



## ALI 657: Living Islam through Combating the Self

This course on Zoom is designed to give a 15-minute *spiritual dose daily during Month of Ramadan*. We will *InshāAllāh* discuss 2 -3 Hadiths on Jihād bin-Nafs from *Wāsā'il al-Shi'ah* of Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-‘Āmilī and see how we can implement them in Living Islam.

Instructor: Hasanayn Kassamali

Dates: 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023/ 1<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> Ramadan 1444.

Times: Karachi 3 pm, Dubai 2 pm, Dar-es-salaam 1 pm, London 10/11 am, NY/Toronto 6 am. The time may change after 15<sup>th</sup> Ramadan; stay tuned.

# Āyāt 12:53 text and translation

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا  
رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

12:53 And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.

- Nabi Yusuf عليه السلام says that even he is not safe from the *nafs*
- Nafs al-Ammārah is persistent in misleading
- We need Divine mercy to be protected from it
- However, Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.

# Why this topic? – part 1

اللَّهُمَّ مَا كَانَ فِي قَلْبِي مِنْ شَكٍّ أَوْ رَيْبَةٍ أَوْ جُحُودٍ أَوْ قُنُوطٍ أَوْ فَرَحٍ أَوْ بَذَخٍ أَوْ بَطَرٍ أَوْ  
خِيَلَاءٍ أَوْ رِيَاءٍ أَوْ سُمْعَةٍ أَوْ شِقَاقٍ أَوْ نِفَاقٍ أَوْ كُفْرٍ أَوْ فُسُوقٍ أَوْ عِصْيَانٍ أَوْ عَظَمَةٍ  
أَوْ شَيْءٍ لَا تُحِبُّ فَاسْأَلْكَ يَا رَبِّ أَنْ تُبَدِّلَنِي مَكَانَهُ إِيْمَانًا بِوَعْدِكَ وَوَفَاءً بِعَهْدِكَ،  
وَرِضًا بِقَضَائِكَ وَزُهْدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا، وَرَغْبَةً فِيْمَا عِنْدَكَ وَآثَرَةً وَطُمَأْنِينَةً وَتَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا

Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام used to recite on the last night of Sha‘ban:

O Allah, whatever there may be in my heart 1. doubt, mistrust, unbelief, despair, vanity, 6. pride, recklessness, conceit, wild thoughts, desire for fame, 11. dissent, hypocrisy, faithlessness, corruption, disobedience, and 16. arrogance, or anything that You do not approve of, I beseech You, o my Lord, to replace it with faith in Your promise, loyalty to Your covenant, resignation to Your decrees, indifference to the world and eagerness for that which is with You and with awareness, peace of mind and sincere repentance!

# Why this topic? – part 2

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي حَبَانَا بِدِينِهِ، وَاخْتَصَّنَا بِمِلَّتِهِ، وَسَبَّلَنَا فِي سُبُلِ إِحْسَانِهِ لِنَسْلُكَهَا بِمَنِّهِ إِلَى رِضْوَانِهِ، حَمْدًا يَتَقَبَّلُهُ مِنَّا، وَيَرْضَى بِهِ عَنَّا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ مِنْ تِلْكَ السُّبُلِ شَهْرَهُ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ، شَهْرَ الصِّيَامِ، وَشَهْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَشَهْرَ الطَّهْوَرِ، وَشَهْرَ التَّمْحِصِ، وَشَهْرَ الْقِيَامِ

2. And all praise be to God, who favored us with His religion, and distinguished us with His creed, and directed us into the paths of His goodness, in order that, through His grace, we may walk along them towards His good pleasure —a praise which He may accept from us, and through which He will be pleased with us.
3. And praise be to God who ordained through those paths His month, the month of Ramadan, the month of fasts, the month of Islam, the month of purity, the month of putting to test/purification and the month of standing up (for prayer); (*The Sahīfah*, Du‘ā 44)

Tamhees from hammasa = to roast; to fry, broil

# Why this topic? – part 3

Marhūm Āyatullāh Sayyid Musawi al-Khumayni (qs) has a great book on Ethics and spirituality titled *Forty Hadith: An Exposition of Ethical and Mystical Traditions*.

The first Hadith it covers is on *Jihad* of the Self. Perhaps, this shows that it is an entry point into spirituality and has Makārimul akhlāq.

Al-Sukuni relates on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (A): *Verily on seeing the returning armies from the battlefield, the Prophet (S) of God said, ‘Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad and have yet to perform the major one.’ When asked, what is the major jihad? the Prophet replied, ‘the jihad of the self’ (struggle against self).*

<https://www.al-islam.org/forty-hadith-exposition-second-revised-edition-sayyid-ruhullah-musawi-khomeini/first-hadith-jihad>

# Why this topic? - 4

In the famous sermon welcoming the month of Ramadan, the Apostle of Allah (Rasūlullāh ﷺ) said:

شَهْرٌ هُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَفْضَلُ الشُّهُورِ وَأَيَّامُهُ أَفْضَلُ الْأَيَّامِ وَلَيَالِيهِ أَفْضَلُ اللَّيَالِي وَسَاعَاتُهُ أَفْضَلُ السَّاعَاتِ . . . فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ بِنِيَّاتٍ صَادِقَةٍ وَ قُلُوبٍ طَاهِرَةٍ

*A month, which in the eyes of Allah, is the best of all months, its days are the best of all days, its nights are the best of all nights, and its hours are best of all hours . . . Therefore, ask your Lord with sincere intentions and pure hearts.*

From all the *a'māl* (fasts, prayers, tilāwah, istighfār, Du'ās, charity, etc.,) we perform, there are limits to how long we can do them in 24 hours. However, we can train ourselves to maintain sincere intentions and pure hearts throughout the month of Ramadan. How do we do that? iA, we will cover

# Hadith on the Jihād of nafs

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّوْفَلِيِّ عَنِ السَّكُونِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع  
أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ص بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ مَرْحَباً بِقَوْمٍ قَضَوْا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَبَقِيَ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ قَالَ جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ

Imam Ja‘far al-Sādiq عليه السلام said that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله dispatched his soldiers to battle to fight the enemy and, upon **triumphant** return, said: ‘Greetings on those who have successfully carried out the “Minor Combat” (*al-jihād al-Asghar*), but have yet to engage themselves in the “Greater Combat” (*al-jihād al-akbar*). He was asked: ‘O Prophet of Allah! What is the “Greater Combat” (*jihād al-nafs*)? To which he replied: ‘Combat with self’. (*Wasā’il a-Shī‘ah*, H 20208)



# Similar Hadith on combat against self

عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ ع عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع قَالَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ  
ص بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ مَرْحَباً بِقَوْمٍ قَضَوْا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَ بَقِيَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ  
الْأَكْبَرُ قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - وَ مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ فَقَالَ جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ وَ قَالَ ص إِنَّ  
أَفْضَلَ الْجِهَادِ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْهِ.

From Musa ibn Ja'far عليه السلام narrating from his father who took from his forefathers that Amirul Mu'minīn عليه السلام said: The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ dispatched his soldiers to battle to fight the enemy and, upon their **triumphant** return, said, “Greetings those who have successfully carried out the ‘Minor Combat’ (*al-jihad al-Asghar*), but have yet to engage themselves in the ‘Greater Combat’” (*al-jihad al-akbar*).” He was asked, ‘O Prophet of Allah! What is the ‘Greater Combat’? To which he replied, “Combat with the self.” And the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: ***The best combat is the combat of one who fights his inner self.*** (Ibid, H 20216).



# Hadith from *Combat with the Self* -3

وَمِنْ أَلْفَاظِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص الشَّدِيدُ مَنْ غَلَبَ نَفْسَهُ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: the truly powerful person is the one who has conquered himself (*Wasā' al-Shī'ah*, H 20212)

- When two people were wrestling, the HP ﷺ stopped. People thought he was interested in the game or in judging who is better. But said above.

وَإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ عَنِ الْمُفْضَلِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ الصَّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ع مَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَاعِظٌ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ وَ زَاجِرٌ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ قَرِينٌ مُرْشِدٌ اسْتَمَكَنَ عَدُوَّهُ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

Imam al-Sādiq عليه السلام said: He who does not have a preaching heart, a reproaching self, and a guiding friend will be easily overcome by his enemy (*Ibid*, H 20213).

-Three qualities for defense against the self

-Meaning of preaching heart: knowledgeable, wise, thoughtful

-Reproaching self would never give into desires or whims.

# Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 4

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو وَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ جَمِيعاً عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ آبَائِهِ ع فِي وَصِيَّةِ النَّبِيِّ ص لِعَلِيِّ قَالَ: يَا عَلِيُّ أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مَنْ أَصْبَحَ لَا يَهُمُّ بِظُلْمِ أَحَدٍ.

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام narrated on the authority of the Imams before him, that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله in his advice to Imam Ali عليه السلام said: O Ali, the best thing about self-struggle is when a person wakes up with no desire to wrong anyone. (*Wasā'il*, H 20214)

- Wake up with a clear mind, not influenced by desires
- sleep with purity in heart by doing wudu and planning not to harm
- When we go to sleep, we are on the threshold of death. Q 39:42

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

39:42 *Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.*

# Observing Ramadan beyond it

Holy Prophet ﷺ said (found in Shi'ī & Sunni sources)

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْعِبَادُ مَا فِي رَمَضَانَ لَتَمَّتْ أَنْ يَكُونَ رَمَضَانُ سَنَةً

*If the servants knew what was in Ramadan, they would have wished that Ramadan lasts for a year. (Shahrullāh, H 2)*

لَوْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا لَكُمْ فِي رَمَضَانَ لَزِدْتُمْ لِلَّهِ شُكْرًا

*If you knew what is there for you in Ramadan, you will increase appreciation/ thanks for Allah (Ibid, H 3)*

1. List all you can that is associated with Ramadan.
2. Highlight those that you can continue beyond Ramadan.
3. Do not allow the spirit of Ramadan to leave you.
4. Have a buddy: the 2 can remind and admonish each other
5. Do not be carried away on the Day of Eid.

# Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 5

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ ابْنِ فَضَّالٍ عَنْ غَالِبِ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ عَنْ شُعَيْبِ الْعَقْرُقُوفِيِّ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ ع قَالَ: مَنْ مَلَكَ نَفْسَهُ إِذَا رَغِبَ وَ إِذَا رَهَبَ وَ إِذَا اشْتَهَى وَ إِذَا غَضِبَ وَ إِذَا رَضِيَ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ جَسَدَهُ عَلَى النَّارِ

H 20215 Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام: One who has complete control over himself (*nafs*), when he desires something as well as when he fears something, when he is angry as well as when he is pleased, Allah prohibits the Fire of Hell from touching his body.

- Complete control over self allows you not to transgress
- We have the right to desire as well as fear
- It is natural to get angry or become pleased
- It is the *nafs* which makes us cross the red lines
- Instead of the *nafs* let us be driven by wara', taqwā and 'aql.

After listening to the famous sermon of from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ, Imam Ali asked: *O Rasūlullāh, what is the best of the deeds in this month?* The Apostle said, *O Abul-Hasan! The best of deeds in this month is wara' from what Allah has prohibited.*

# Hadith from *Combat with the Self*-6

و عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ خَالِدٍ وَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عِيسَى جَمِيعاً عَنْ الْبَرْقِيِّ عَنْ النَّضْرِ بْنِ سُؤَيْدٍ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ الْحَلَبِيِّ عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنْ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ هَارُونَ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَ الْبَصَرَ وَ الْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا - قَالَ يُسْأَلُ السَّمْعُ عَمَّا سَمِعَ وَ الْبَصَرُ عَمَّا نَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ وَ الْفُؤَادُ عَمَّا عُقِدَ عَلَيْهِ.

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام: *Surely the ears and the eyes and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that (Q 17:36), i.e., that the ears will be questioned regarding what they heard, and the eyes with regard to what they looked at, and the heart regarding what it believe it (Ibid, H. 20219)*

- Look at the commentary on the verse by 'Allamah Tabātabā'ī in *Al-Mizān*, v 25, pp 122, 123 & 126.
- Ears, eyes and the heart are gateway to knowledge

# Something for you to ponder?

Try to answer the following question in 2 – 3 lines and email them to [director@academyofislam.com](mailto:director@academyofislam.com). Although a spiritual/internal fast is important and essential, for it is like the major combat (*al-jihad al-akbar*) why would an evil thought or plan to harm someone or harbor envy not break our physical fast?

## Why we reminded you thrice and not more?

From al-Sadūq in *al-Faqīh*: Amir al-Mu'minīn عليه السلام said to a man from Bani Sa'd: Should I not tell you about myself and Fatimah? ... The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ came to us in the morning while we were still in bed and said: '*As-Salāmu 'Alaykum*' (Peace be upon you). We were silent out of shyness for where we were. Then he said: '*As-Salāmu 'Alaykum*' (again) and we remained silent. Then he said again: '*As-Salāmu 'Alaykum*' so we feared that if we remained silent (a third time) then he would leave. This was his practice – he would salute thrice and if he were permitted to enter, he would do so otherwise he would leave. So, we said: '*Alaykas-Salām Ya Rasūlullāh*' (Upon you be peace O Prophet of Allah!) Please enter! So, he entered. <https://www.al-islam.org/sunan-nabi-sayyid-muhammad-husayn-tabatabai>



# Your responses - 1

1. Fasting is a mean to an end-Taqwa. Taqwa leads to wisdom of avoiding envy, hate, evil & other deadly sins promoted by Shaitan. By invalidating a fast Allah does not wish to negate a chance for a human to achieve a higher purpose. In an analogous example, not offering salat **does not** invalidate a fast.

2. According to Sh Leghaei, fasting has three levels, namely: Fasting Al-Shariah (jurisprudential), Fasting of Al-Tariqat (ethical), and fasting of Al-Haqiqat (mystical). So, although an evil thought or envy does not invalidate jurisprudential fasting, it would undoubtedly impact mystical fasting. In mystical fasting--the highest level of fasting--one should detach from everything other than God. Envy or an evil plan would prevent the believer from detaching and risk the mystical fast but not necessarily compromise the jurisprudential fast.

3. I think the fasts do not break because: 1. Allah (swt) is encompassing in His mercy, and He has determined that only physical (carnal) desires like eating will break the physical fasts



# Your responses - 2

Due to Allah's mercy as it would be difficult for most of us to have a perfect fast. Our goal, whether we are in Ramadan or not, to purify our soul, and fasting helps achieve this goal. It's a goal of a lifetime but until we get there, Allah accepts our physical fast due to his mercy. Allah swt knows best.

It has invalidated the fast but:

- 1) No action has taken physically, by consuming any food or drink
- 2) Not breath the smoke knowingly which could break the fast physically nor said verbally anything wrong about Quran Hadith or Ahlulbayt.
- 3) asked the forgiveness, pay some Sadaqah and repented immediately As the evil thought came in mind.

# Your Questions Answered

Q1. Where can we get the book *Combat with the Self*?

A1. Preview for the book can be found at

[https://books.google.com/books/about/Combat\\_with\\_the\\_Self.html?id=p3g5I3nORiUC](https://books.google.com/books/about/Combat_with_the_Self.html?id=p3g5I3nORiUC)

Q2. Some people had trouble joining the class.

A2. Yes, we had erred in saying that it would be at 11 am in UK, till Saturday March 25 it would be at 10 am, and thereafter *iA* at 11 am.

Q3 Some of you could not register for the course.

A3 Please email [director@academyofislam.com](mailto:director@academyofislam.com) and you will receive the Zoom invitation link. You may chat privately to Sr Najma Dhala-Datoo.

Q4 How can I access the previous sessions? Go to [www.academyofislam.com/ali-657](http://www.academyofislam.com/ali-657) and ALI YouTube channel

Q5 How to get spiritually connected in Ramadan. *iA* we will cover this.

Q6 Can we take picture of the slide screen? Yes, sure you can.

# References

Al-‘Āmilī, Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Hurr. *Combat with the Self*, ICAS, London: 2003

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Tabātabā’ī, ‘Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. *Al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-Quran*. Used English translations where available.

Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani, *An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur’an*, [www.al-islam.org](http://www.al-islam.org)