

Purification of the Heart – The Islamic Method (in light of the Humanistic Theory of Counselling)

(Prepared by Light of Hira)

Soul Purification is prescribed in the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān informs humanity:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾
وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿١٠﴾

Success is really attained by him who purifies it (the soul). (91:8)

And failure is really suffered by him who pollutes it. (91:9)

From these verses we learn that success in the Hereafter depends on purifying our heart, our soul.

Spiritual Counselling

A method is needed to attain spiritual purification.

In Islām, this process can be accomplished by a Muslim believer is in need of a qualified and God-fearing Shaykh or Counsellor to assist the Seeker of spiritual reformation i.e. murīd.

The process of spiritual allegiance is corroborated by the Humanistic Theory of Counselling

Elements of Humanistic Theory

- * Congruence
- * Empathy
- * Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR)

Particularities of Humanistic Theory

- * It is recognized that it is possible to make fundamental changes in people's lives.
- * The quality of the relationship with the counsellor can make these changes take place effectively.

From Congruence we learn that...

It demands from the counsellor that his relationship with the **seeker** is to be:

- * Real
- * Genuine
- * Caring about the seeker
- * Considerate towards the seeker
- * The seeker is to be also genuine and real in his/her quest for recovery and establishing his/her relationship with the counsellor

From Empathy we learn that ...

- * The counsellor is to identify with the seeker in his/her effort to understand where the seeker comes from, his/her mental background.

From Unconditional Positive Regard we learn that ...

- * The counsellor may condemn the crime/sin but never the criminal/sinner.

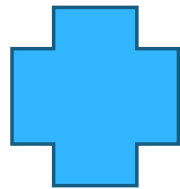
Islamic Model – “At-Tazkiyah”

Counsellor

- SHAYKH - Spiritual Mentor
- Role Model/empathy/UPR

Seeker

- MURĪD
- Spiritually ill (sinner)





God

- ALLĀH's help
- To be beseeched by the Seeker primarily

İŞLĀḤ

- Reformation
- Cure
- Purification
- Remedy
- Cleansing
- LOCUS/centre of reformation: the Heart not the mind

Central Role of the Heart in the Human's General Wellbeing

- * “Take heed! In the body there is a piece of flesh which, if it becomes sound and healthy, the whole body becomes sound and healthy, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart (qalb).” [Prophetic teaching in Al-Bukhārī & Muslim]
- * “Verily, God does not look to your bodies nor to your faces; but He looks to your hearts.” (Muslim)
- *  “Verily, Only in the Remembrance of Allāh will your hearts find peace.”  (Al-Qur’ān 13:28)

Central Role of the Heart in the Human's General Wellbeing



- * “Verily, when the slave (of Allāh) commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart. When he refrains from it, seeks forgiveness and repents, his heart is polished clean. But if he returns, it increases until it covers the entire heart.” [Prophetic tradition in At-Tirmidhī]
- * There is a polishing for everything that takes away rust. The polish of the heart is the remembrance of Allāh. (Al-Bukhārī)

Opponents to Spiritual Wellbeing

SHAYṬĀN
(devil)

Whispers the human
being to commit Evil
(sins)

Determined to land
human in Hellfire

NAFS (base
desires/flesh)

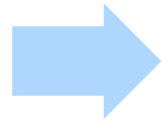
Influence Humans to seek
Pleasure/satisfaction
(good or bad)

Focus of At-tazkiyah =
how to tame the Nafs

Level development of Nafs/Flesh/Base Desires

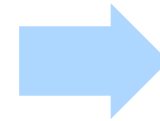
Ammārah

- LOWEST
- Pure Pleasure
- Can destroy a human



Lawāmah

- MEDIUM
- Regrets evil
- Common stage of people



Muṭma'innah

- SUPERIOR
- Resists and abstains
- Pious

Role of a Shaykh

- * A counsellor who establishes a genuine relationship with the seeker who in turn seeks to reform himself for the Pleasure of God.
- * A role model for the seeker
- * A centre of Love
- * He could use the skill of *Transference* becoming a perceived loved relation who can advise.
- * **UPR** is imbedded in the nature of the Shaykh and constantly applied; the seeker being informed of it at early stages.
- * Works free of charge for the pleasure of God.
- * He will advise seeker how to tackle his/her **two opponents**.

Role of a Murīd

- * Submissive Patient to the advice of the Shaykh
- * Search for a compatible, authentic, genuine, qualified, pious, accessible Shaykh willing to accept him as spiritual apprentice
- * Has to show the **TRUE SELF**
- * Has to take personal responsibility for his actions
- * May decide to take personal spiritual allegiance to the Shaykh (BAY‘AH)

Seeker Taking Personal Responsibility

Realization (TA'AMMUL)

- * Prior to undertaking any action to ponder about consequences of that action and its effect (especially in hereafter)
- * If action already committed, **accept mistake**, repent and try to abstain

Sacrificing (TAḤAMMUL)

- * If consequence of action is harmful in hereafter be willing to undergo any sacrifice to be saved from that action

4 Requisites a Seeker needs to adopt

1- Inform the Shaykh fully and without reservation of Problems & symptoms faced throughout counselling (Iṭṭilā‘)

2- Strictly and punctually follow advice & spiritual practices (Ittiba‘) E.g. meditation, tasbīḥ (beads), etc.

3- Full trust in guidance provided (I‘timād)

4- Conviction and confidence in guidance outlined and the Shaykh (Inqiyād)

What is Mujāhadah (struggle)?

- * Fulfilling the Do's
- * Abstaining from the Don'ts
- * In essence to oppose the Nafs/Flesh, leading to its development into a superior/higher level
- * Abandoning the animalistic features within the human and cultivating the angelic features within us.

At the end of the journey...



Spiritually Dead,
Ill or Corrupt Heart



Spiritually Living, Robust
& Healthy Heart

Conclusion

People journey in the world to address their problems and seek cures through different methods to find happiness by contacting Life Coaches, Counsellors, etc.

Muslims have been blessed with this spiritual tool of Tazkiyah to enable them to purify their hearts, by appointing a qualified and God-fearing Shaykh and becoming a murīd.

As Muslims, we need to take advantage of this precious faith method that gives us an opportunity to develop ourselves as wholesome humans. Undergoing such process, will enable us to reach our greatest potential and be of maximum benefit to ourselves, our families, our loved ones, our communities and attain Allāh's Love.