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# ETHICS OF ISLAM

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# ETHICS OF ISLAM

## PREFACE

***Let's start the book with the name of Allah!  
Name of Allah is the best refuge,  
His blessings can never be measured nor calculated,  
He is the Lord most compassionate and forgiving***

Allâhu ta'âlâ pities all human beings in the world. He creates and sends everyone the blessings they need. He also teaches them how to use these blessings to attain happiness of this world and the next. Imâm ar-Rabbânî 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ, in his 259th letter informs us that those disbelievers who never heard of Islam will not be punished in Hell. They will be annihilated along with the animals after their Judgement. People who hear about Islam and ponder about it, and then accept it will be blessed with Paradise. He gave a lifelong time-span for pondering. He forgives those who become believers after lapsing into disbelief and deviation, which are mostly consequent upon self-deceit, which in turn is exacerbated by evil company, seditious books and subversive radio (and television) broadcasts. He saves them from eternal disasters. He does not show the path of salvation to tyrants, wicked and depraved people. He lets them stay in the pit of denial that they have fallen into and which they like and desire. In the next world, He will forgive whom He wishes among the Believers who deserve to go to Hell, and will send them to Paradise after they are punished in Hell for their sins. He is the only One who creates all living beings, keeps them in existence every moment, and protects them against fear and horror.

If anyone thanks and praises anyone else at any time and at any place for any reason, these thanks and praise thus paid belong to Allâhu ta'âlâ by rights, for He is the only One who creates and sends all kinds of blessings and goodness. If He would not remind, create, and give strength, no one could ever do any goodness or harm to anyone else. Only what He wills, comes into existence. No one can do anything against His Will.

May our prayers for and greetings be to His beloved Prophet Muhammad ‘sall-Allâhu alaihi wa sallam,’ who is the most beautiful and highest of all human beings in all respects, be also upon all of his progeny, relatives, and companions ‘ridwânullâhi ta’âlâ ’alaihim ajma’în,’ who radiate good morals and knowledge.

Muslims are required to learn “Islamic Knowledge.” It is divided into two branches, “Religious knowledge” and “Scientific knowledge.” The scientific knowledge is called “Wisdom” (**Hikmat**). Our Prophet ‘sall-Allâhu alaihi wa sallam’ said, **“Wisdom is the lost property of a Muslim. He should pick it up wherever he may find it.”** This hadîth commands us to learn scientific knowledge. “Religious knowledge” is made up of twenty sub-branches, eight of which contain teachings of a higher level and the remaining twelve consist of teachings of a subsidiary nature. One of the teachings of a higher level deals with ethics.

[A Muslim who has good morals and is advanced in the scientific knowledge of his time is called a civil or a progressive Muslim. Alternately, a person who is advanced in scientific knowledge and has established basic industries, and yet who has poor morals is called a tyrant, a regressive person, a bandit, or a dictator. Those who are lagging behind in the scientific knowledge and arts and have poor morals are called savages or vulgar people. Civilization means building cities and serving human beings. This can be accomplished through scientific knowledge, arts, and beautiful morals. In short, when the scientific knowledge and arts are accompanied with beautiful morals, it is called civilization. A civilized person uses scientific knowledge and arts for serving humanity. Alternately, tyrants use them for torturing. We can see that a true Muslim is a progressive person. Unbelievers are retrogressive, and miserable people. It is apparent that civilization means constructing buildings and developing cities. This is only possible through science and technology. Advancement in technology is due to addition of new ideas to the ideas of the previous generations. People’s living in peace and comfort is only possible through ethics of Islam.]

Learning Islamic knowledge as much as necessary is an obligatory duty (**fard**) for every Muslim. Islamic scholars have written numerous books on this subject. The following books on the subject of ethics are well known: **Akhlâq-i-Nâsirî** by Nasîruddîn-i Muhammad Tûsî, **Akhlâq-i-Jalâlî** by Jalâladdîn-i Muhammad Dawânî, and **Akhlâq-i-Muhsînî** by Husayn Wâiz-i

Kâshifî of Hirat. We translated the first chapter of this (last) book from the book **Berîka** written by Abû Sa'îd Muhammad Hâdimî 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ'. In the first chapter of this book we will deal with unacceptable poor morals rejected by Islam and their prescribed cures. Poor morals are due to maladies of the spiritual heart. They cause infinite death and destruction of the heart (**qalb**) and the soul (**rûh**). In the second chapter of this book, we will describe the meaning of ethics (**akhlâq**) and its varieties, borrowing from the beginning chapters of the book **Akhlâq-i-Alâî** written in Turkish by Alî bin Amrullah 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ,' who passed away in 979 Hijrî, 1572 A.D. in Edirne / Turkey.

The uncorrupt youngsters who read this book will understand and realize that their ancestors were healthy people with good morals. They were also industrious, civilized, and progressive people. By learning the truth about their ancestors they will not be misguided by the lies and slanders of their enemies.

The name of the author of the book Akhlâq an-Nâsirî was Nasîruddîn-i Muhammad Tûsî. He was born in Hijrî 597 in the city of Tus (Mashhad) and passed away in Hijrî 672 [1273 A.D.] in Baghdad. He belonged to the Shi'ite sect of Muslims. He was one of the people who were instrumental in Hulagu's destruction of Baghdad and carnage of hundreds of thousands of Muslims. He became the prime minister of Hulagu. He founded a new library with the capacity of 400,000 books and a planetarium and an Academy. He wrote many books.

Jalâladdîn-i Muhammad Dawânî 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ,' was born in 829 Hijrî and passed away 908 Hijrî [1503 A.D.] in Shiraz. He is one of the most profound among the Islamic scholars. He wrote many books. His book **Akhlâq-i-Jalâlî** is in Persian. Its eighth printing was accomplished in 1304 Hijrî, 1882 A.D. in India. It has been translated into English.

Husayn Wâiz-i Kâshifî 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ,' was a preacher in the city of Hirat. He passed away in Hijrî 910, 1505 A.D. in Hirat.

O you, virtuous youngsters! O you, noble and dear children of those martyrs who spent their lives for learning and spreading beautiful moral teachings of Islam and also sacrificed their lives for spreading the religion of Allah to all human beings! Do learn

the Islamic religion and its beautiful ethics, which our honourable ancestors brought and entrusted in its pristine completeness and correctness to your protection. Protect this holy object of care (**amânat**) with all your might and power against the attacks of our enemies, that is, those who attack our lives, properties, religion, and ethics, and who are eyeing our beautiful country with rapacity! Strive hard to spread this correct religion everywhere and thereby to save all human beings from infinite disasters. Let it be known that our religion orders us to have beautiful morals, mutual love for each other, respect for the elders and compassion for younger people, and to be kind to everyone irrespective of their religious opinions. Pay everyone's due rights and wages! Do not violate laws of the land and do not oppose orders of the government! Pay your taxes on their due times! Never forget that Allâhu ta'âlâ is the helper of the righteous people! Let us love and help each other so that Allâhu ta'âlâ in turn will help us.

Islamic scholars say: "Allâhu ta'âlâ created three things in humans: wisdom (**'aql**), spiritual heart (**qalb**), and nafs.<sup>[1]</sup> We can see none of them. We can understand their existence by observing their effects or the things they do, or we know them because our religion teaches them to us. Wisdom and nafs are located in our brain and the spiritual heart is found over the biological heart, which is in the left side of our chest. They are not made of matter and do not occupy space. Their existence in these places is similar to the existence of electricity in a light bulb or that of the magnetic power in an induction bobbin. Wisdom tries to understand Islamic knowledge. It understands Islamic knowledge and its good and useful as well as evil and harmful variations or portions. The good and evil are discriminated in accordance with the divine law. Wisdom, which recognizes the divine law (**Sharî'at**) and wants to obey it, is called "correctly thinking wisdom," (**'aql-i-salîm**). People who have little wisdom and always make mistakes are called idiots or fools. People who have no wisdom are called crazy. Correctly thinking wisdom conveys good things taught by the divine law to the spiritual heart. The spiritual heart decides to do these good things. It uses the action nerves, which come out of the brain and go to the

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[1] A malignant being created in the human nature. All its desires run counter to Allâhu ta'âlâ's commandments. Its the only property whose desires and activities are harmful to itself and to its owner.

organs, to give orders to the organs so that they carry out these good things. Assimilation of the desire of doing good or evil things into the spiritual heart is called ethics or morals (**akhlâq**). The nafs is excessively fond of worldly pleasures. It does not think whether these are good or evil, useful or harmful. Its desires are not compatible with the divine law. Doing things that are forbidden by the divine law strengthens the nafs. It tries to convince the spiritual heart to commit the worst things. It deceives the spiritual heart by showing the evil and harmful things as good things. It strives to attain its pleasures by convincing the spiritual heart to satisfy its desires. It is necessary to strengthen the spiritual heart and to weaken the nafs so that the nafs will not be able to deceive the spiritual heart and that the spiritual heart will not develop an evil nature. As wisdom is strengthened by reading and learning Islamic knowledge, likewise the heart is strengthened, or purified, by obeying the Sharî'at. Formation of ikhlâs in the heart can only be accomplished by the spiritual heart's mentioning the name of Allâhu ta'âlâ often (making Dhikr of Allah through the qalb). Accomplishing "Dhikr of qalb" is possible only by learning it from a perfect Sufi master (Murshîd al-Kâmil-the Perfect Guide). It is also necessary to empty the spiritual heart from all worldly thoughts formed in the brain due to the sensory information coming via the organs. Once the heart is free from all sorts of worldly thoughts, it starts to do "Dhikr of Allah" automatically. It is similar to emptying the water from a bottle. When you pour the water out, the air automatically enters the bottle. Protecting the spiritual heart from worldly thoughts can be accomplished by the spiritual heart's benefiting (receiving "Fayd" (Nur [light]) from the spiritual heart of the perfect Sufi master. The spiritual luminance (**Fayd**) flows from one spiritual heart to another by way of love. Death of the perfect spiritual guide or his being in a distant country does not stop the flow of spiritual luminance (Fayd). The perfect spiritual guide (Murshîd al-kâmil) is an "Ahl as-sunnat" scholar (**'âlim**) who knows Islamic knowledge in depth and does all of his actions sincerely (with ikhlâs) in accordance with this knowledge. Obeying the Sharî'at and receiving spiritual luminance (Fayd) from the perfect guide (Murshîd al-kâmil) strengthens the spiritual heart and conversely weakens the nafs. It is for this reason that the nafs does not want the spiritual heart's obeying the divine law (Sharî'at) or communing (**Sohbat**) with the perfect spiritual

guide (Murshîd al-kâmîl) or reading the books written by the perfect spiritual guide. It wants spiritual heart to be irreligious and beliefless. Therefore, those who do not follow their wisdom and instead follow their beliefless nafs, become irreligious. The nafs does not die but when it is weakened, it cannot deceive the spiritual heart any longer.

Mîlâdî  
2001

Hijrî Shamsî  
1380

Hijrî Qamarî  
1422

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***Make thy heart a Garden of Paradise with the fountain of tawhîd<sup>[1]</sup>,  
And thy soul's garden, render a rosary with the bud of tawhîd!  
Both without place and without time will experts of heart,  
Traverse endless distances with the power of tawhîd.  
Shameful as thou mayest feel on account of thy wrongdoings,  
The end will certainly be good with the rapture of tawhîd.  
O you, supplicant! The 'Arif-i-billâh<sup>[2]</sup> will free the heart from  
Seventy thousand curtains with one flash of tawhîd.***

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HÜSEYN HİLMİ İŞİK,  
'Rahmat-Allahi 'alaih'

Hüseyn Hilmi İşık, 'Rahmat-Allahi 'alaih', publisher of the Hakikat Kitabevi Publications, was born in Eyyub Sultan, Istanbul in 1329 (A.D. 1911).

Of the one hundred and forty-four books he published, sixty are Arabic, twenty-five Persian, fourteen Turkish, and the remaining are books in French, German, English, Russian, and other languages.

Hüseyn Hilmi İşık, 'Rahmat-Allahi 'alaih' (guided by Sayyid 'Abdulhakim Arwâsî, 'Rahmat-Allahi 'alaih', a profound scholar of the religion and perfect in virtues of Tasawwuf and capable to guide disciples in a fully mature manner; possessor of glories and wisdom), was a competent, great Islamic scholar able to guide to happiness, passed away during the night between October 25, 2001 (8 Sha'bân 1422) and October 26, 2001 (9 Sha'bân 1422). He was buried at Eyyub Sultan, where he had been born.

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[1] Oneness of Allâhu ta'âlâ. The statement of and the belief in His oneness.

[2] A blessed person who has attained a state wherein he knows Allâhu ta'âlâ (as well as a slave could know his Creator).

# ISLAMIC ETHICS

## FIRST CHAPTER

The first chapter of the book explains forty of the most important vices and their remedies. All of the following information is translated from the first chapter of the famous Islamic book **Berîqa** written by Abû Sa'id Muhammad Hâdimî 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ'. This book, originally written in two volumes in Arabic, was published in 1284 Hijrî [1868 A.D.] in Istanbul and was reproduced in 1411 Hijrî [1991 A.D.] by Hakikat Bookstore. Muhammad Hâdimî 'rahimahullâhu ta'âlâ', passed away in 1176 Hijrî Qamarî [1762 A.D.] in his birth place Hâdim village of the city of Konya, Turkey.

## VICES AND METHODS OF CLEANSING

### ONE'S SELF FROM THEM

Things that harm men in this world and in the next are due to vices. The essence of man's spiritual loss is his having vices. Man's avoidance of vices is called **taqwâ**. Taqwâ is the most precious of all worships. Decorating something requires that the thing first should be cleansed from all dirt and stain. Similarly, neither any reward (**thawâb**) will be given nor any benefit will occur for the worships unless the man who does those worships cleanses himself from the sin. The worst of all vices is disbelief (**kufr**). The good deeds of a person who does not have belief will not bear any fruit for him in the Hereafter. [A disbeliever who is killed unjustly does not become a martyr and will not go to Paradise.] The foundation of all virtues is taqwâ. One should try hard to obtain taqwâ and advise others to do the same. Living in this world peacefully with others and obtaining the best of eternal blessings could only be accomplished by having taqwâ.

Vices cause disease in the heart or soul. Any increase in this disease will cause the death of the soul, i.e. it will cause **kufr**. Disbelief (**shirk**), which is the worst of all vices, is a fatal poison of the soul. Some people who do not have belief claim: "My

heart (spiritual) is clean. You should look at my heart.” Their claim is no more than empty words. A dead heart cannot be clean.

There are many types of disbelief. The worst of all is polytheism. Any variety of a certain vice is mostly specified with its most outstanding characteristic. For that matter, the word *shirk* used in *âyat-i-kerîmas*<sup>[1]</sup> and in (our blessed Prophet’s utterances termed) *hadîth-i-sherîfs* represents all sorts of *kufr* (disbelief). Allâhu ta’âlâ, in the 48th and 116th *âyats* of the *Sûra Nisâ* of the *Qur’ân* states that He will never forgive the polytheists (**mushriks**). These verses point out that disbelievers will burn forever in the Hell fire.

[“*Shirk*” means to attribute partners to Allâhu ta’âlâ. A person who does the attributing is called a polytheist and the thing which is attributed is called partner (**sharîk**). To believe that someone possesses one of the attributes of Divinity means to make him a partner (*sharîk*). The attributes possessed exclusively by Allâhu ta’âlâ are called “**Attributes of Divinity**.” Some Divine Attributes are the following: Existing eternally, creating, all-knowing, and healing the sick. To believe that a human being or the sun or a cow or any other creature possesses a divine attribute, and thus to respect or beg that being or creature, is called to worship them. Those things become an idol. To say words that mean deification of such people or to speak respectfully before statues, pictures or graves of disbelievers assumed to be possessing divine attributes means to worship them and therefore it is polytheism. If one believes that a person does not possess a divine attribute but instead he is a person loved by Allâhu ta’âlâ or alternately if one believes that that person has served his nation much and therefore deserves respect, paying respect to his statues or pictures is not disbelief or polytheism. Nevertheless, since paying respect to any person’s picture is forbidden (**harâm**), anyone doing so becomes a sinner (**fâsiq**). If he slights the fact that it is forbidden, he will become an apostate (**murtad**), and so will those who flout a prohibited action (*harâm*). Since those Jews and Christians who are not “*mushriks*” do not believe in the prophethood of Muhammad ‘alaihissalam’, they are disbelievers. They are called “Disbelievers with a heavenly book.” Presently, most Christians are polytheists because they attribute divinity to prophet “*Îsâ*”, that is, Jesus ‘alaihissalam’. Christians belonging

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[1] Verses of the *Qur’ân al-kerîm*.

to the sects of Barnabas and Arius (Arians) were among the People of the Book. However, they have not survived to the present time.

The second worst disease of the soul after shirk is to hold and practise (heretical beliefs which are called) **bid'at**, which is followed by looseness in abstaining from sins, in the order of evil. A person who dies without making tawba<sup>[1]</sup> for venial or grave sins other than disbelief may be forgiven by Allâhu ta'âlâ either through intercession (**shafâ'at**) or directly by His Mercy. If a venial sin is not forgiven then there will be punishment in Hell. Sins that involve violating rights of other human beings will not be forgiven easily. Most likely, people who commit them will be punished more severely. For example, not giving wife's due money (**mahr**) regarding the marriage contract or prohibiting human beings from learning their correct religion, which is their right (**haqq**), is the gravest gross violation of human rights. Rasûlullah 'sall-Allâhu 'alaihi wa sal-lam' stated as follows: "**A time will come when people will not care whether they earn the money by permissible (halâl) means or not,**" and "**A time will come when practicing Islam will be as difficult as holding a fire ball with bare hands.**" Therefore, to avoid committing all prohibited actions (harâms) and those actions that are called makrûh tahrîmî (because they are quite close to harâms) is (**taqwâ**). Not to perform obligatory duties (**fards**) and strongly recommended actions (**wâjibs**) is forbidden (harâm). According to some information, not performing "muakkad Sunnats," i.e., acts of worship which our blessed Prophet practised regularly, without an excuse, is strongly disliked (**makrûh tahrîmî**). People who do not carry out commandments of Islam with respect to belief (**i'tiqâd**), ethics (**akhlâq**), and deeds (**'amal**) will be punished. Logically, one must avoid doing things that will cause punishment. For example, not performing five daily "salâts" and women's and girls' not covering themselves is a grave sin. It would be a strong requirement for one to abstain from the grave sin by performing the five daily "salâts." Nevertheless, in this book, we will not deal with the subject matter regarding the things that must not be omitted; instead, we will communicate

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[1] Penitence; to make tawba means to repent for your sin(s), to beg Allâhu ta'âlâ for forgiveness, and to be resolved not to commit the same sin(s) again.

the things that should be avoided, i.e., prohibited actions and vices.

The things we should not do (prohibited actions) are committed either with a particular organ or with the entire body. The following eight organs are very well known for committing sins: spiritual heart, ears, eyes, tongue, hands, stomach, sexual organs, and feet. The spiritual heart (**qalb**) is a spiritual grace blown upon the material heart of human beings. It is incorporeal, not made of matter, like the soul. These organs themselves do not commit the sin. The sensing power of these organs commits the sin. Anyone who wants to attain happiness in this world and the next must prevent these organs from committing sins. The spiritual heart has to be developed into a state wherein not committing sins will be its natural habit (malaka). Anyone who can achieve this state is called Allah-fearing (**muttaqî**) or pious (**sâlih**) person. He has now attained Allâhu ta'âlâ's love and approval and become Walî<sup>[1]</sup> to Him. It would also be piety [taqwâ] to avoid sins by exerting yourself without its becoming the heart's natural habit. Yet being a Walî requires its being a natural habit not to commit sins, which in turn requires purifying the heart. And to purify the heart requires obedience to the rules of Islam. Islam consists of three parts: knowledge (**'ilm**), practice (**'amal**), and sincerity (**ikhâlâs**). (1) To learn the knowledge teaching the commandments, i.e., Fards, Wâjibs, Sunnats, and forbidden actions (**harâms and makrûhs**), (2) To practise them in accordance with this knowledge, and (3) To do them only for the sake of Allâhu ta'âlâ. The Qur'ân al-kerîm commands and praises all these three parts. In this book, we will only communicate those sins that are to be abstained from in order to cleanse the heart. They are called vices, unethical behavior, or immoral acts.

## UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR OR IMMORALITY AND ITS REMEDY

A Muslim as a first priority should strive to cleanse his (spiritual) heart because heart is the leader of the body and all organs are under its command. Our Prophet Muhammad 'sall-Allâhu 'alaihi wa sal-lam' once said: **“There is a piece of flesh in the human body. If this is good, all the organs will be good. If this**

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[1] Walî (pl. Awliyâ) means a person close and beloved to Allâhu ta'âlâ.

**is evil, all the organs will be evil. This piece of flesh is the heart.”**

What is described in this hadīth is not the physical heart but the spiritual heart which is located in the physical heart. The goodness of the flesh, as explained above, means its being cleansed from vices and its assimilation of good morals (virtues). The physical appearance of a human being is called (**khalq**). The power or state that exists in the heart is called habits (**khulq**). Vices in the heart are called “maladies of the heart” or unacceptable morals (**akhlâq al-zamîma**). Their cure is a very difficult task. Correct treatment requires extremely sophisticated knowledge about the maladies and correct methodology to apply this knowledge. Habits are the faculties (**malakas**) or states or desires in the heart. It is this power in the spiritual heart which generates man’s belief, words, actions. His optional behaviour also is the work of (this power which is called his) khulq.

Changing or transforming the state of the heart from undesirable, unwanted, unacceptable morals or habits to desirable, good habits is possible. Our Prophet ‘sall-Allâhu ‘alaihi wa sal-lam’ once said, “**Improve your morals (habits or character).**” Islam does not contain commandments that cannot be accomplished. Experiences also show that this is the case. [Experience is only one of the three true-knowledge-acquirement methods. The other two true-knowledge-acquirement-methods are understanding through calculation and information passed to us by our Prophet.] Human beings do not share equal abilities to correct their unacceptable, deficient morals.

Origin or source or fountain of morals is three powers inherent in the human soul. The first one is the power of understanding (comprehension) of the soul. This is also called “**nutq**” or wisdom (**‘aql**). The first and second powers of “nutq” are theoretical knowledge (**hikmat al-nazarî**) and practical knowledge (**hikmat al-‘amalî**) respectively. Theoretical knowledge which exists in average proportions is called reason (**hikmat**). Reason is the power that differentiates between virtue and vice; right and wrong; and good and evil. A state of excess in this power is termed **jarbaza** (the state of being a wiseacre). A person who suffers from this excess tries to understand things beyond comprehension. For example, he tries to interpret verses of the Qur’ân with hidden or metaphorical meanings (**mutashâbih âyats**) or talks about fate and destiny or occupies himself with futile pursuits such as deceit, trickery, and sorcery. Conversely, inadequacy of this power is

termed idiocy (**balâdat**). A person suffering from this inadequacy cannot differentiate between vice and virtue. When the practical power of *nutq* (wisdom) exists in an average intensity, this state is called justice (**'adâlat**). There cannot be paucity or plentitude in justice.

The second power of the sources of morals is wrath (**ghadab**). It is the bestial aspect of the soul. Things which it dislikes and loathes stir its blood. When this force is subdued to a reasonable intensity by the human aspect of the soul, it develops into bravery (**shajâ'at**), which prompts man to practical and useful enterprises. Examples of this are Muslims' fighting against disbelievers whose numbers are more than double theirs and their saving the oppressed from their oppressors. An excess in this force is **tahawwur**, which causes aggressiveness. A person with this temperament becomes angry fast. If this power exists in less than average proportions, it is called cowardice (**jubn**). A person having this character will not be able to attempt to do the necessary actions.

The third power of the human soul is appetite (**shahwat**). It is the bestial soul's desiring the things that it likes. The human aspect of the soul mollifies this desire into what we call chastity (**iffat**), or honor. A person who has chastity gratifies the needs of his nature in a manner prescribed by Islam and compatible with humanity. Excess in this is called greed or debauchery (**sharah**). A person having this character tries to obtain all his desires and wishes without regard to laws or others' rights. When appetite is less than average proportions in one's nature, it causes a lazy character (**humûd**). A person with this character will not even try to get things that are necessary for himself either because of his extreme sense of shame, fear or pride, or because of his (psychological) illness.

The aforesaid four temperate forces, i.e. *hikmat* (reason), *'adâlat* (justice), *iffat* (chastity), and *shajâ'at* (bravery), are the essence of all virtues. When a person adapts himself to *hikmat*, which is one of the three forces of the soul, he overcomes the other two forces of the bestial soul, i.e., *ghadab* and *shahwat*, and attains happiness by developing these two excesses into *iffat* (chastity) and *shajâ'at* (bravery). If the theoretical force of wisdom fails to abide by *hikmat*, which is its temperate degree, and overflows unto either one of the vicious extremities, vices will appear. All six extremities are always evil. In fact, even the four

temperate forces are evil when they are employed for evil purposes. Examples of employing hikmat for evil purposes are: to go into a religious career for the purpose of an easy competence or a high position, and to perform (the daily prayers termed) namâz or (the struggle for the promulgation and propagation of Islam, which should be done only to please Allâhu ta'âlâ and which is termed) jihâd for ostentation. On the other hand, abstention from a certain kind of pleasure in order to gratify one's desire to enjoy another kind of pleasure would be a good example of misusing iffat.

Each of the four main virtues is recognized by their attributes. For example, wisdom has seven attributes. Bravery and chastity have eleven attributes each.

**REMEDY FOR THE VICES:** A medicine that would be a common cure for all the vices is the recognition of the illness and things that are harmful to it, its cause, its opposite case, as well as effects of the medicine. The next step would be the diagnosis of the illness, which is done either by self-research or under the supervision of a guide, i.e. an 'âlim (a deeply learned Islamic scholar). A Believer is another Believer's mirror. Self-diagnosis of one's faults is a difficult task. A recommendable way of knowing your own faults, therefore, would be to consult with a dependable friend. A faithful friend is one who will protect you against dangers and fearful situations. Such a friend is hard to come by. It is to this effect that Imâm Shâfi'î 'rahmatullâhi 'aleyh' stated:

***A staunch friend and true medicine,  
Are hard to find, waste not your time.***

And Hadrat 'Umar 'radiy-Allâhu 'anh' stated:

***My friend's warned me about my fault,  
This is the true essence of brotherhood.***

Since your adversaries will always be seeking ways for criticizing you, they will fling your shortcomings to your teeth once they find them. Such inimical comments therefore can be exploited as efficient references to learn about your faults. Good friends, by contrast, will mostly be inclined to overlook your faults. One day, someone begged Hadrat Ibrâhîm Ad-ham, (a great Islamic scholar and a Walî,) to tell him about his faults and shortcomings. "I have made a friend of you. So, all your manners and ways appear nice to me. Ask someone else about your

faults,” was the great scholar’s reply. Another way of recognizing your shortcomings is to observe others’ faults. When you observe others’ faults, you should try and see if you have the same fault(s), and, if you see that you do, you should try to get rid of them. This way of identifying vices is another method for curing the vices and is the meaning of the following hadîth, **“A Believer (Mu’min) is a mirror of another Believer.”** In other words, you identify your own faults in others’ faults. When Jesus (Îsâ ‘alaihi-salâm’) was asked who he had learned his virtues from, he answered: “I did not learn them from anyone. I looked at others, observed the things I did not like and I avoided doing the same, copying and imitating the things I liked.” When the famous doctor Lokman was asked who he had learned manners from, he replied, “From people without manners!” Reading about the biographies and episodes of Islamic luminaries, such as the (blessed people called) Salaf as-sâlihîn, the Sahâba, and other Awliyâ ‘rahmatullâhi ‘alaihi ajma’în’, is another way of forming good habits.<sup>[1]</sup>

A person who has a vice should search for the reason (cause) of his contracting that vice. He should try to eliminating this cause and then try to get rid of it by doing its opposite. He should try very hard to do the opposite of the vice for getting rid of it. For, getting rid of a vice is very difficult. The nafs loves evil and ugly things.

Another useful medicine for getting rid of vices is to establish a method of retribution. For example, when one commits a vice, immediately afterwards, one should do some action one’s nafs does not like. A good way of accomplishing this is to take an oath. Namely, one should take an oath to the effect that if one commits a vice, one will do extra goodness such as giving alms, fasting or performing salâts. Since one’s nafs never likes to do extra prayers, one will stop committing vices. Another useful medicine is reading or hearing from others about those vices which produce harmful results. Many hadîths inform us about the harms of vices. Some of them are:

1– **“In the sight of Allâhu ta’âlâ, there is no sin graver than vices.”** For, those who commit vices are not aware that they are

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[1] For terms such as Walî, Awliyâ (pl. of Walî), the Sahâba, Salaf as-sâlihîn, see our other publications, e.g. **Sahâba ‘The Blessed’**, available from Hakikat Kitâbevi, Fâtih, Istanbul, Turkey.

committing sins. Therefore, they do not repent for their sins so that their sins accumulate and increase many folds.

2- **“The one sin which human beings commit without any hesitation or reservation is being a person with vices.”**

3- **“There is a repentance for every sort of sin but there is none for vices. Instead of repenting for a certain vice, the offender commits something worse.”**

4- **“As hot water melts an ice cube, likewise virtues melt mistakes and errors. As vinegar destroys honey, likewise vices destroy rewards (thawâbs) for good deeds.”**

Justice (**’adalat**), chastity (**iffat**), bravery (**shajâ’at**) and wisdom (**hikmat**), when they are not used with evil intentions are the sources of all virtues. One should associate with pious (**sâlih**) and good-natured people in order to be a good-natured person or to protect one’s virtues. A person’s akhlâq will be like his companion’s habits. Akhlâq is contagious like a disease. One should not make friends with ill-humoured people. It is stated as follows in a hadîth-i-sherîf: **“A person’s faith will be like his companion’s.”** One should shun from useless occupations and games, harmful jokes, and quarrels. One should learn knowledge and do useful deeds. One should not read books that undermine one’s morals or which promotes sex and should not watch television programs or listen to radio programs destructive of moral values or which arouse sexual desires. One should constantly remind oneself of the benefits of virtues and harmful effects of Islam’s prohibitions and the punishment they will incur in Hell. None of the pursuers of wealth and position has attained his wish. However, those who have wanted rank and worldly possessions to do good deeds with them have lived comfortably and happily. Worldly ranks and possessions should not be one’s goals but instead they should be vehicles to do goodness to others. Worldly ranks and possessions are like an ocean and many people are drowned in that ocean. Fear of Allâhu ta’âlâ is the ship which one needs to survive in that ocean. Our Prophet ‘sall-Allâhu ‘alaihi wa sal-lam’ once said, **“One should live in the world not like a permanent resident but like a traveler, and should never forget that he will die!”** Human beings will not live in this world forever. When one is absorbed in worldly pleasures, one’s troubles, worries and distress will increase. The following hadîths should never be forgotten:

1- **“A slave of Allâhu ta’âlâ who has not performed many acts**

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