



Module Ten

Heart-Matters

WHAT WE COVERED

The legal obligations of Sacred Law that a person is commanded to fulfil in his personal life are two categories:

1-Legal rulings that pertain to the outward actions

2-Legal rulings that pertain to the inward actions

WHAT WE COVERED

The heart is the basis and source for what appears outwardly.

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) told us that when we commit a sin, a black mark is etched in our hearts, and that it remains until we seek forgiveness. If the black mark grows in the heart, the heart will eventually be like an overturned vessel. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) went on to tell us that this is the meaning of the verse in Sura al-Mutaffifin, “*Nay, a covering has been placed upon their hearts due to what they earned.*” The *ran* is the darkness that covers our hearts and deadens them, making them insensitive to what destroys us.

WHAT WE COVERED

The reciprocal relationship between the outward and the inward:

Our inward states affect what we say and do, and what we say and do affect our hearts.

SETTING OUT...

The beginning of the path requires **tawba** from all sins, inwardly and outwardly. This means that we **must know** what the inward and outward sins are so we can leave them and make tawba now, and avoid them in the future.

SINS

1. Inward
 2. Outward
- Between the person and Allah (haqq Allah)
 - Between the person and others (haqq al-‘ibad)

MAJOR AND MINOR SINS

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ

‘Those who abstain from the major sins and immoralities, and when they are angry they forgive...’

Allah distinguishes between the major and minor sins, but we must define both.

1] Some say that a kabira is a sin for which there is a **prescribed punishment**, or an **explicit threat** of an afterworldly punishment for it in the Quran and Sunna.

MAJOR AND MINOR SINS

2] Some, like al-Tabari, took a strict scripturalist approach and said that a kabira is just what the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) described as a kabira

اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُؤِيفَاتِ . قَالُوا : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُنَّ ؟ قَالَ : (الشِّرْكُ بِاللَّهِ وَالسَّحَرُ وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَكْلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ وَالنَّوَالِي يَوْمَ الزَّحْفِ وَقَذْفُ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ

‘Avoid the seven destructive sins.’ The Companions asked, ‘What are they, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said: ‘Associating partners with Allah, sorcery, murder of a soul that Allah has forbidden without right, consuming usury, consuming the wealth of an orphan, fleeing the battlefield, and accusing innocent chaste women of adultery.’

MAJOR AND MINOR SINS

(The problem is that if we take this scripturalist approach based on the hadith it will mean sins like theft and bribery are not major sins despite the fact that their harms are worse than some of the major sins mentioned in the hadith)

Ibn 'Abbas said, **'A major sin is any sin that Allah recompenses with Hellfire, chastisement, curse, or punishment.'**

BENEFIT OF KNOWING THE MAJOR SINS

1] Allah promises to forgive the rest if we abstain from them.

إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا

‘Those who abstain from the major sins they are forbidden from We shall expiate their [minor] sins and grant them an noble admittance...’

2] Abstaining from major sins is tied to the acceptance of witness testimony in court, qualification in roles such as imamate and guardianship, etc.

HOW MANY MAJOR SINS ARE THERE?

The further along we travel in history the more and more sins are added to the list of major sins. Often what was considered a minor sin among the earliest generations is grouped among the major sins in the latter period.

There is a narration in which Ibn ‘Abbas was asked if the kaba’ir are seven and he replied, **‘They are closer to 700 than 7—but there is no kabira with seeking forgiveness and no saghira with arrogant insistence.’** But this is anomalous (*shadh*). The famous narration from him is that he said, **‘They are closer to 70.’**

The ‘Ulama say this was not a definitive statement about their exact number but a caution from Ibn Abbas, as he felt people were taking minor sins lightly. Another narration which shows this fear on his part is, **‘A major sin is everything by which one disobeys Allah.’**

HOW MANY MAJOR SINS ARE THERE?

- Al-Hafiz al-Bardiji (301 AH) is the author of the first book enumerating the kabair. His work describes **13** major sins only.
- Later, al-Diya' al-Maqdisi (643 AH) wrote an addendum to the work and added three more, making them **16** in total.
- Nine years after Bardiji comes Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, author of the famous tafsir, and he listed them at **9**!
- Then came Abu Talib al-Makki (386 AH) who listed them at **17** major sins.
- Abu Zakariyya al-Nahas, author of a famous work *Tanbih al-Ghafilin*, gathered the enumeration of the Shafi'i imams al-Nawawi (676 AH), al-Rafi'i (623 AH) and Ibn Rif'a (710 AH) and arrived at **40**

HOW MANY MAJOR SINS ARE THERE?

- Imam al-Dhahabi, the author of the most famous work on major sins, *al-Kabair*, arrived at **70/76**.
- Ibn Nahas came later (814 AH) and added them and some more, arriving at **171** major sins.
- Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (974 AH) wrote *al-Zawajir* and listed **466 major sins**. To be fair, he said he listed everything that anyone has ever said to be a major sin, even if it really is not, for the sake of caution.
- Ibn Nujaym al-Hanafi (970 AH), a contemporary of Haytami wrote a work about major sins and listed **89**.

HOW MANY MAJOR SINS ARE THERE?

This gradual increase to the list of what is considered a major sin is worth reflecting over and interrogating. Is it because people became more knowledgeable in the latter period or were more religiously observant?

It can't be because people were more pious—the Companions were the most pious and did not describe more than **17**.

It can't be because people were more knowledgeable. The issue of major sins is tied to acceptance or rejection of witness testimony in courts, so these things need to be standardized for court cases.

Imam al-Dhahabi's work is the *standard list* of major sins; Imam al-Haytami's massive list is helpful in knowing what to avoid as a 'possible' major sin (because it was differed over).

IMAM AL-DHAHABI'S LIST OF MAJOR SINS

1. Associating anything with Allah
2. Murder
3. Practicing magic
4. Not praying
5. Not paying Zakat
6. Not fasting on a day of Ramadan without excuse
7. Not performing Hajj, while being able to do so
8. Disrespect to parents
9. Abandoning relatives
10. Fornication and Adultery
11. Homosexuality (sodomy)
12. Interest (Riba)
13. Wrongfully consuming the property of an orphan
14. Lying about Allah and His Messenger

IMAM AL-DHAHABI'S LIST OF MAJOR SINS

15. Running away from the battlefield
16. A leader's deceiving his people and being unjust to them
17. Pride and arrogance
18. Bearing false witness
19. Drinking alcohol
20. Gambling
21. Slandering chaste women
22. Stealing from the spoils of war
23. Stealing
24. Highway Robbery
25. Taking false oath
26. Oppression
27. Illegal gain
28. Consuming wealth acquired unlawfully
29. Committing suicide
30. Frequent lying

IMAM AL-DHAHABI'S LIST OF MAJOR SINS

31. Judging unjustly
32. Giving and Accepting bribes
33. Women imitating men and men imitating women
34. Being a cuckold (*dayyuth*)
35. Marrying a divorced woman to make her lawful for the husband
36. Not protecting oneself from urine
37. Showing-off
38. Learning knowledge of the religion for the sake of this world and concealing that knowledge
39. Betrayal of trusts
40. Recounting favors
41. Denying Allah's Decree

IMAM AL-DHAHABI'S LIST OF MAJOR SINS

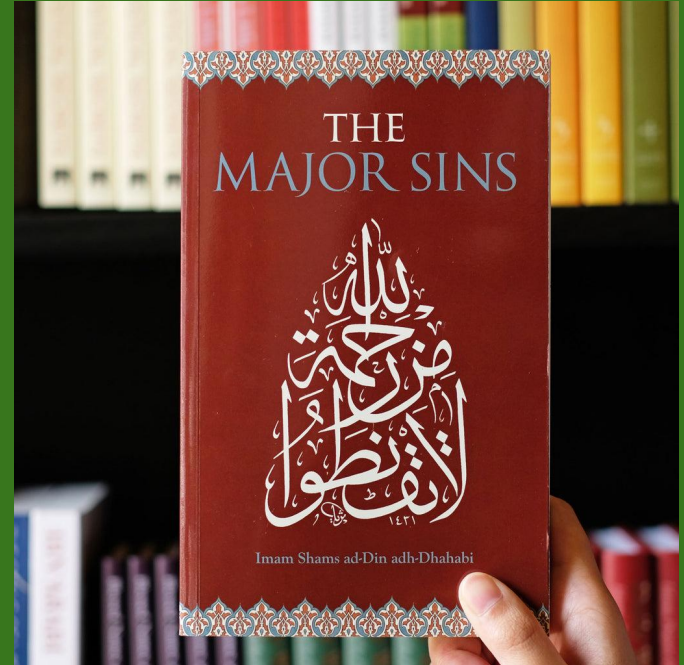
42. Listening to people's private conversations
43. Carrying tales (*namima*)
44. Cursing
45. Breaking contracts
46. Believing in fortune-tellers and astrologers
47. A woman's bad conduct towards her husband (*nushuz*)
48. Making statues and pictures
49. Lamenting, wailing, tearing the clothing, and doing other things of this sort when an affliction befalls
50. Treating others unjustly
51. Overbearing conduct toward the wife, the servant, the weak, and animals
52. Offending one's neighbor
53. Offending and abusing Muslims
54. Offending people and having an arrogant attitude toward them

IMAM AL-DHAHABI'S LIST OF MAJOR SINS

55. Trailing one's garment in pride
56. Men wearing silk and gold
57. A slave running away from his master
58. Slaughtering an animal which has been dedicated to anyone other than Allah
59. To knowingly ascribe one's paternity to a father other than one's own
60. Arguing and disputing violently
61. Withholding excess water
62. Giving short weight or measure
63. Feeling secure from Allah's Plan
64. Offending Allah's righteous friends
65. Not praying in congregation but praying alone without an excuse
66. Persistently missing Friday Prayers without any excuse

IMAM AL-DHAHABI'S LIST OF MAJOR SINS

- 67. Usurping the rights of the heir through bequests
- 68. Deceiving and plotting evil
- 69. Spying for the enemy of the Muslims
- 70. Cursing or insulting any of the Companions of Allah's Messenger



WHAT REMAINS

1] Inward sins—sins of the heart:

- What they are
- How they manifest
- How they arise
- How to treat them and remove them

2] Inward virtues—praiseworthy actions of the heart:

- What they are
- How to cultivate them