A photograph of a mosque interior. In the foreground, a person is seen in silhouette, looking towards a brightly lit staircase with intricate Islamic geometric patterns. The staircase is illuminated from below, creating a strong contrast with the dark surroundings. The architecture features multiple arches and a ceiling with a modern light fixture. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.

“Successful indeed are those involved in their purification.”

—al-Qur'an

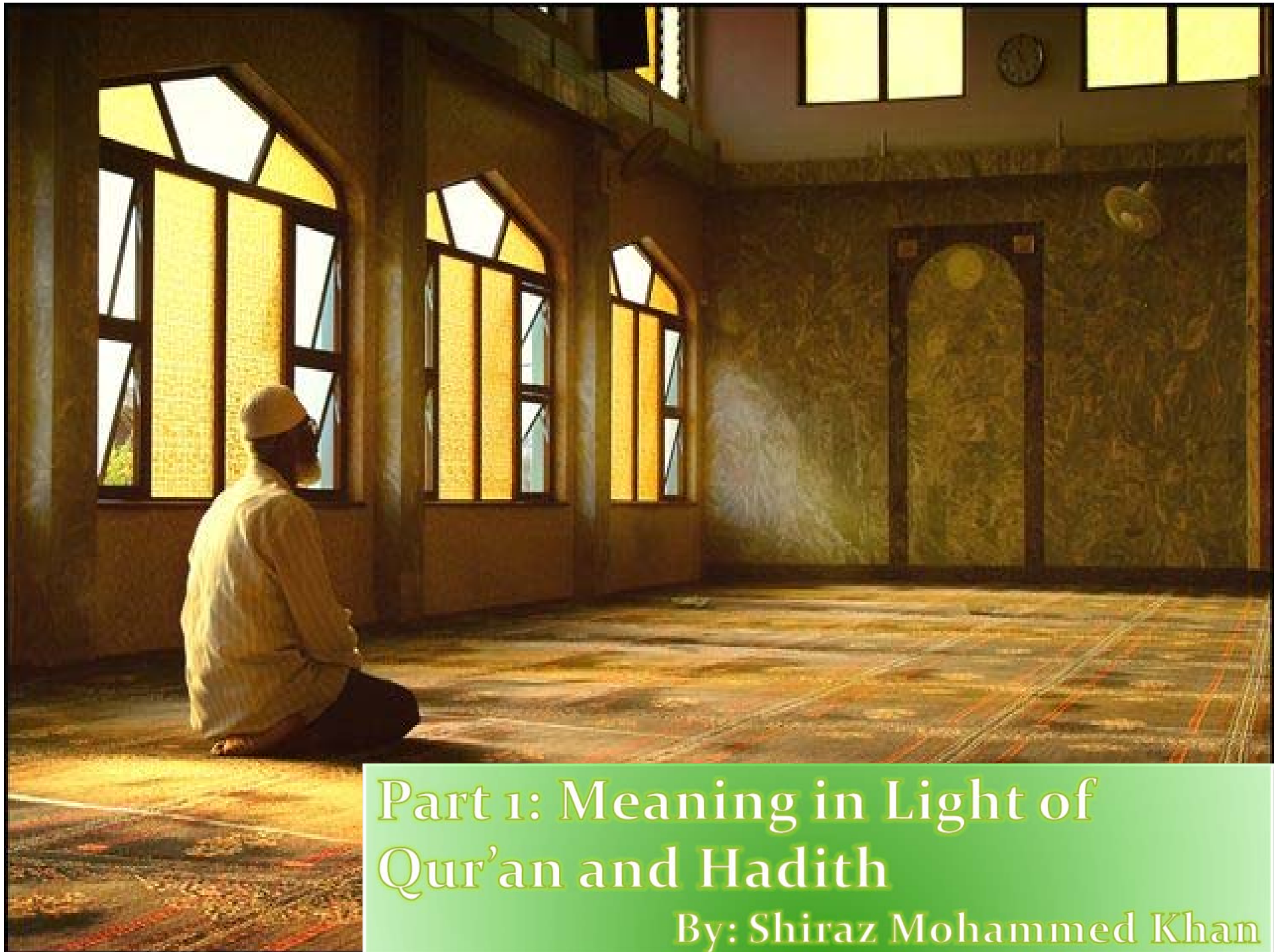
Purifying the Soul

—Tazkiya-tun Nafs—

[mahdaviaislamiccenterofchicago](http://mahdaviaislamiccenterofchicago.com)

Table of Contents

- **Part 1:** The Meaning in Light of Qur'an and Hadith
- **Part 2:** The Prescription Found in Qur'an and Hadith
- **Part 3:** The Prescription Given by the Ullema (Scholars)
- **Part 4:** Mahdaviath
- **Conclusion**
- **Quiz**



Part 1: Meaning in Light of Qur'an and Hadith

By: Shiraz Mohammed Khan



- **Purification** is a fundamental part of Islam.
- The Wudu is an example of this.
- The Wudu is demonstrated to someone before they take their Shahadah (When accepting Islam).

What is Tazkiyah?

- The term *Tazkiyah* means two things in Arabic:
 - to grow
 - to purify
- In the Qur'an Allah says, "He has succeeded who purifies it (i.e. their soul)" [**Qur'an 91:9**]
- So, *Tazkiya-tun Nafs* is working towards having a pure heart and soul.

Words of the Prophet (PBUH)

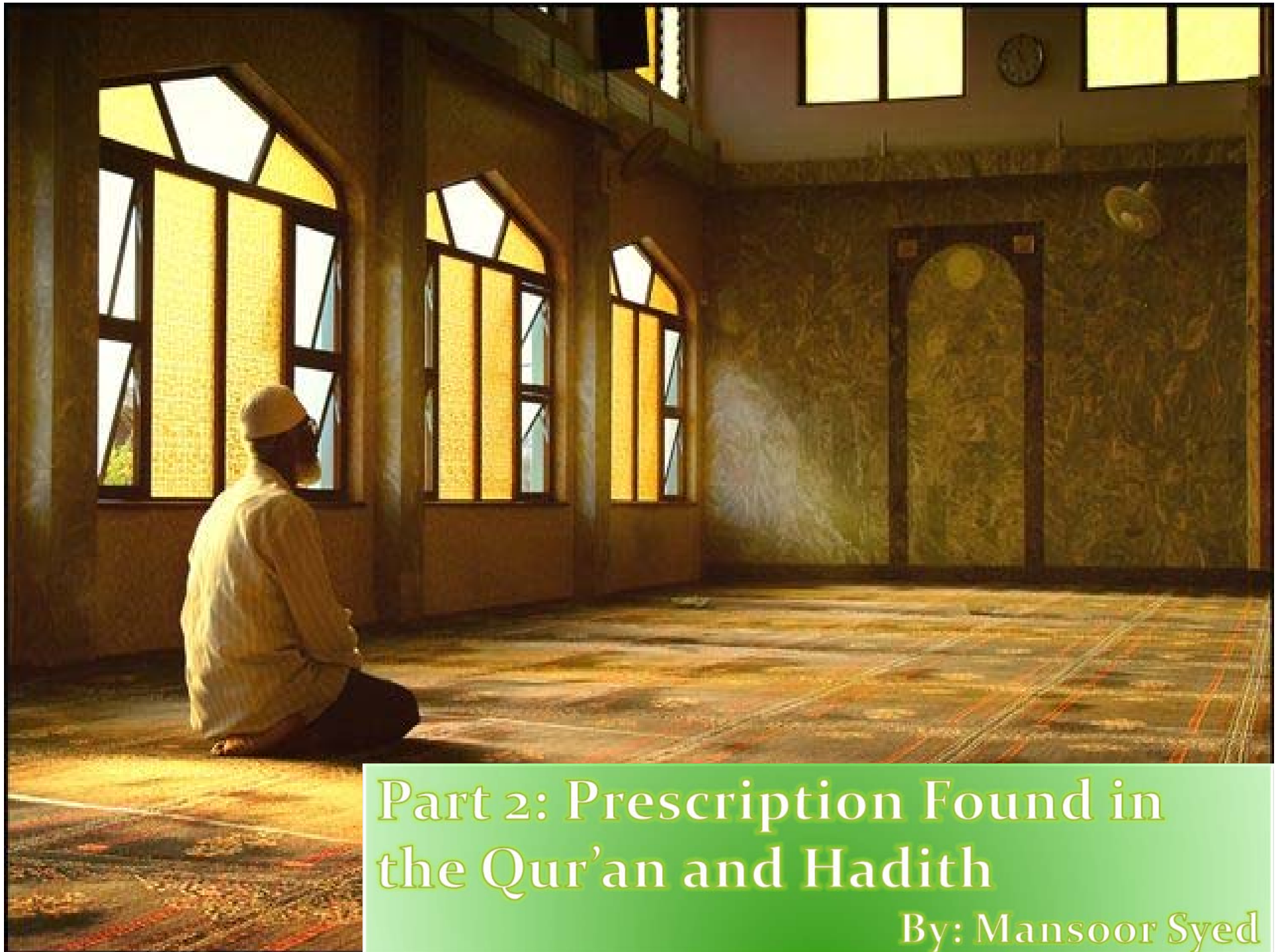
- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) captured the essence of our discussion in this Hadith:
"Successful indeed is the person who is sincere in faith, whose heart is pure, whose speech is truthful and whose character is upright."

Tazkiya-tun Nafs

- *Tazkiya-tun Nafs* (self-purification) is rooted in Spirituality (Ruhaniyath), and Spirituality involves:
 - The development of a heightened level of God-consciousness (“Allah is always present and watching all my actions.”)
 - An increased dedication to the spirit of righteousness (“I want to be a good person because that’s what Allah has commanded, and I want to please Him.”)

Striving to be Good on the Inside and Outside

- **Internally**, Tazkiyah refers to the purification of the self from the evils of bad intention, deceit, hypocrisy, selfishness, cowardice, arrogance, prejudice, and the like.
- **Outwardly**, it becomes manifested in one's attitude, behavior and character.
- The ultimate goal is **Ihsan**- goodness/excellence in the Inward and Outward.



Part 2: Prescription Found in the Qur'an and Hadith

By: Mansoor Syed

The *Nafs* (*Self or Ego*)

- There are three principal stages of *nafs* which are specifically mentioned in the Qur'an. They are stages in the process of development, refinement and mastery (purification) of the *nafs*:
 1. **The inciting Nafs (*nafs-i-ammara*)**
 - Evil
 2. **The self-accusing Nafs (*nafs-i-lawwama*)**
 - Between Good and Evil
 3. **The Nafs at peace (*nafs-i-mutma'inna*)**
 - Good

1.) The Inciting Nafs (*nafs-i-ammara*)

- In its primitive stage, the *nafs* stimulates us to commit evil: this is the *nafs* as the lower self, the base instincts.
- One of the earliest form of revelation that Prophet (PBUH) taught, “*If you feel no shame, do as you wish.*”

2.) The Self-Accusing Nafs (*nafs-i-lawwama*)

- This is the stage where the conscience is awakened and the self accuses one for listening to one's ego. One repents and asks for forgiveness.
- Here the *nafs* is inspired by your heart, sees the results of your actions, agrees with your brain, sees your weaknesses, and aspires to perfection.

3.) The Nafs at Peace (*nafs-i-mutma'inna*)

- This is the ideal stage of ego. On this level one is firm in one's faith and leaves bad manners behind.
- The soul becomes tranquil, at peace. At this stage, one has relieved themselves of all materialism and worldly problems, and are satisfied with the will of Allah (SWT).
- The ego here has been overcome. The self has become closer to Allah (SWT) and is more conscious of Him, so much so that these evil desires are gone.

God-Consciousness (*Taqwa*)

- “O you who profess belief! Be sincerely dutiful to Allah. Consider carefully what you send forth for the future; be sincerely dutiful to Allah. Surely, Allah is fully informed about all your activities.” [Qur'an 59:18]
- A person needs to be constantly aware that Allah (SWT) is watching him before committing any actions.

Upright Character

- Outer expression of inner purity is the most beautiful and valuable of human abilities.

“Surely good character is part of the completion of Faith.”

[Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)]

Good Deeds

- Faith (*Iman*) and Good deeds (*Amal-us-saalihaat*) is the sum total of human duty in this life. Binding ourselves to a wholesome, practical and beneficial philosophy of life and living by its principles, gives meaning and purpose to life.
- The Qur'an emphasizes the most valuable assets we take from this world to the next:
 - *Baaqeeyaat-us-saalihaat* - *the permanency of good actions*
[Qur'an 18:46]
 - *Qalb-un-saleem* - *the pure heart* **[Qur'an 26:88-89]**
- “Verily Allah does not consider your appearances or your wealth in (appraising you) but He considers your hearts and your deeds.”
— Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal

Speech and Gossip

- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:
“The worst of people are those engaged in slandering others, those who ruin relationships between dear ones and who try to find fault with innocent people.”
- The Prophet(PBUH) also cautioned us that:
“When you pursue the faults of others, you corrupt them.” He also warned that “those who unduly pursue the shortcomings of others will have their own faults exposed.”

Having Good Opinion of Others

- As people of Faith, we should harbor no unwarranted negativity towards others and also have the decency not to **search for faults** in others. One way to avoid this is, to mind one's own business.
- Fault-finding inevitably leads to undermining the character.
- Being **jealous or envious** of others also is a form of negativity.
- We should remember that when we are jealous of what others have (money, etc...), we are being jealous of what Allah (SWT) has given to them.

Being Humble vs. False Pride

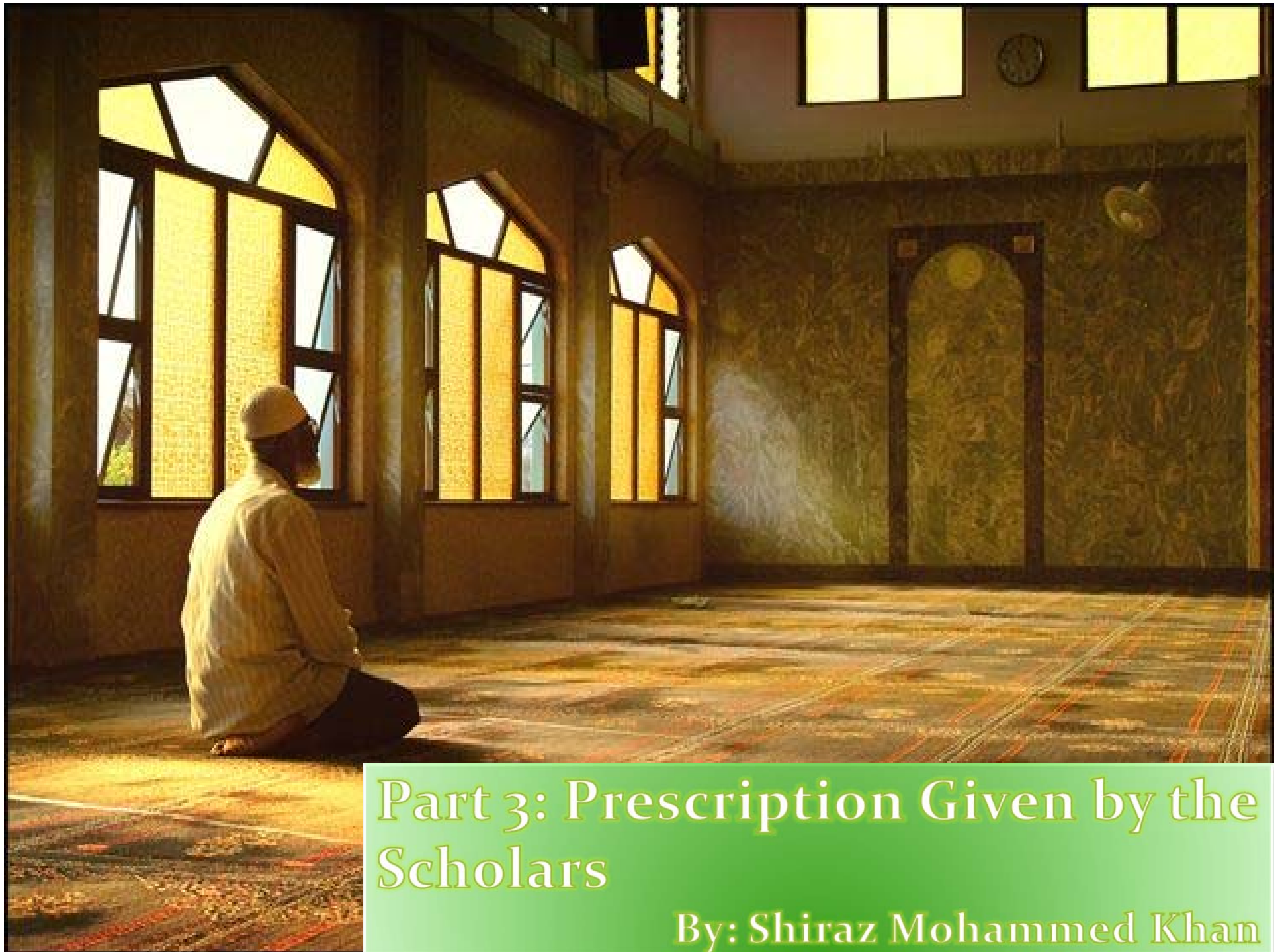
- Being humble and having humility should be the goal of the believer.
- Having an ego means one believes that he/she is better than other.
- If one reflects on oneself and looks to their own shortcomings, he would realize where he stands with Allah (SWT).

Benefits of TAZKIYA Given in Qur'an

- *Some of the benefits of achieving the state of Tazkiya (Purification) are:*
 - **FALAAH** which means, success, prosperity, felicity, fortune, good state, the attainment and acquisition of what one desires; the conversion of latent potentialities into actualities [**Qur'an 91:9, 87:14**]
 - The attainment of Paradise and permanence therein [**Qur'an 20:76**]

Characteristics of Nafs

- In its primitive state the nafs has seven heads that must be defeated:
 - False Pride (Takabbur)
 - Greed (Hirs)
 - Envy (Hasad)
 - Lust (Shahwah)
 - Backbiting (Gheebah)
 - Stinginess (Bokhl)
 - Malice (Keena)
- The Nafs of all of mankind has been created with the evil qualities mentioned. The Nafs is as inseparable from one as is one's shadow. It is an integral part of human nature.



Part 3: Prescription Given by the Scholars

By: Shiraz Mohammed Khan

The Scholars of Islam

- The Scholars of Islam paid great attention to the Ayahs of Tazkiyah in the Qur'an and words of the Prophet (PBUH)'s regarding it.
- Many scholars studied the texts closely and gave details regarding the **illnesses of the soul** and recommended methods to **cure** them.

Fighting the Inclination to Sin

- The one who desires to walk the Straight Path needs to protect 7 things from sin:
 - Eyes, Ears, Tongue, Stomach, Privates, Hands, Feet
- There are 7 doors of Hell.
- One who said **Gheebah (Back-biting)** will go through a particular door of Hell, and the one who listened to **Gheebah** silently and will go to through another door.

Sins of the Heart

- The Sins of the Heart are more dangerous since they are not perceptible or visible, they are being committed by your heart.
- These sins will lead to the sins of the body. They are:
 1. Jealousy
 2. Vanity/Showing-off
 3. Pride
 4. Love of Dunya (the World)

Hadith:

"Truly, in the body there is a morsel of flesh, and when it is corrupt the body is corrupt, and when it is sound the body is sound. Truly, it is the qalb [heart]."

— *Sahih al-Bukhari*

Sins of the Heart (Jealousy)

- **Jealousy** and **Envy** is a sin that sits deep in the heart:
 - Hadith: *“Jealousy eats up your good deeds as fire eats up wood”*
- Out of the many fights that take place between multiple parties, if you look at the core, you’ll find jealousy as the cause.

Sins of the Heart (Vanity)

- **Vanity** or **Showing-off** is another example of a sin that sits deep in the heart.
- Here you are not doing good deeds for Allah (SWT) and His pleasure, but you are doing it to get attention and praise from others.
- Hazrath Ali (RZ) in the condition of Jihad.
- Vanity is so dangerous that it has been deemed as a minor shirk: **Shirk-e-Khafi**.

Sins of the Heart (Pride)

- **Pride** involves having a feeling of self-importance, feeling superior to others, and enjoying self-praise.

Example: Shaitan's Mistake

- There was no Shaitan to mislead Shaitan. His Nafs misled him.
- How Iblees became Shaitan.
- Instead of being grateful for the Mercies of Allah (SWT), he focused upon himself. Self-infatuation and Self-importance blurred his intelligence.
- Ambition drove his Nafs to the such an extent that he simply forgot that he was but a mere insignificant creature. He ultimately deemed himself fit to question Allah (SWT)'s wisdom and instructions.

Sins of the Heart (Love of Dunya)

- **Love of Dunya** involves love of material gains, wealth, attachment.
- The main cause of all of the previous three sins is the love of Dunya. So if one cuts this root of the sins, there you may abstain yourself from other sins too.
- **Hadith:** *“The love of the world is the root of all sin and mistakes that are committed” if you want to abstain from sin then “abstain from love of the world (hubb-e Dunya)”*

The Recommended Cure

- The Cure is protecting oneself by forming **Taqwa**, which means two things:
 - God-Consciousness
 - Shield to protect your Iman (Faith)
- “O you who believe! Be sincerely dutiful to Allah. Consider carefully what you send forth for the future; be sincerely dutiful to Allah. Surely, Allah is fully informed about all your activities.” **[Qur'an 59:18]**
- A person needs to be constantly aware that Allah (SWT) is watching him before committing any actions.

The Recommended Cure (Cont.)

- **Being in the Company (Sohbath) of the Pious** is a prescription to forming and growing Taqwa. Who are the pious people? What type of people are the one whose gathering (*majlis*) we should be in?
- **Hadith:** Sahaba asked, “Who are the people of good that we should be in the company of?”
 1. **Seeing them creates remembrance of Allah (SWT) in your heart.**
 2. **Hearing what they say increases your Ilm (Knowledge).**
 3. **Seeing their Amal (Actions) reminds you of Akhirah (Afterlife).**

Hadith Regarding Company of Allah (SWT)

- Those who will be in the Company of Allah (SWT) during the Day of Judgment are:
 1. The **Humble** person.
 2. The person with **Humility**.
 3. The person has **Taqwa**.
 4. The person who engages in the Remembrance of Allah (**ZIKR**).

Zikrullah

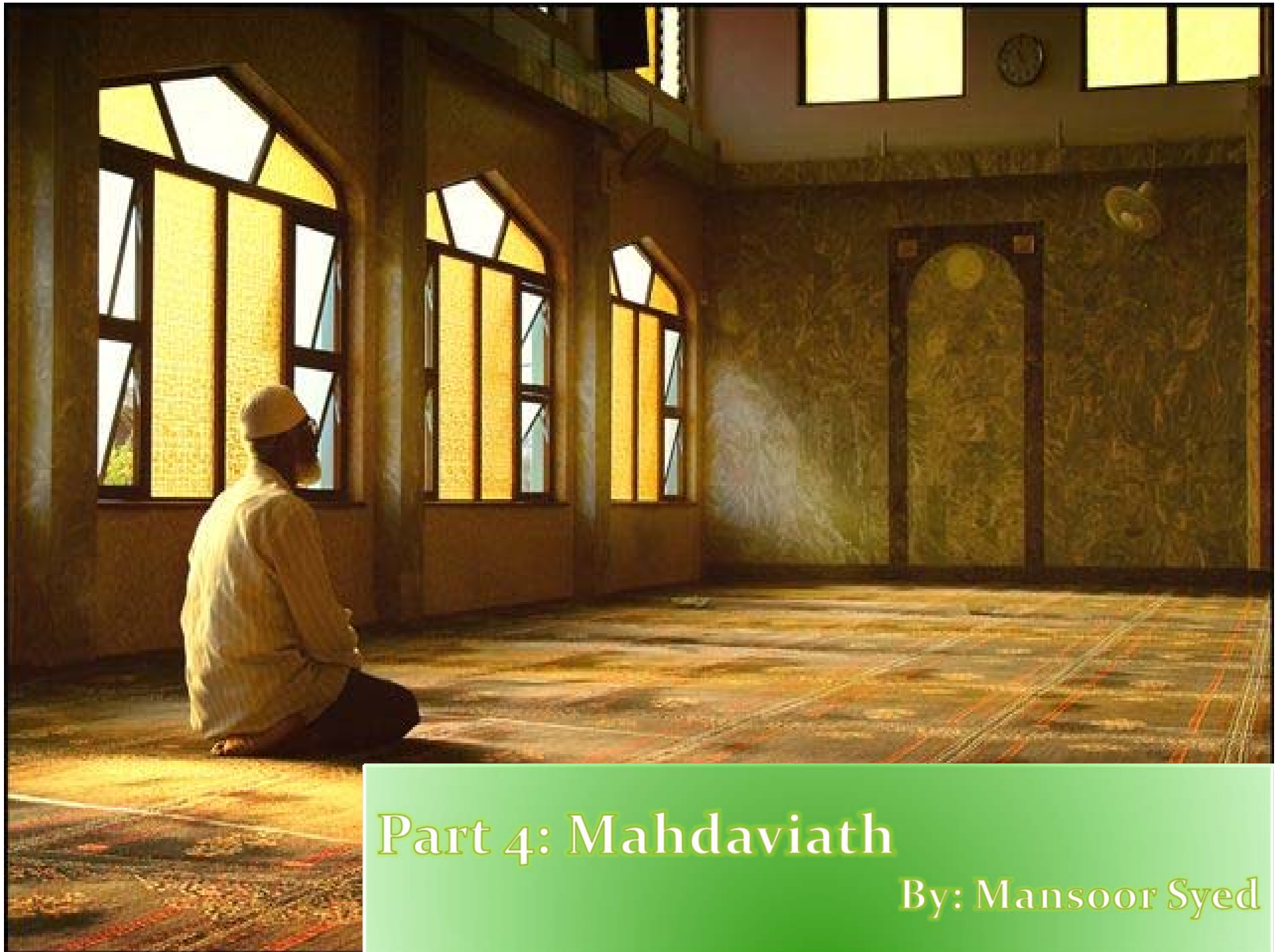
- Among many Scholars, Imam Ghazali (RH) gives great importance to Zikrullah as the single technique best adapted to concentrate the heart on nothing other than Allah (SWT).
- He says, “reading the Qur’an, studying Hadith, and reciting prayers are no doubt beneficial activities, but just by themselves these activities will not make it possible for the heart to be filled by Allah and nothing else.”
- Many of the Scholars and Auliya over the history of Islam have referred to the following Hadith where Prophet(PBUH) says, **“the best [form of] Zikr is ‘La ilaha il-Allah’”**

Examples of Piety

- Imam ibn Juziyya writes that when **Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal (RH)** used to give Dars at least 5,000 people would be there to listen. There would be at most 500 people. The rest would listen to increase their Ilm (Knowledge), but would primarily gather to learn **Adab** (Manners) by looking at Imam Hanbal's action.
- Only the very pious people and those close to Allah (SWT) in ranks have these characteristics.

Examples of Piety (Cont.)

- **Hazrath Bayazid Bistami (RH)- Sultan-ul Arifeen** and the story of the King.
- “Everyday he would stand up in respect of me. I would look at my Nafs and into my heart and check to see if I’m getting influenced by this. Today I noticed that when he stood up, I became proud, I thought to myself that this is my *right*, that I’m such an honest and saintly person that I deserve this. As soon as I noticed this, I spit and he sat down.”
- “I asked myself, my Nafs what happened to your *right* now?”



Part 4: Mahdaviath

By: Mansoor Syed

Mahdaviath

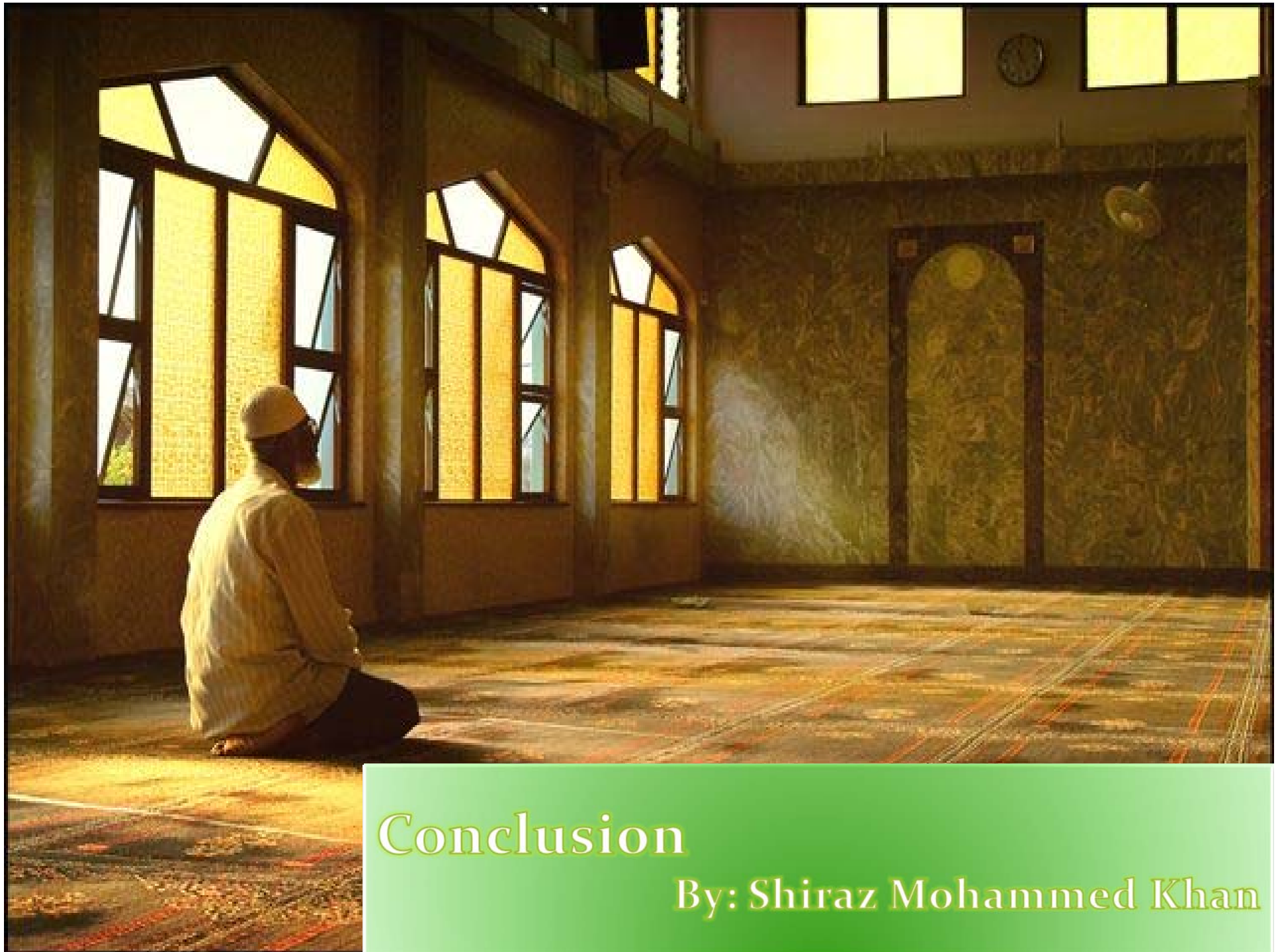
- When we are speaking of the internalization of Faith (*Iman*), we are getting into Mahdaviath.
- The essence of Mahdi (AS)'s message is curing the Nafs of man and bringing him into total submission to the Will of Allah (SWT), which is the ultimate goal of Islam.
- This is why you see that much of the concepts that the Scholars and Auliya-e-Ikram are discussing are taken to their logical conclusion by Mahdi (AS) under the guidance of Allah (SWT).

Mahdi (AS)'s Sayings

- Regarding Nafs:

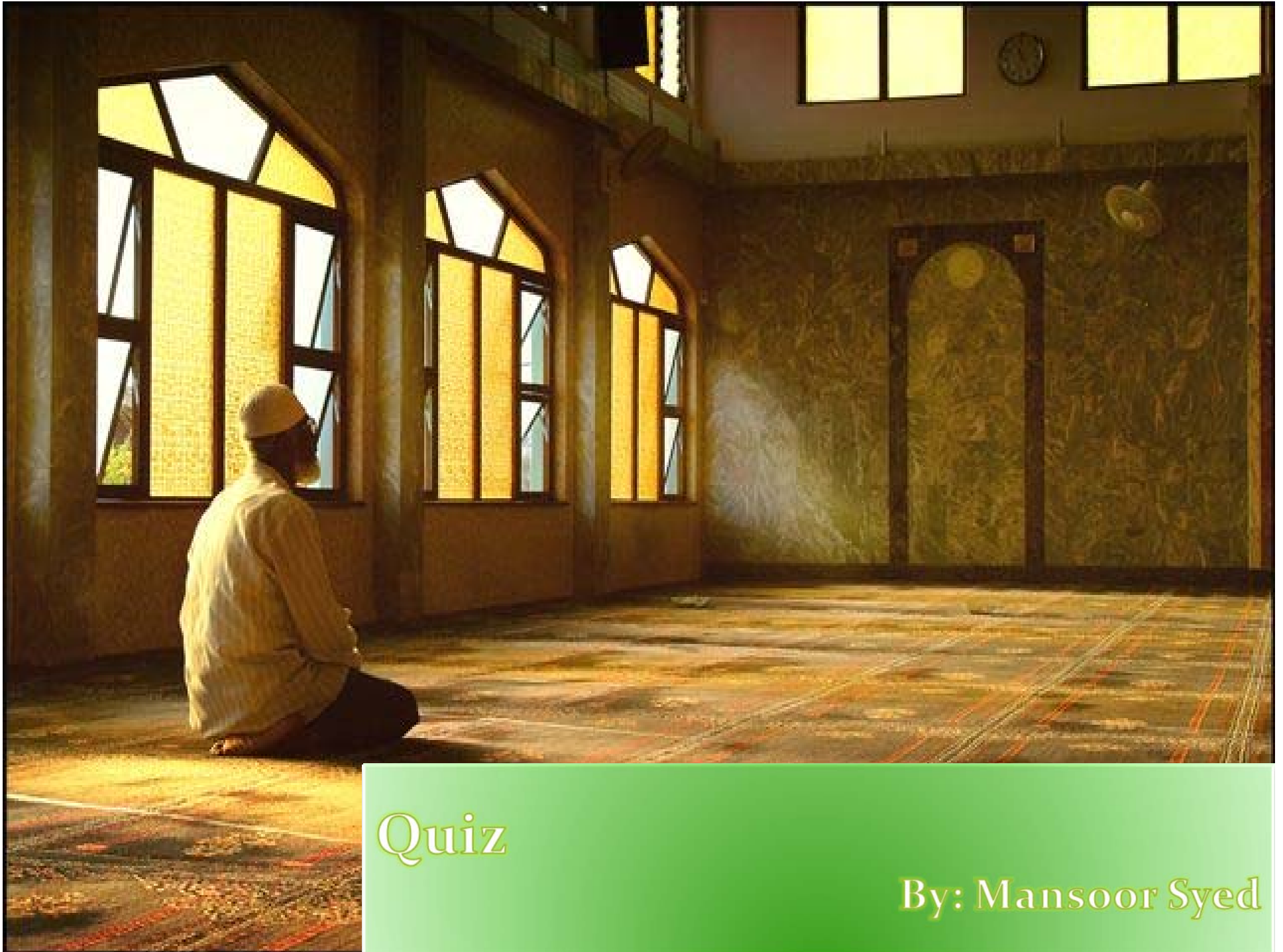
Do not give Lanath to Pharoah nor to Yazid, but give Lanath to one's Nafs (ego), as it was their ego that led them to their destruction”

[Mahdi (AS)]



Conclusion

By: Shiraz Mohammed Khan



Quiz


By: Mansoor Syed

Quiz

- 1. What type of Purification is required before performing Salath?**
 - Wudu
- 2. What is Tazkiyah?**
 - To grow; to purify
- 3. What is Tazkiya-tun Nafs?**
 - Self-Purification
- 4. What does Inward Purification focus on?**
 - One's Intentions
- 5. What does Outward Purification focus on?**
 - One's Actions, Behavior, and Character

Quiz

6. **What is Ihsan?**
 - The excellence of Inward & Outward Purification
7. **What is the 1st stage of the Nafs?**
 - The inciting Nafs (nafs-i-ammara)
8. **What is the 2nd stage of the Nafs?**
 - The self-accusing Nafs (nafs-i-lawwama)
9. **What is the 3rd stage of the Nafs?**
 - The Nafs at peace (nafs-i-mutma'inna)
10. **What is the recommended cure from the Sins of the Heart?**
 - By protecting oneself by forming Taqwa (God-Consciousness)

A photograph of a mosque interior. In the foreground, a person is seen in silhouette, looking towards a brightly lit staircase with intricate golden Islamic geometric patterns. The staircase is set within a series of arches. The walls are dark with subtle patterns. A ceiling fan is visible in the upper part of the frame. The overall atmosphere is serene and contemplative.

“Successful indeed are those involved in their purification.”

—al-Qur'an

Thank You

mahdaviaislamiccenterofchicago