

# ALI 352 : Spiritual self discipline

## Session One

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition.

**Sura Ra'd, 13:11**

Make a list of other words for self-discipline



If a man sets right matters between himself and Allah  
then Allah sets right matters  
between him and other people  
and if a man sets right the affairs of his next life  
then Allah sets right for him the affairs of this world  
Whoever is a preacher for himself  
is protected by Allah

Hadith no.89

Nahjul Balagha

# Agenda

- ▶ What is self-discipline?
- ▶ Why self-discipline
- ▶ Types of self discipline
- ▶ Spirituality and self discipline
- ▶ Practical Application

# What is self discipline

- ▶ Control over the impulses of the self
- ▶ Training the self for achieving certain goals
- ▶ Ability to overcome resistance of the body, the mind, the emotions . . .
- ▶ Energy that enables you to persevere and overcome hardship/discomfort
- ▶ Ability to reject immediate gratification for long term benefits

# Why self discipline

- ▶ Makes a human being fully human
- ▶ You choose your behavior and reaction rather than being ruled by them
- ▶ Enables success in achieving goals in all aspects of life. Large goals as well as small everyday goals.
- ▶ Makes success out of the talent that God has given you

# Self discipline in Nahjul Balagha

## Think of the consequences

*What a difference there is between two kinds of actions: an act whose pleasure passes away but its (ill) consequence remains, and the act whose hardship passes away but its reward stays.*  
Hadith no. 121, NB

## Work on yourself

***Fear Allah** like the one who **prepares himself** after **extracting himself from worldly affairs** and after getting ready in this way **makes effort**; then he **acts quickly** during the period of this life, hastens in view of the dangers of falling into error **and has his eye on proceeding towards the goal** on the end of his journey and on the place of his return. Hadith no. 210, NB*

# Types of self discipline

- ▶ Physical – Inspire yourself to look after your body; nutrition, sleep, stress levels.
- ▶ Mental – Review your thoughts and self talk to control your thoughts. Mentally reframe a situation.
- ▶ Emotional – Feelings have a lot of effect on how you think and act. Choose to feel a certain way by controlling and channeling your feelings.
- ▶ Spiritual – Set small goals of spiritual self improvement for each day. Keep track of them.

# Spirituality and self-discipline

- ▶ Self discipline is necessary for spiritual development.
- ▶ To walk on the path a wayfarer needs self control to persevere on the path and avoid temptations.
- ▶ All forms of worship in Islam create self discipline through control of desires and focusing on Allah.



# Practical application

Self discipline is a learned behavior. It comes from practice and repetition.

Strengthen the muscles of self discipline by:

- ▶ Doing things you know you should do but would rather not do.
- ▶ Scheduling small tasks and doing them
- ▶ Removing temptations from your surroundings
- ▶ Taking care of your stomach
- ▶ Inspiring yourself through reading, listening . . .
- ▶ Having a plan and keeping track of it
- ▶ Interacting with like minded people