; Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥayn

³ Tafsīr Al-Durr al-Manthūr, vol. 5, p. 526

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا مَيْلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٧﴾

Translation from Kanz al-Īmān: “And Allah wants to direct His Mercy towards you. And those who chase after their own pleasures; they desire that you be remotely separated from the straight path.”¹

Dear Islamic brothers! Look at how Allah condemned those who follow their desires, and how a valley of Hell called Ghayy awaits them. In the other verse we discussed, we see how Allah also condemned hypocrites and explained how they followed their desires until they fell into disgrace. The same hypocrites, out of hatred and stubbornness, wanted Muslims to fall into the same bad habits as them.

Regretfully, the state of Muslims today suggests that they have fallen prey to this hoax. They have fallen short in overcoming the hurdles set out by Satan and their *nafs*, transgressing boundaries in pursuit of fulfilling their desires. What has been the result of outside influence? Loss of Muslim identity, and a feeling of pride in following others. Dressing immodestly is but one example of this. And this has been normalized to the point that many do not even see this as being wrong.

When it comes to raising children, we see parents teaching them everything of this world but absolutely nothing of Islam. If a child is academically gifted, all focus then becomes set on turning them into a career professional. Teaching them Islamic knowledge is then something nobody pays attention to, and the child is brought up learning nothing but worldly things.

Dear Islamic brothers! To raise our children properly and have them working to better their Hereafter right from their childhood, affiliate yourselves with the Islamic environment of Dawat-e-Islami. اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ

¹ Al-Quran, 4:27

Through the blessings of this, a huge number of people have repented from their sins and adopted a life of piety.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Dear Islamic brothers! As we encourage one another to reject the desires of our *nafs* whilst seeking to please Allah by doing so, let us now mention some hadith discussing this topic. We hope that with the blessings of this, we can avoid the dangerous diseases of self-indulgence and chasing desires.

Heaven and Hell are close to you

As reported by the Companion ‘Abd Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, the final Prophet of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Paradise is closer to you than your laces are to your shoes. Hellfire is the same. Yes, Paradise is covered by difficulties, and Hellfire by desires and delights.”¹

Who is wise, and who is foolish?

In similar fashion, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained:

الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هُوَ هَاتِمٌ تَسْتَقِي عَلَى اللَّهِ

The wise is he who takes accountability of his *nafs* and works for the life that takes place after death. The helpless is he who follows his (carnal) desires, then thinks wishfully regarding Allah (as in, such a person still hopes Allah will grant them Paradise).²

Dear Islamic brothers! Paradise is a place brimful with bounties, luxuries and comfort, but reaching it is not easy. One **must** fully exert themselves

¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*: 6487

² *Sunan Ibn Mājah*: 4260

in worship, acts of piety and good deeds in order to reach it, even if these deeds may be difficult to do at the time.

At the same time, Hell is a place full of terror, pain and punishment, yet it is very easy to reach. This is because it's covered by desires of the *nafs*. There is great fear for anyone who lives their life fulfilling the impermissible desires of their *nafs*; they may ultimately be made to enter Hell in the end.

All of us want to enter Paradise and be saved from punishment in Hell. In order to achieve this, we should try our best to stand in opposition to our *nafs*. Not only should we work to avoid impermissible desires, but we should also keep control of our permissible ones. Not controlling one's permissible desires can lead to eventually becoming engrossed in them. Let us mention a beautiful hadith discussing this issue.

The Companion Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reports how the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

When Allah created Paradise and Hell, He sent Jibrīl to Paradise and ordered, "Look upon it and its bounties I have prepared for those who shall reside therein". Jibrīl then went, saw Paradise and the bounties Allah prepared for the people who will enter it, and then presented himself in the court of Allah. "O Lord!", he exclaimed, "By Your Might! Whoever hears of this Paradise will certainly strive to enter it." Then with Allah's command, Paradise was covered with hardships and difficulties, and He ordered Jibrīl, "Go, look at Paradise and its bounties again, which I have prepared for those who shall reside therein."

Jibrīl returned, and found Paradise was now covered with hardships and difficulties. He presented himself in the court of Allah and said, "By Your Might! I now fear nobody will be able to

enter it.” Allah then ordered, “Now go and look at Hell and the punishments I have prepared for those who shall reside therein.”

He then went and saw one part of Hell(fire) climbing onto the other. He presented himself in the court of Allah and said, “By Your Might! There is none who will hear of Hell and (want to) enter it.” Then with Allah’s command, Hell was covered with veils of desire and delight. “Go to see Hell once more”, He ordered.

Jibrīl went, then presented himself in the court of Allah and said, “By Your Might! I now fear nobody will be able to save themselves from this. In fact (after engrossing themselves in their desires), they shall fall into it.”¹

Commentary of the Hadith

Imam Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ comments on this hadith:

Desires refer to worldly matters from which delight is gained, irrespective of whether shari‘ah has prohibited them directly, or if doing them leads to divine commands categorically not being implemented. This also includes *mushtabah* (doubt-filled matters) and every other permissible action, which carry fear of leading to haram if carried out.²

As relayed by the Companion ‘Aṭīyyah bin Sa‘d رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained, “An individual cannot become pious until he leaves lawful actions in order to protect himself from the unlawful.”³

¹ *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhi*: 2569

² *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 11, p. 273

³ *Al-Mustadrak li al-Ḥākim* 7,969

Dear Islamic brothers! We now know that only after sailing across an ocean of hardships and difficulties can a person then enter Paradise. We also learn that only after abandoning *nafs*-related desires can one attain freedom from Hell.

When giving a sermon in Kufa, the fourth Caliph of Islam, Sayyiduna ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

O people! More than anything, I fear you shall succumb to misplaced hopes and fulfilling desires of the *nafs*. Misplaced and wishful hopes cause you to forget the Hereafter, whilst fulfilling the *nafs*' desires leads you away from the truth.

Be aware, for the world will soon turn its back, and the Hereafter will soon arrive. Each of these has its desirers. Become those who desire the Hereafter, and do not become those who desire the world. Act today, as this is not the time accountability shall occur. We will instead be held accountable tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement), when we will have no further opportunity for good deeds.¹

When the third Caliph of Islam, ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was asked why he would cry so much whenever he saw a grave, he answered, “I think about how alone I will be, as nobody will be with me in the grave.”

He continued further:

Whoever considers their world to be a prison, his grave will become Paradise. Whoever considers their world to be Paradise, his grave will become a prison. Death is a message of freedom for he who spent his life imprisoned. He who refrained from pursuing his desires in this world, will receive full reward in the Hereafter.

¹ *Al-Zuhd*, p. 58

The superior individual is he who rejects the world before it abandons him, and who pleases Allah before meeting Him. The condition of the grave will vary for everyone. If someone spent their life performing good deeds, they will find ease in their grave. If they died whilst sinning, there is nothing but ruin for them.¹

Dear Islamic brothers! Look how much the pious people of Allah contemplate over what will happen in the grave. They knew this world is temporary and abstained from obeying their *nafs*. These individuals knew that if they were to develop heartfelt attachment to the world and chase their desires, there would be great loss incurred in the Hereafter.

Then on the other hand, we have us. How many times have we visited the graveyard and even buried people with our own hands, yet we fail to learn a lesson from any of this. We don't realise that those who followed their desires and who worked to attain the luxuries of this world, are earning the fruit of their misplaced efforts as they now lay in their graves.

Remember! Although it may appear nothing is happening from the outside, the inward state of the grave is not the same for everyone. Some graves are blooming gardens with greenery and flowers. Others are full of crackling hot coals, or a pit full of scorpions and snakes. Think about this at the very least: if someone gives into their desires and goes on to miss just a single salah, tell a single lie, backbite once, look at something haram once, listen to music once, watch a film once, swear a single time or angrily tell someone off without reason **just once**, they can be punished for this in the grave.

If this happens, and a person is kept in a small, constricted, fearfully dark grave entirely by themselves, how will they even begin to cope? For those who fear Allah, simply thinking of this is enough to make them tremble. And even then, this is simply our worldly understanding of this

¹ *Mawāzih Hasanah*, pp. 61,62; *Nēiki Kī Dawat*, p. 56

issue. If a person dies and Allah is displeased with them, how will they possibly withstand the punishments of the grave?

It is reported in *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, “When someone enters the grave, the things he feared in the world instead of Allah will come to scare him.”¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic brothers! Well-being lies in not giving into the desires of one’s *nafs*, and in not chasing fleeting delights. Whoever stands in firm opposition to their *nafs* and does not give into its desires for the sake of Allah is granted the never-ending bounty of Paradise as a gift.

Allah declares in Sūrat Nāzi‘āt:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۗ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ۖ

Translation from *Kanz al-Īmān*: “And as for the one who feared standing in the Majestic Court of his Lord and restricted his soul from (illicit) desire. So indeed, only Paradise is (his) abode.”²

The great ascetic, Abū Sulaymān Dārānī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said: “Turning away from a desire posed by one’s *nafs*, is more beneficial to the heart than an entire year of fasting and standing in salah at night.”³

Dear Islamic brothers! Look how many benefits and excellences there are in staying away from *nafs*-related desires. Whoever closes the door of desires for themselves, Allah opens the door to Paradise for them. We should all try our best to attain this great gift and honour, and the way to do this is by turning away from the desires our *nafs* puts in front of us.

¹ *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, vol. 10, p. 12, raqm 1431

² *Al-Quran*, 79:40-41

³ *Qūt al-Qulūb*, vol. 2, p. 336; *Faizan-e-Sunnat*, p. 734

There are many things which cause a person to fall into self-indulgence and following their desires. Let's now mention five of these, and the ways we can go about saving ourselves from these destructive habits.

1. Rushing to get what you want

This refers to hearing good things about something, or seeing someone with that particular thing, and then desiring to have it yourself (like a new mobile, laptop, iPad, house, shop and so on). We begin wanting these things as soon as we see them, regardless of whether we need them or not. If what a person wants is difficult to get, he then begins paying no consideration to the boundaries of halal and haram. This ultimately leads to him ruining himself in pursuit of his desire.

Remedy

Such a person should make a habit of differentiating between his actual needs and impermissible desires. This can be achieved by discussing these matters with a pious and true friend, as well as from thinking about how following *nafs*-related desires is a condemned action, which leads to nothing but harm. He should also only go about attaining halal things in a completely halal manner.

2. Wasteful Spending

Wasteful spending is another bad habit, which leads to a person constantly chasing desire after desire. He who falls victim to this will purchase anything he likes, even if he has no need for it. Like so, he will continue to waste large sums of money, all for the attainment of his desires.

Remedy

The solution to this is for a person to keep their needs and priorities in mind whenever spending money, and to not spend on anything they

don't need. If possible, give money to charity instead of spending it on useless items.

Spending in places which sharī'ah, societal norms or moral standards prohibit, is known as *isrāf*. Examples of this include spending where sin openly occurs or spending on strangers to the extent a person's own family is left without any financial support. If this *isrāf* and wasteful spending is against sharī'ah, it is considered haram. If this is against common practice or moral standards instead, it is minorly disliked.¹

The renowned spiritual guide and Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah, Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ narrates in his famous book, *Blessings of Sunnah*:

Muftī Ahmad Yār Khan Naʿīmī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ writes in *Tafsīr Naʿīmī*:

Isrāf has many layers of detail when it comes to explaining it, and it can refer to:

1. Considering halal things to be haram.
2. Using haram things.
3. Eating, drinking or wearing more than one needs.
4. Eating, drinking or wearing whatever one's heart desires.
5. Eating continuously throughout the day and night, causing illness and damaging the stomach.
6. Eating and drinking harmful things.
7. Always thinking about what to eat, drink or wear next.²
8. Eating for the sake of it.

¹ *Al-Ḥadīqat al-Nadiyyah*, vol. 2, p.28; *Batini Bemarion kī Malūmat*, p. 307

² *Rūḥ al-Bayān*, vol. 3, p. 154

9. Eating with the intention of performing sin.
10. Becoming so used to luxurious food and clothing to the extent a person cannot make use of normal things anymore.
11. To assume that one has attained high quality food by his personal accomplishments only.¹

3. Needlessly thinking about others

Another way a person can end up chasing their desires, is by needlessly thinking about others. Looking at other's expensive clothes, grand houses and lavish lifestyles, can lead to the destructive spiritual disease of jealousy. A person becomes blinded by his desires thereafter and goes about doing anything and everything to gain more money.

Remedy

In order to avoid this, a person needs to stop thinking about what others have. Be patient, content and thankful for what Allah has given. Read the biographies of our pious elders رَحِمَهُمُ اللهُ الْبَرِيَّينَ, and contemplate over how they lived their lives. This will encourage you to perform good deeds.

4. Being negligent in regard to rectifying yourself

Not focusing on rectifying yourself can also lead to a person falling prey to the tricks of Satan and the *nafs*. Someone who does not take account of their actions, will never come to realise their shortcomings. Instead, he will inadvertently listen to Satan and commit sin after sin.

Remedy

To avoid this, we must take account of our deeds daily. In the Islamic environment of Dawat-e-Islami, this is known as self-accountability.

¹ *Tafsīr Naʿīmī*, vol. 8, p. 390

Before going to sleep, think about the good and bad deeds you performed that day. Question your *nafs* over any sins it caused you to do and make firm intention to never do them again.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ The Pious Deeds booklet gifted to us by the Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah helps hugely when it comes to this self-accountability. Also, taking daily account and submitting this booklet monthly is one of Dawat-e-Islami's 12 Islamic activities.

Filling in the Pious Deeds booklet is a truly effective way of taking account of your deeds and preparing for the Hereafter. Try your best to get hold of and act upon this booklet, and submit it to the relevant Islamic brother within the first ten days of every month. اِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ By the blessings of this, you can avoid Satan's evil plans and stay away from other sins.

5. Eating to a full stomach

Another way many of us fall victim to our desires, is by eating to a full stomach. Satan easily overpowers someone who has a stomach full of food, which causes their heart to turn away from goodness. Self-indulgence then awakens within them, and they end up chasing desires of the *nafs* and even find comfort in sinning.

Subject to calamity

The Sufi, Yaḥyā Mu'ādh Rāzī رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ explains:

Whoever eats to a full stomach has his body increase in size. Whoever's body increases in size; such a person eventually submits to his desires. Whoever submits to his desires increases in sinful deeds. Whoever increases in sinful deeds has his heart become hard. Whoever's heart becomes hard; such an individual

is drowned in the calamities and fleeting attractions of this world.¹

Sins attack the excessive eaters

Dear Islamic brothers! This is a matter of great concern. Whoever eats to a full stomach goes on to drown in sin. Imam Muhammad Ghazālī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ once asserted:

Eating excessively leads to body parts becoming corrupted, which then takes one towards mischief and immoral actions. When one eats to his fill, desire to look at forbidden things grows stronger, and the ears yearn to hear evil. The tongue becomes ready to indulge in inappropriate speech, lust increases, and the feet avidly await opportunities to walk towards impermissible locations. Contrary to this, if someone remains hungry, his limbs are at ease. He has no intention of performing evil and feels no joy when seeing it.

Ustādh Abū Ja‘far رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ said, “If the stomach remains empty, the limbs will be at ease, and they will desire nothing. If the stomach is filled, the limbs become hungry and resort to a multitude of evils.”²

Remedy

Dear Islamic brothers! The way to avoid falling into sins due to a full stomach, is to eat less than your fill. Try to eat to the extent you still remain hungry afterwards. اَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ The Islamic environment of Dawat-e-Islami encourages us to completely avoid eating haram at any cost. It also encourages us to eat less, but with the intention of gaining strength to worship. This will lead to someone finding untold delight in their

¹ *Al-Munabbihāt al-‘Asqalānī*, p. 59

² *Minhāj al-‘Ābidīn*, p. 82; *Faizān-i-Sunnat*, p. 709

worship of Allah, and thus save them from sinning, or even inclining towards it in the first place.

In order to have as many people as possible act upon this, the Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah, Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri **دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةِ** has written a book called *The Excellence of Hunger*. By the blessings of reading this book, you will learn the etiquettes of eating, the benefits of eating less, tips on how to be healthy and much more. This can be purchased from any branch of Maktabat al-Madinah. It can also be read, downloaded or printed from www.dawateislami.net.

Maktabat al-Madinah

Maktabat al-Madinah is a department of Dawat-e-Islami. Nowadays, many methods are used to deliver messages and publish books, with more of them being introduced almost daily. These methods should have been used to spread goodness or for other permissible goals. Unfortunately, many groups have used them as weapons to spread their own ideologies. Day and night, they work to spread misguided beliefs and publish literature endorsing it. They are constantly trying to pull Muslims away from the path of truth.

Seeing this bleak situation, the Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah, Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri **دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةِ** stepped forward. After his tireless and sincere efforts, Maktabat al-Madinah was established in grand fashion in 1986. It serves as Dawat-e-Islami's publishing house.

Initially, this department only sold audio cassettes of speeches. Through the grace of Allah and His Messenger **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ**, Maktabat al-Madinah took huge strides forward. As of now, it has its own printing press in Karachi (Pakistan), which has all forms of the most modern tools available for use. In no time, Maktabat al-Madinah has spread thousands of cassettes and VCDs across the world, some of audio speeches, and others of Madani Muzakaras. The books of Imām Aḥmad

Razā Khān رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, Mawlana Ilyas Attar al-Qadiri دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةَ and other Sunni scholars have also been published through this department. Thousands upon thousands of people have benefitted from this, and Maktabat al-Madinah is becoming a means by which the sunnah is being revived worldwide.

Pious Deed 29

Dear Islamic brothers! In order to avoid the desires of your *nafs* and become punctual in acting upon the sunnah, affiliate yourself with Dawat-e-Islami's Islamic environment and take part in its 12 Islamic activities.

Kindly act upon the Pious Deeds booklet, gifted to us by the Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةَ. From amongst the 72 pious deeds listed in this booklet, number 29 is: "Today, have you eaten according to the sunnah and recited the supplication to be mentioned before and after eating?" By acting upon this pious deed, not only will you eat according to the sunnah, but you will also eat less and therefore be more successful in avoiding the desires of your *nafs*.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Sunnah and etiquettes regarding intentions

Dear Islamic brothers! Let's now discuss the sunnah and certain etiquettes regarding intentions. First, let us have the honour of mentioning two hadith of the final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

1. إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ – "The reward of actions are based on intentions."¹

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: 1

2. **يَبِيَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ** - “The intention of a believer is better than his action.”¹
- More than one good intention can be made for a permissible action.²
 - Performing a good deed without good intention will not earn you reward.³
 - Performing a good action with good intention means one’s heart is focused on carrying out the action in order to please Allah.⁴
 - An intention is the resolve of the heart. Saying your intention aloud whilst it is present in your heart is better.⁵

Announcement

The remaining sunnahs and etiquettes of making intentions will be mentioned in study circles. Please do participate in them to find out more.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr: 5,942*

² *Bahār-i-Niyyat, p. 10*

³ *Sawāb Barhāne ke Nuskhe, p. 3*

⁴ *Bahar-e-Niyyat, p. 10*

⁵ *Bahar-e-Niyyat, p. 10*