

## From Juz' 30: Successful is the one who purifies it!

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا \* فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا \* قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا \* وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا

By the soul and Him who fashioned it, and inspired it with [discernment between] its virtues and vices: one who purifies it is felicitous, and one who betrays it fails (ʿash-Shams:7-10)

### Reflections:

As the month of Ramaḍān wraps up, we are left with a deep sense of inward remorse and sorrow as we depart from the Divine banquet. If we take one lesson from this month, it will throttle us forward with gratitude and hope. This lesson is encapsulated in these verses, whose import is reiterated in both Surahs recommended for recitation within the ʿid ʿal-Fiṭr prayers – the Taqwa which is the goal of fasting should be seated in a soul, that is constantly and consistently on the path of purification (Tazkiyah). Some key points worthy of reflection include:

**God's oath - by the soul and the One who fashioned it:** The human soul as the Divine viceregent on earth has such capacity and honour, that the Lord chooses to introduce Himself as the fashioner of this mystical creation. Such is the level of obliviousness in the human being that Amīr al-Muminīn (ʿa) is reported to have stated: “Do you consider yourself an insignificant germ, whereas lies within you the greater realm of existence”<sup>1</sup>. Such is the Almighty's pride on His creation of the human that He Hallows Himself as the best of Creators when describing the stages of human composition and soul infusion<sup>2</sup>. Swearing an oath in such a way indicates the profound importance and lasting impact this creature can have on himself and all other creation.

**Soul's intrinsic knowledge of virtue and vice:** Through inspiration, the human soul is intrinsically aware and cognizant of what is good and what is evil. This consciousness stems from the *Fitrah*, the God-oriented perfection-seeking human foundation. As long as it stays polished and purified, the outer and inner guides are available to affirm and guide these intrinsic inclinations in the human being towards higher levels of perfection. Fasting in the month of Ramaḍān is one sure way to bring us closer to the pure state, so we can continue the purification process through the rest of the year.

**True success is on the inside, failure stems from self-destruction:** The verse above defines true success – it stems from within and is gauged on the spiritual plane, not from the outside based on flimsy man-made arbitrary definitions based on material standards. Thus virtue and vice are also ‘real’, not ‘arbitrary’, and such a treatment leads to eternal felicity away from imaginative success. The believer is thus responsible for self-purification throughout his life – as his most potent enemy lies within, the untamed soul inviting towards evil – which if left on its own without nurturing through purification, rectification and a strong spiritual programming – will lead the soul to self-destruction and loss in this world and the Hereafter.

We pray to the Almighty to grant us the Tawfīq to engage in life-long self-purification on the path of the Qurʾān and the Ahlulbayt (ʿa), and through the inspiration of the God-given *Fitrah* and the illuminated ʿAql in preparation for the honourable government of Imām al-Mahdī (AJ).

**To ponder:** How can I continue with the spirit of the month of Ramaḍān into the spiritual new year ahead?

**References:** ʿAllāmah Ṭabaṭabei, *Tafsīr al-Mizān*. Āyatullāh Makārim Shirāzī, *Tafsīr Nimuneh*.