

Science is the tool to view the creation of Allahﷻ by the lens that we see with, which is our heart. But to see clearly, that lens must first be purified and cleansed of all coating of the false glory of the world and burnished with the polish of Allahﷻ's Khashiya (Awe) and lighted with the Noor of His love. Only then can the heart see as it is supposed to and recognize Allahﷻ in His creation. That is the importance of Tazkiyyatun Nafs. That is why Allahﷻ said about those who look at His creation but don't see His signs: *Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind.* Allahﷻ said:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ  
يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي  
الصُّدُورِ

*Hajj 22: 46. Have they not travelled through the land, and have they hearts wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that grow blind.*

Medical research tells us today that the heart has neurons and is the seat of understanding and memory, like the brain and is not simply a pump.

<https://www.heartmath.org/resources/downloads/science-of-the-heart/?submenuheader=3>

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/heart-wisdom\\_b\\_2615857](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/heart-wisdom_b_2615857)

So, what is required? First, we need to acknowledge and accept the definition of intelligence and understanding that Allahﷻ gave us. People who recognize Him, are obedient to Him, are concerned about His Pleasure and who are willing to live their lives in the way that He ordered. The meaning of Dhikr, standing, sitting, and lying down, is our whole life in all its aspects. That is where intelligence begins. The one who doesn't know his Creator, doesn't recognize Him, and is not connected to Him is not intelligent. To know Allahﷻ and to remember Him in all aspects of life does two very important things. It makes us cautious and it makes us confident. Cautious about our speech and actions, to ensure that we don't do anything that can displease Allahﷻ. This caution is not anxiety and fearfulness. It is concern out of love and awe and respect for Allahﷻ and is a shield against all sin and disobedience. Such a person understands that everything in life, all success, all power, all happiness, all wealth begins and ends with earning the Pleasure of Allahﷻ. If it is earned and used for Allahﷻ' s Pleasure, it is good and a blessing. If not, it is evil and a curse. A person who is blessed with this caution, uses a single criterion to judge any potential decision point i.e. will this please Allahﷻ? If so, he does it. If not, he doesn't. And if he is in doubt, he waits to clarify before acting. This simplifies life and makes it stress free. When you are concerned about the pleasure of Allahﷻ, it frees you from every other concern. Allama Iqbal said in his poem, Islam aur Musalman, in his book, Zarb-e-Kaleem:

badal ke bhes phir aate haiñ har zamāne mein  
agarche peer hai aadam javāñ haiñ lāt-o-manāt  
ye ek sajda jise tū girāñ samajhtā hai  
hazār sajdon se detā hai aadmī ko najāt

(with changed disguises, they come in every age  
though Adam (mankind) is old, Laa and Manaas are young  
this one Sajda that you think is difficult  
frees Man from a thousand sajdas)

So beautiful is this religion of ours if we only understand and practice it. In it are the solutions to all that ails us. If only we are ready to see and act.

The second thing that true intelligence does for the one who knows Allahﷻ is that it makes him confident. Confident that Allahﷻ is with him wherever he is. Confident that he can call on Allahﷻ for anything he needs, for protection, for aid and help and comfort in every situation in his life. The more he understands Allahﷻ and becomes conscious of His Glory and Majesty, the more he will appreciate Islam and being a Muslim and the greater will be his desire to please Allahﷻ. It is a virtuous cycle where obedience increases Maʿeyyat (awareness of being with) and confidence. Allahﷻ said about those who know Him, and obey Him i.e. Muttaqoon:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ

*Nahl 16: 128. Truly, Allah is with those who have his Taqwa and those who are Muhsinun (people who do Ihsaan).*

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ

*Hadeed 57: 4 And He is with you (by His Knowledge) wheresoever you may be.*

If Allahﷻ is with us, who do we need to fear? Allahﷻ asked us:

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ

*Zumar 39: 36. Is not Allah Sufficient for His slave?*

That is the confidence that the Muttaqi feels. This is the real meaning of Dhikrullah. It is not merely repeating a name or attribute of Allahﷻ a certain number of times. It is to monitor what the effect of that is on the heart. Allahﷻ told us that His Dhikr has a measurable effect on the heart:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

*Anfal 8: 2. The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts shiver with the awe and glory of Allah and when His Ayaat are recited unto them, they (Ayaat) increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Rabb (Alone)*

Like an intelligent farmer prepares the soil before he plants the seed because he knows that the best seed will fail if the soil is dead or toxic, the effect of the Word of Allahﷻ is visible only in a heart that is free from all toxicity and is fertile with the yearning to know Allahﷻ and connect with Him. Preparing the heart to receive knowledge is critical. Without it any attempt at approaching knowledge will fail. Everything begins with Tazkiyyatun Nafs wa Tarbiyyatul Akhlaaq. Tazkiyya wa Tarbiyya is a contact sport.

It is learned under the supervision of a Shaikh who has himself been through the mill under his Musleh (Mentor). It is not achieved by reading books or remotely on Zoom. You need to go to a scholar who is trained to guide you. He will diagnose your problem and administer the cure and monitor your progress. This is not a 6 or 8 year course with an exam at the end. The exam in this is at the end of every interaction, every thought, and its duration is as long as it takes. That is what Rasoolullah ﷺ concentrated on all through the Makkan period.

Finally, Tazkiyya is not a degree or Sanad or Ijaza. There is no final ‘arrived’ state where you or someone can say, ‘He has passed. He has achieved Tazkiyya.’ The one who believes that about himself is sitting in the lap of Shaytaan. In the words of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ood (RA): *“Whoever wants to follow a path, let him follow the path of one who has died, for the living are not safe from fitnah. I mean the Companions of Muhammad ﷺ. They were the best of this Ummah: the purest in heart, the deepest in knowledge and the most straightforward. Allah ﷻ chose them to accompany His Prophet ﷺ and establish His religion. So, recognize their status and follow in their footsteps and adhere as much as you can to their example of conduct and attitude, for they followed true guidance.”* [Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in Jaami’ Bayaan al-‘Ilm wa Fadluhu, 2/947, no. 1810.]

<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/170954/what-is-meant-by-the-saying-whoever-wants-to-follow-a-path-let-him-follow-the-path-of-one-who-has-died-for-the-living-are-not-safe-from-fitnah>

Without Tazkiyya wa Tarbiyya, no amount of book learning helps. Allah ﷻ mentioned those who had a lot of book learning but succeeded only in

earning His anger and compared them to ‘donkeys carrying books’. The knowledge of a scholar is only what is visible in his speech and actions. Nothing more. Everything else is a Hujjah against him on the Day of Judgment. May Allahﷻ protect us from ourselves.

In the Ayah about Al-Ulil Albaab (People of Understanding/Intelligence) Allahﷻ used the preposition (and) when He referred to what people who know Him and are concerned about His Pleasure, do. Remember that grammatically speaking that Ayah would be a correct sentence if Allahﷻ had used (or – Au) instead of (and – Wa). But He didn’t. The Ayah speaks clearly about **two qualities** of people of intelligence (Al-Ulil Albaab); that they have Taqwa and (then) wearing the glasses of Taqwa, they look at the creation. Fikr fee Samawaati wal Ardh comprises and contains everything you can imagine in the field of scientific research, investigation, experimentation, exploration, analysis, testing and verification. Not only does Islam encourage Muslims to do all this but calls this the second part of the two-part definition of a person of intelligence.

The key is to recognize that Allahﷻ set the sequence for the two. When we broke this sequence and created a gap between Dhikrullah and Fikr fee Samawaati wal Ardh we lost the Baraka of the sequence. It no longer delivered to us the result which Allahﷻ promised which is the enlightenment with which the person says:

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

*A'al Imraan 3: 191 "Our Rabb! You have not created (all) this without purpose, Glory to You! Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire.*

This is our crime and we have paid for it for centuries. I submit to you that it is time to change. High time, if we want to break out of the malaise that ails us and is the reason for our decline into mental, and intellectual slavery. They ask, "What must change in education?" I say, "Everything." If you are operating for cancer, do you remove it one cell at a time or the whole thing at once? That is the answer to your next comment before you make it i.e. "Let us do it gradually." There are 7 things we must change in how we educate.

**First:** Train teachers to teach in a way that they may never have done before. It is better to start with new people rather than trying to retrain `older people. The key quality to look for is people who are willing to learn and change. Let students assess teachers every quarter and have annual skill development training. The hallmark of a good teacher is one who seeks to work in this environment. If they don't like it, let them go. Don't waste too much time in trying to convince them. We don't need reluctant people who need a job. We need enthusiastic people answering a calling.

**Second:** Design the curriculum and teaching methodology for this new way. Today, the Integrated Teaching method integrating Islam and science, within a framework of character building and connecting to Allahﷻ, doesn't exist anywhere in the world. Our education is fractured and predicated on the worst possible premise, as a business. Commercialization of education

and public health care are the two worst crimes committed on society but that is another discussion. We must integrate Islam and science because Allahﷻ told us to do so. To do that our Ulama must respect scientists and consult with them and vice versa. The challenge in driving all change, including this one is that those who are the leaders today, benefit from the status quo so they will never change. The key therefore is to start a pilot project to prove the concept and then present it to the world as evidence that this method works. When the world sees scientists standing on the Minbar of Rasoolullahﷺ and Ulama performing brain surgery and leading space exploration missions, it will accept the truth that Allahﷻ stated, that His creation is replete with the signs of His Glory and Majesty. That is our task.

**Third:** We must start with primary education and continue until the age of 15. No more than 10 years of schooling from age 5 to 15. After that students will be ready for the world. This is not about university. It is about the foundation. The very basics without which the edifice that stands on it will collapse. It needs those who, like the rocks that go into the foundation of any great structure, are willing to work unsung and unknown, so that the structure of the new society can be created and matured. With this training the child can go to any college or live in any society, and he/she will become the game changer and not a pawn to be moved around the board by others.

**Fourth:** Education must first and foremost start with teaching values, ethics, and morals. This, not in a special class but the culture of high ethical and

moral character on which everything else runs. This culture must be visible on the playing field, in science and religious studies classes, in the dining room, in the hostel. It must be visible in how we treat others, no matter who they may be. It must be visible in how we pray, how we speak, how we relate to our neighbors and society. It must be visible in every waking moment in our lives. It is essential to know the boundaries of anything. That is a safety requirement in life and the Aakhira. Ethics, values, and morals are the boundaries of Allahﷻ. All knowledge begins with knowing the boundaries. Boundaries are all about respecting the rights of others, which is the essence of civilization. The rights of Allahﷻ and the rights of creatures. That must be the framework of all learning. Remember that children listen with their eyes. They don't care what you say until they see what you do. That is why inspirational teachers who love teaching and who are ready to pay to teach, not only to teach free of cost are the key to success. Remember that they are moulding society. They are creating a generation, scripting the destiny of the nation, and leaving their own and your legacy. So, pay them a premium, way out of the market. That is because quality is worth the price. *"Quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten."* ~ Gucci family slogan.

Support, applaud and reward imagination, creativity, ingenuity, curiosity, experimentation, collaboration, risk-taking, teamwork, respect for difference and dissent, forgiveness, responsibility, owning accountability, putting others first, humility, compassion, kindness, courtesy, consideration,

courage (physical and moral), industry, charity, perseverance, resilience, equanimity, self-discipline, focus, and patience. In short, nurture all those things which in our current schooling system, we destroy as quickly as possible to create obedient slaves and make our own lives easy. We must remember that real education is about creating responsible, moral, ethical, and compassionate leaders. Not obedient robots. Values can't be legislated. Values must be inculcated. Remember that this means that teachers must demonstrate all these values in their lives and monitor them in their students. Catch them doing right, applaud and reward them and help them when they make mistakes. Mistakes must never be punished because that's the fastest way to kill risk taking ability, which is essential to succeed.