

# *Tazkiyat al-Nafs in the Context of Interfaith Dialogue*

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## **Abstract**

The concept of dialogue entails a conversation or discussion between two or more individuals or groups about a subject of interest or a problem that requires resolution with the consent of all parties involved in that discussion. Apart from the essential elements for a successful dialogue such as receptiveness, attentiveness, respect for diverse opinions, skillful communication, the dialogue also necessitates good intentions and right manners by which it is to be performed with prolific and lasting results. In this paper, our aim is to discuss the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul/self) and its impact on an effective dialogue in both, its internal and external connotations of which the second is not other than a reflection of the first, namely, a sort of introfaith dialogue, conducted between positive and negative powers or virtues and vices situated within a self.

**Keywords:** *tazkiyat al-nafs*, self-purification, enlightenment, spirituality, interfaith dialogue.

## **Introduction**

From the traditional Islamic perspective, the original condition or nature of human self is the state of purity (*fiṭrah*), as indicated in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet of Islam.<sup>1</sup> The concept of *fiṭrah* in relation to the nature of human beings received mixed interpretations by Muslim scholars. Commenting on the notion of *fiṭrah*, Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī (d. 1725 AD) states that “what is meant by adhering to it (i.e. *fiṭrah*) is to proceed according to its requirements and not to disturb it by following desires and the temptations of Satan.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Ḥaqqī elaborates the meaning of “upon which (i.e. *fiṭrah*) He has created [all] people,” by suggesting that the *fiṭrah* refers to the Divine nature upon which all humans are created, thus, being naturally able to accept the true path, that is, Islam and fully comprehend its principles and doctrines.<sup>3</sup> The concept of *fiṭrah* here is seen as “primordial nature” that modifies the religion in question, namely Islam in its universal sense, that is, submission<sup>4</sup> to God or His Will, for it is only this purpose for which God has created all people: “I did not create jinn and mankind, save to worship Me” (Qur'an, 51:56).<sup>5</sup> For Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373 AD), the *fiṭrah* conveys the meaning that all human beings are naturally gifted to follow the Islamic path.<sup>6</sup> However, al-Qurtubī (d. 1273 AD) a century earlier has maintained other view in his interpretation of this verse, suggesting that it is not possible that *fiṭrah* refers to Islam in its particular sense, “because ‘Islam (submission) and *īmān* (faith) are declaring with the tongue, embracing with the heart, and performing with the limbs,’ implying that if *fiṭrah* pertains to the original human nature, which is related to the spirit, it cannot pertain to the specific practices of a

particular religious tradition because these can only be performed while a spirit resides in a body in this world.”<sup>7</sup> The *fiṭrah*, in this regard, might be identified with a religion as such, as long as the former remains in accord with the latter.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the methodology of *tazkiyat al-nafs* is meant to assist believers in returning to, or regaining a spiritual state attested to in the pretemporal phase of humanity by every soul: “‘Am I not your Lord?’ they said, ‘Yes, You are, we testify.”<sup>9</sup> This verse, according to most classical commentators, is closely related to the concept of *fiṭrah* in both of its connotations mentioned above. It presents a reflection upon the recognition of the Divine Lordship on behalf of all humanity in this primordial covenant established between God and souls. The fact that the verb ‘*shahidnā*’ used in the verse, derives from the same root as the *shahādah*, indicates the acknowledgment of the Divine Unity (Tawhid) by all mankind.<sup>10</sup> For Seyyed Hossein Nasr this covenant is a timeless, metaphysical event in which the human soul affirmed the Divine lordship before its earthly existence. As such, “*qālū balā*” is not merely symbolic, but expresses an ontological reality: the human being is, at the deepest level, already aware of and connected to the Divine.<sup>11</sup> However, the covenant in question is often forgotten in this world due to the ignorance of human beings and their negligence as stated in the Qur’an: “We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it. And the human being carried it. Surely, he is very ignorant, a great wrong-doer” (Qur’an, 33:72). For this very reason, Sufi scholars underline the significance of the spiritual path in Islam within which realm the notion of *tazkiyah* with its methodologies is developed. They knew well that purifying the soul leads to the original nature of human beings as it projects the spiritual light of an enlightened soul into the outward universe, revealing the Divine harmony through its endless shades. Thus, our aim in this article is to discuss the concept of *tazkiyah* as a process of transforming human beings into their ‘best stature’ and how such a process might be implemented in the field of interfaith dialogue.

### ***Tazkiyat al-nafs* and the spiritual path in Islam**

Since the essential reason for the creation of human beings is the worship of God as indicated earlier, the entire teachings of the fundamental sources of Islam, the Qur’an and the Sunnah on the one hand, and the classical corpus dealing with Islamic spirituality are centered upon this reason in terms of its proper elaboration, comprehension and justification. In this context S. Mahmoud suggests that “the Divinely revealed law is crucial for knowing what is right and what is wrong. However, even when we know what is right and wrong, we may be under the influence of compulsions and temptations that control us or skew our judgment. Therefore, there is an important element in the *tazkiyat al-nafs*, namely, a conscious decision to changes one’s self in the direction of that which is better. As a spiritual-moral term, the *tazkiyah* denotes our self-imposed effort of eradicating those tendencies within the human self, which form obstacles in the path of our moral and spiritual development.”<sup>12</sup>

The concept of *tazkiyah* as the spiritual purification of the soul or self is a cornerstone in the Islamic spirituality and ethics. Derived from the Arabic root z-k-y, meaning purity, innocence,

justice, but also growth, goodness, blossoming, and success among others,<sup>13</sup> the *tazkiyat al-nafs* refers to the process of cleansing and liberating the soul from all spiritual impurities (*ṣifāt madhmūmah*), inclinations toward sin, and negative traits, in order to achieve a state of self-realization, inner peace, divine closeness, and moral excellence. The Qur'an indicates that the soul, being created and fashioned by God, has tendencies towards both, the good and the evil, depending on one's spiritual aspirations: "And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness. Successful indeed is the one who purifies their soul, and doomed is the one who corrupts it!" (Qur'an, 91:7-10). The wickedness and righteousness of the soul, according to some Qur'anic interpreters such as Mujāhid (d. 722 AD), Qatādah (d. 735 AD), and al-Thawrī (d. 778 AD), is understood as an indication that God has taught the soul or instilled in it the nature of evil and good and set the course for which it should follow in order to succeed and be saved.<sup>14</sup>

In relation to this interpretation, Ibn Kathīr narrated a hadith of the Prophet who was once asked about the deeds of mankind whether it is "something ordained (*qadā'*) for them and coming to pass from a previous measuring out (*qadar*), or something written for them only after the Message came to them from their Prophet, when there will be a clear proof against them?" To which he (i.e. the Prophet) replied, "Rather, it is ordained for them." So, the man said, "Then what is the point of our actions?" The Prophet replied, "Whosoever God created for one of the two positions [Paradise or Hell], He makes it easy for him [to attain]. The proof of that is in the Book of God: By the soul and the One Who fashioned it and inspired it as to what makes it iniquitous or reverent."<sup>15</sup>

From an Islamic perspective, all divine revelations, linguistic and non-linguistic or divine scriptures and natural phenomena,<sup>16</sup> and prophets and messengers are sent with the mission to guide mankind to righteous or spiritual path/s: "Indeed, Allah has done the believers a 'great' favor by raising a messenger from among them - reciting to them His signs (*āyāt*), purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom..." (Qur'an, 2:129). The verse clearly describes the function of the prophets as the Divine Messengers and the Spiritual Guides in relation to people. Likewise, the purpose of diverse natural phenomena is created to provide a specific guidance for humanity by virtue of its symbolic signs (*āyāt*): "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding" (Qur'an, 3:190). The cited verses indicate that the notion of *āyāt* (pl. of *āyah*), denoting sign/verse/symbol, is used for both types of revelation, linguistic or qur'anic and non-linguistic or cosmic. This fact suggests that divine signs in the sense of guidance to the right path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) are present not only in the form of explicit revelation but all-around natural environment wherein human being is situated and even in themselves.<sup>17</sup> It is therefore not surprising that both, the *Sharī'ah* and *Ṭarīqah* in Islam designate road, way or path respectively, the first representing the Islamic sacred law and the second the Islamic spiritual order. The *Sharī'ah* is a road incumbent to all Muslims if they are to end their earthly journey in a blessed state, the *Ṭarīqah* is designed for those who wish to take

a step further to deepen their knowledge and discover the ultimate nature of things and themselves.<sup>18</sup>

The latter was the platform for developing detailed methodologies dealing with the *tazkiyat al-nafs*, theoretically and practically. Among the first who wrote on the topic is Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728 AD), followed by al-Muḥāsibī (d. d. 857 AD), later by al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 AD), and Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240 AD) and others.<sup>19</sup> Inspired by the Qur’anic and Sunnatic narratives about the *nafs* (soul/self) being imprinted with its dual nature, the one inclining toward righteousness, the other toward corruption, these Muslim thinkers emersed themselves into meticulous study of psychological nature of human beings in order to construct systematic methods for the purification of mind and soul in both, the doctrinal and the applied manners. Firstly, they had to deal with detecting all mental and emotional factors that influence and manifest itself in human behavior. Numerous classifications of psychic and pneumatic elements of human beings that form the essential segments of cognitive faculties such as perception, memory, intuition, imagination and reasoning among others, were made. Similarly, the study of categorization of the soul, based primarily on the Qur’an and Sunnah have been conducted in this regard.<sup>20</sup> The following table to certain extent depicts the classical Islamic model of the soul:<sup>21</sup>

Main categories	Subcategories
Nature of the soul	Concept of <i>fitrah</i>
	<i>Fitrah</i> exists underneath the projected self
	Being out of alignment with <i>fitrah</i>
	<i>Dunya</i> as distraction
	<i>Fitrah</i> as internal compass—realignment
Structure of the soul	Distinct features of the soul
	Soul as whole—integrated nature of the soul
	<i>Nafs</i> (lower self)
	<i>Qalb</i> (heart)
	<i>Aql</i> (intellect)
	<i>Ruh</i> (spirit)
Stages of the soul	Changing nature/fluctuation of the <i>nafs</i>
	<i>Nafs al amara bil su</i>
	<i>Nafs al lawwama</i>
	<i>Nafs al mutmainah</i>
Development of the soul	The human project of development

Main categories	Subcategories
	<i>Tazkiyat an nafs</i> (purification of the soul)
	<i>Jihad an nafs</i> (struggle of the soul)
	<i>Tahdhib al akhlaq</i> (refinement of character)
	Need for moral reform
	<i>Muhlikat</i> and <i>munjiyat</i> (vices and virtues)

All technical terms in the table have been thoroughly studied as the essential subjects of the Islamic psychology by numerous Muslim philosophers and scholars over the centuries and consequently introduced within the scope of mystical tradition of Islam for practical implementation that last until today. It is therefore almost impossible to find any spiritual path in Islam that does not share abovementioned perspectives on human soul, its stations and stages, vices and virtues and proper methodology for its purification, perfection and finally preparation to return to its source.

### ***Tazkiyat al-nafs* and interfaith dialogue**

While deeply rooted in the Islamic teachings, the idea of spiritual purification resonates across various religious traditions and offers common ground for interfaith dialogue. In a world marked by religio-cultural diversity and various conflicts on the one hand, and by reduction of knowledge to mere information with all technological and digital media advancements on the other hand, the need for spirituality is ever-increasing prerequisite for affluent and effective dialogue between not only different religious traditions, but also different factions within one religion (intra-faith dialogue) as well as within diverse tendencies within one self (intro-faith dialogue). In this context, the *tazkiyat al-nafs* as well-developed system for spiritual enlightenment may provide a psychological framework for cultivating inner harmony on individual level and consequently healthier and deeper interactions on societal level, across religious and cultural boundaries.

Having been chosen as the Divine vicegerent (*khalīfatullāh*), the human being as such was given the responsibility not only towards God that is exercised by virtue of the servitude (*al-ta'abbud*), but towards the rest of creation, from fellow humans to animals, minerals and the rest of natural species, the latter being reflected through a range of ethical interactions (*al-ta'āmul*). However, the title of *khalīfah* is conditioned by a degree of the servitude which for its part depends on one's intellectual and spiritual awareness of the Truth or Reality (*al-Ḥaqq/al-Ḥaqīqah*) the knowledge of which is the ultimate goal of human existence. The awareness in questions is contingent upon the knowledge of one's self as stated by the Prophet of Islam: "Whosoever knows his self, knows his Lord."<sup>22</sup> The hadith clearly suggests that self-knowledge leads to that of the Truth. It is precisely in the process of knowing oneself where the *tazkiyah* plays the crucial role for it requires detection of all vices of the soul such as arrogance, greed, resentment, hatred, and

egoism, then getting rid of them by methods of purification. On the other hand, one needs to uphold all virtues of the soul such as love, compassion, gratitude, humility, and patience in order to achieve the goal of purifying and perfecting his or her soul. In other words, to reach the states of servitude and stewardship.

In relation to interfaith dialogue, which refers to a constructive interaction with people from other faiths and cultures on subjects of mutual interest, the *tazkiyah* might serve as a foundation of the three main ethical principles, namely, *al-niyyah* (intention, aim, motive), *al-karam* (honor, respect, generosity), and *husn al-zann* (good expectation, optimism, aspiration) with regard to an individual or collective interaction with the “other.” The intention from an Islamic perspective, beside its outstanding reputation in the process of *tazkiyat al-nafs*,<sup>23</sup> is the key principle that determines the quality of an outward action. Its importance has been stressed in both the Qur’an and Hadith of the Prophet. The Qur’anic verse in this context “Allah knows what is in your hearts” (Qur’an, 33:51), has been explained by other verses that underline the Divine knowledge and awareness of everything in the created order of reality.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the importance of intention has been often emphasized by the Prophet of Islam such as in the hadith “The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended...” (*Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, 1).<sup>25</sup> Thus, in relation to interfaith dialogue as to any other act, the good intention stands as the real determiner of the outcome regardless of what the outward actions appear to be. The methodology of *tazkiyat al-nafs* is made for universal purposes as human beings regardless of their cultural or religious background and despite their scientific and technological development, psychologically and socially remain intact. It is safe to say that the relevance of *tazkiyah* today still holds the ground since the problems such as egoism, monopoly, materialism and others are dominant in contemporary societies as they were centuries ago. The same applies to inner diseases of the soul such as pride, hate, and impatience to name but a few all of which can manifest outwardly as prejudice, racism, extremism, leading to violence and other human calamities. There is no doubt that a dialogue with sincere intention on how to purify, enlighten and perfect human souls will bring more benefits and problem resolutions not limited to certain individuals but extending to the societal plane, since purity does not reflect other than purity.

As for the respect or honor of otherness, another ethical concept that often appears in the Qur’an through various notions such as love (*al-mahabbah*), grace (*al-faḍl*), kindness (*al-ḥusn*) and alike, in addition to *karam* itself, it is a reminder that one needs to view and approach others in light of the Qur’anic principle “everything belongs to God,” and as such it deserves an honor and respect on the basis of equality, justice and other rights.<sup>26</sup> This verse might serve as the starting point for understanding the virtue of reverence. Without annihilating the spiteful features of the soul and replacing them with virtues, inwardly and outwardly, that is in private and public behavior, the whole process of the purification of the soul would be meaningless. That is why the Qur’an and the Sunnah continually insist on the above virtues. In addition to that, even the virtue of honor ultimately belongs to God but He has extended it to all humanity as the Qur’an informs: “And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and

provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference” (Qur’an, 17:70). Without speculating about possible reasons for such a Divine blessing upon mankind,<sup>27</sup> it is certain that vicegerency, yet another God-given reverence to human beings, as stated earlier, is part of the said honor. But the latter also implies human responsibility in the sense of the guardianship of the entire earthly creation, including the nature itself. As a respond to that Divine favor bestowed upon mankind, they are required to display the honor to the rest of the creation in their interaction with the “other.”<sup>28</sup> An example of such an interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims in the form of Divine imperative is provided by the Qur’an: “Invite ‘all’ to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner” (Qur’an, 16:125). As interfaith dialogue generally promotes a constructive and positive interaction between people of different religions concerning the themes of shared human concerns such as reducing the poverty, climate threats and social injustice, while promoting equality and human rights, sustainability, and social harmony, the above verse may be taken as the principle for that noble task.

Finally, the third element extracted from the methodology of *tazkiyat al-nafs*, namely *husn al-zann* or promising anticipation, may well serve interfaith community in enhancing their belief that honest discussion and struggle for spiritual and social advancement coupled with reverential and just treatment of others will result in a promising hope for all humanity. The same approach is strongly encouraged on the spiritual path whereupon the sages are advised to stay firm in their faith and reliance on God (*tawakkul*)<sup>29</sup> regardless of the obstacles they may encounter along the way. As the world is facing increasing challenges on several fronts, starting with increased economic upheavals and uncertainties, growing migrations, climate issues to horrifying genocidal hostilities and conflicts all of which are mere manifestations of vicious nature of the soul encompassed with evil traits topped by ignorance, egoism, despotism, materialism and numerous others that blind the self to see the real world, be it microcosm or macrocosm, the latter being just a reflection of the former. In this context of human interaction with others such as in domain of interfaith dialogue, or generally in contact with anything we consider to be outside of ourselves, the Qur’an provides the guidelines through the Divine intervention in one of the Prophetic lived episodes: “So by mercy from Allāh, [O Muḥammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allāh. Indeed, Allāh loves those who rely [upon Him]” (Qur’an, 3:159). The virtues of compassion, forgiveness, intercession, consultation and whatever else from righteous qualities one is able to undertake in approaching others, then upholding to the *tawakkul* and *husn al-zann*, constitute the successful interaction the results of which are expected to be the external manifestation of the internal merits invested in the whole process.

## **Conclusion**

Apart from the socio-political and religio-cultural aspects of interfaith dialogue that represent the basis for the most interfaith academic scholarships and practical enterprises, there is an element hardly explored in this domain of studies, namely, the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) the importance of which is almost unparalleled not only in the realm of interfaith, but equally in that of intrafaith as well as introfaith forms of dialogue. In the Islamic spirituality, this method of self-enlightenment or self-purification is well known and it has been doctrinairely and practically part of the Islamic tradition since the Prophetic time. Needless to say, the essential basis for the methodology of *tazkiyat al-nafs* is the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The main purpose of the purification of the soul is rediscovery of one's original nature, that is, from an Islamic perspective, pure and muslim in its universal sense, thus returning to one's original or primordial state of being.

As such, the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* in the context of interfaith dialogue may serve as the foundation for the notions of equality and similarity between people of different religious and cultural backgrounds. Having been centered upon the goal of perfection and purifying the soul on its path toward God, the purpose of *tazkiyah* is emptying one's self from all the negative traits such as ignorance, hate, and violence, while at the same time, enriching one's self with all the positive qualities such as enlightenment, love and peace. This purpose of *tazkiyah* relates not only to the inward purification of the self, but also to the outward reflection of such a purification that is often visible through one's relationship with his or her fellow human beings and the rest of the creation, including animals and other natural phenomena. By introducing the *tazkiyah* into the realm of interfaith dialogue, the existing doctrines or aspects interfaith will certainly be intellectually deepened and spiritually strengthened in their resolutions for the lasting peace and harmony between people and also between people and natural environment.

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<sup>1</sup> "So, direct your face [i.e., self] toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fiṭrah<sup>1</sup> of Allāh upon which He has created [all] people" (Qur'an, 30:30). As for the hadith, it states: "No child is born but upon fiṭrah. It is his parents who make him/her a Jew or a Christian or a Polytheist..." (Book 46, Hadith 37, <https://sunnah.com>).

<sup>2</sup> Ismail Haqqi, *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān* [Sūrah al-Rūm: 30], <https://www.altafsir.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ismail Haqqi, *Ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> For the detailed analysis of the concept of Islam in its universal and particular connotations, see Osman Bakar, "Islamization of knowledge: its conception, methodology and challenges," in *Seminar on Islam in ASEAN's Institutions of Higher Learning II* (Islam and Social sciences, 1990), 13-16.

<sup>5</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed.), *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), pp. 991.

<sup>6</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed.), *Ibid*, pp. 991

<sup>7</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed.), *Ibid*, pp. 991. See also al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* [Sūrah al-Rūm: 30], <https://www.altafsir.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> For more on this see Senad Mrahorović, "The Concept of Fiṭrah in Spiritual and Rational Orientation: An Islamic Perspective," *Religions: A Scholarly Journal*, Issue 17, 2023, pp. 122-131.

<sup>9</sup> The complete verse is the following: "And 'remember' when your Lord brought forth from the loins of the children of Adam their descendants and had them testify regarding themselves. 'Allah asked, ' "Am I not your Lord?" They replied, "Yes, You are! We testify." 'He cautioned, "Now you have no right to say on Judgment Day, 'We were not aware of this'" (Qur'an, 7:172).

<sup>10</sup> Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2005), pp. 136.

<sup>11</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), pp. 170-171.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.samirmahmoud.com/article/the-purification-of-the-self>.

<sup>13</sup> Teufik Mutić, *Arapsko-Bosanski Rječnik* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2017), pp. 597.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafṣīr ibn Kathīr* (Sūrah al-Shams: 8), <https://quran.com/91:9/tafsirs/en-tafsir-ibn-kathir>.

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- <sup>15</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Ibid*; Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed.) *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, pp. 1520.
- <sup>16</sup> Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'an: Semantics of the Qur'anic Weltanschauung* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2002), pp. 142-215.
- <sup>17</sup> "We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that this 'Quran' is the truth" (Qur'an, 41:53).
- <sup>18</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), pp. 5.
- <sup>19</sup> Senad Mrahoročić, "The Role of Muḥāsabah al-Nafs in Conflict Resolution," *Religions: A Scholarly Journal*, Issue 19, 2024.
- <sup>20</sup> See for example contributions in this domain of study by al-Muḥāsibī and al-Ghazālī in G. Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of al-Muḥāsibī* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 168 onwards and al-Ghazālī, *On Disciplining the Soul and Breaking the Two Desires* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1995), respectively.
- <sup>21</sup> Rothman, A., Coyle, A., "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: An Islamic Model of the Soul." *J Relig Health* 57, 1731–1744 (2018).
- <sup>22</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ibid*, pp. 5.
- <sup>23</sup> "Know that sincerity is a reality, a foundation, and perfection. These are three pillars. Its foundation is intention, or sincerity is within it. Its reality is negating any corruption of intention, and its perfection is truthfulness" (Al-Ghazālī, *Forty Principles of Religion: An Adapted Summary of Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* [London: Turath Publishing, 2016], pp.286.
- <sup>24</sup> For example: "Indeed, from Allāh nothing is hidden in the earth nor in the heaven" (Qur'an, 3:5), or "Whether you speak openly 'or not', He certainly knows what is secret and what is even more hidden" (Qur'an, 20:7). For more on this see al-Qurtubī [Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 51], <https://www.altafsir.com/>.
- <sup>25</sup> <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1>.
- <sup>26</sup> Exception from this principle according to al-Ghazālī are evil deeds or manifestations of vices that certainly deserve condemnation and disapproval. For detailed analysis of this issue, see al-Ghazālī, *Ibid*, pp. 339-341.
- <sup>27</sup> See commentary of this verse in Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed.), *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, pp. 715.
- <sup>28</sup> "And be good 'to others' as Allah has been good to you. Do not seek to spread corruption in the land, for Allah certainly does not like the corruptors" (Qur'an, 28:77); "Tell My 'believing' servants to say only what is best. Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them. Satan is indeed a sworn enemy to humankind" (Qur'an, 17:53); "And do good, for Allah certainly loves the good-doers" (Qur'an, 2:195).
- <sup>29</sup> See al-Ghazali, *Ibid*, pp. 301-315.