

The Book of Breaking the Two Desires	
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Test	<p>God has given his slave such things which give him delight and reinforce his temptations in order that He might try him and see how he might prefer Him over his desires and ambitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By respecting His Ordinances and Prohibitions, persevering in His obedience and restraining himself from sinning against Him
Desire of the stomach	<p>The greatest of the moral vices is the desire of the stomach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Because of it were Adam and Eve expelled - Although they were forbidden the Tree, their desire overcame them so that they ate from it and their private parts became apparent unto them
Origin of all desires	<p>After the belly comes the desire of sex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Then yearning after fame and wealth (which are no more than means to indulge one's desire further) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Then comes competitions and jealousies - Which give rise to the vices of ostentation and boasting and arrogance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which in turn lead to rancor, envy and enmity - Which cause injustice and corruption
Hadīth	<p>The belly is the well-spring of desires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “A descendant of Adam can fill no container worse than his own belly. A few small mouthfuls should suffice to keep his back straight; if he cannot keep to this, then let him fill one-third with his food, one-third with his drink and keep the other for his breath” <p style="text-align: center;">مَا مَلَأَ آدَمِيٌ وَعَاءَ شَرَّا مِنْ بَطْنٍ يَحْسُبُ ابْنَ آدَمَ أَكْلَاتٌ يُقْمِنُ صُلْبَهُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَا مَحَالَةً فَتَلْتَّ لِطَعَامِهِ وَتَلْتَ لِشَرَابِهِ وَتَلْتَ لِنَفْسِهِ</p> <p>Every delicious thing which a man desires and eats leaves behind it an exuberance in his soul and a hardness and forgetfulness in his heart, so that he conceives a dislike for death and the meeting with God</p>
Hunger	Hunger narrows the courses which the devil pursues within him
Sahl al-Tustarī	Wisdom and knowledge have been set in hunger, and ignorance and sin in satiety

Al-Tustarī	<p>وَضَعَتُ الْحِكْمَةُ وَالْعِلْمُ فِي الْجُوعِ وَوَضَعَتُ الْمُعْصِيَةُ وَالْجَهَلُ فِي الشَّبَّاعِ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whosoever makes himself hungry is severed from the whisperings of the devil (because hunger restricts the courses by which the devil reaches the heart)
The Prophet's practice	<p>The Prophet ﷺ would hunger by choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “No bondsman renounces a morsel which he had desired without it raising his degree in heaven” وَمَا تَرَكَ عَبْدٌ يَشْتَهِي إِلَّا كَانَتْ لَهُ دَرْجَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ - “Those who hunger in this world shall be fed handsomely in the next” إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْجُوعِ فِي الدُّنْيَا هُمْ أَهْلُ الشَّبَّاعِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
Benefits of hunger Luqmān	<p>Purification of the heart and sharpening of one's insight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A child, when it eats too much, becomes unable to memorize things, and its mind is corrupted so that it becomes slow and dull-witted - O my son! When the stomach is full, then the intellect sleeps, wisdom is silenced, and the members of the body are too slothful to perform any act of worship
Al-Junayd	<p>Softness of the heart</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An empty stomach is the cause for the softening of the heart which allows it to be affected more powerfully by His remembrance and take great delight in communing with Him - Can anyone put a measure of food between him and his chest, and still hope to find the sweetness of intimate communion with God? <p>Abasement and removal of exultation and exuberance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hunger causes the soul to have placid trust in its Lord and fear of Him, and to be aware of its helplessness when it weakens - As long as man fails to behold the baseness and helplessness of his own soul, he will be unable to behold the glory and power of his Lord <p>One does not forget God's trials or those afflicted by them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The man sated is liable to forget those people who are hungry and to forget hunger itself - When Joseph AS was asked, “Why do you hunger, when you hold in your hands the storehouses of the land?” He replied, “I fear that I may eat my fill, and forget the hungry” - Whoever is not in a state of humility, sickness, poverty and tribulation will forget the Afterlife <p>Breaking of one's desires for sin and mastery of the soul</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When one eats less, every one of one's desires and strengths will be enfeebled - Just as you cannot master a stubborn riding beast without weakening it through hunger, so it is with the soul

Dhū al-Nūn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never have I eaten my fill without then committing or wishing to commit some sin - The desire for speech is deflected by hunger, protecting one from the faults of the tongue <p>Repulsion of sleep</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sleeping abundantly is a waste of one's lifetime and causes one to miss the Tahajjud prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A lifetime is the most precious of jewels and constitutes a slave's capital with which he trades and will survive into the Afterlife <p>Lengthy acts of worship are made easier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food prevents a person from worshiping much since he needs time for eating, shopping, cooking, washing and relieving oneself <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If this time were spent instead in the remembrance of God, intimate communing with Him, and other forms of worship, he would profit greatly - 'Alī al-Jurjānī would eat barley porridge with his fingers instead of chewing with bread so that he could have more time to do more tasbīhs <p>Reduced expenditure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whoever becomes used to eating little will find a modest income sufficient <p>Enables one to give in charity to the orphans and the poor that which is surplus to his wants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Man benefits from his wealth only insofar as he gives it away, and rendered it permanent - Donation of one's superfluous food entails storing up something better than one would gain by eating it - The Prophet ﷺ once saw a pot bellied man and said pointing to his belly, "If that were elsewhere it would be better for you" <p>ونَظَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى رَجُلٍ سَمِينٍ الْبَطْنَ فَأَوْمَأَ إِلَى بَطْنِهِ بِاصْبَعِهِ وَقَالَ لَوْ كَانَ هَذَا فِي غَيْرِ هَذَا لَكَ خَيْرًا لَكَ</p>
Amount of food	<p>Ideal measure when eating: to eat only after the onset of hunger and to stop eating before the onset of satiety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aspirant should determine a quantity which will not enfeeble his capacity for worship <p>People need food in varying degrees, according to their age, build and profession</p> <p>Everything beyond one meal every day and night constitutes extravagance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Salaf used to eat only once a day

Hadīth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “You should beware of extravagance, and it is extravagant to eat twice in a single day” <p style="text-align: right;">إياك والسرف فإن أكلتين في يوم من السرف</p>
Cutting down on food	<p>The method of reducing one's intake of food must be gradual so that one does not weaken and it does not result in unbearable hardship and distress</p>
Mastering the stomach	<p>Qāsim al-JŪT: Know that the belly is the world of God's slaves, and that to the extent that he masters it, he has mastered asceticism, while to the extent that his belly masters him, he is mastered by the world</p>
Moderation	<p>“The best of affairs is the middle course”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">خير الأمور أوسطها</p> <p>A heavy stomach is an obstruction to worship, and so are the pangs of hunger, for they distract the heart</p>
Qur'an	<p>“Eat and drink but do not be extravagant”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">وَكُلُوا وَاشْرِبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا</p> <p>Because human nature demands the maximum of satiety, this must be countered by praises of extreme hunger so that the instincts of man's nature and the prohibitions of the Law bring about an equilibrium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the outset, should the soul have a tendency to incline to excess the mean will yield it no advantage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instead, one must go to extreme lengths to hurt it with hunger, in the way one must employ hunger and blows to hurt a riding beast that is not broken in until it becomes moderate in its temperament <p>A Shaykh may command his aspirants to perform things which he himself does not do since he has concluded the discipline of his own soul and he is no longer in need of such training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ would engage in every form of self-discipline which he instructed his aspirants to perform so that they would not think that the Shaykh was telling them to do things which he did not do himself
Ostentation	<p>If one detects a desire in the soul to be known and spoken of as one who abstains from his desires then it is more important to defeat it than to defeat the desire for food itself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is more appropriate that such a person should eat - Ostentation is more harmful than the desire for food
Benefits of sexual desire	<p>By knowing its delight one is able to draw an analogy to what the delight of the Afterlife must be like</p>

	Allows the human race to continue
Desire for women Hadīth	<p>The desire for women is the greatest of all desires</p> <p>“I leave behind me no temptation more damaging to men than that of women”</p> <p>ما تركتُ بعدي فتنة أضرَّ على الرجال من النساء</p> <p>Were it not for this desire women would have no power over men</p>
Sexual desire and reason	<p>The intellect has been created to be obeyed, not to obey desires and devise means of gratifying them</p> <p>It has been said that an erection results in the loss of two-thirds of the intelligence</p>
Balance in sexual desire Hadīth	<p>Excess in sexual desire and insufficient sexual desire are both to be condemned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual desire is praiseworthy when it stands in a state of equilibrium - When it becomes excessive then it should be broken with hunger and marriage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “O young men! You should marry, and whosoever cannot should fast” <p>يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ أَسْتَطَعَ مِنْكُمُ الْبَاءَةَ فَلْيَتَرْوَجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَعْضُّ الْبَصَرِ وَأَحْسَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءَ</p>
Curing the weakness	The cure for this weakness is threefold: hunger, lowering the gaze and busying oneself with some activity that will come to prevail in the heart
Distractions	<p>Al-Dārānī: Everything which distracts you from God, whether it be family, property or children, is an ill omen for you</p> <p>ما شغلك عن الله من أهل ومال وولد فهو عليك مشؤوم</p>
Dealing with desire	<p>At the outset, the aspirant should remain celibate until his gnosis becomes well-established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If he is overcome with desire then he should break it with constant hunger and fasting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are many souls whose cravings cannot be subdued through hunger - Should his desire still not be subjugated, and he finds himself unable to restrain his eyes, then for him marriage is the better state
The gaze Hadīth	<p>The fornication of the eye soon leads on to the fornication of the flesh</p> <p>“A gaze is a poisoned arrow from Satan. Whoever abstains from it in fear of God shall receive from Him an increase in faith, the sweetness of which he will feel in his heart”</p>

	<p>إِنَّ النَّظَرَةَ سَهْمٌ مِّنْ سَهَامِ إِبْلِيسِ مَسْمُومٌ، مَنْ تَرَكَهَا مِنْ مَخَافَتِي أَبْدَلْتُهُ إِيمَانًا يَجُدُّ حَلَاوَةً فِي قَلْبِهِ</p> <p>One is rewarded in the case of being able to gratify the sexual desire of the eye and yet abstaining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is rare that a man will not happen to glance at women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If he senses their beauty his nature will demand that he look again but he should understand that this is sheer ignorance - If he looks and finds beauty then his desire will be aroused, but since he will be unable to satisfy it, he will gain only regret
The sincere aspirant	<p>A sign of sincerity in aspirancy that one marry a woman who is poor but religious, rather than seeking after a wealthy one</p> <p>The mark of sincere aspirancy in married life is good character</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Sufi was asked why he did not divorce his wife who was a bad-tempered woman and he replied, "I am afraid that someone might marry her who is unable to tolerate her and will suffer"
Reward	<p>Most people refrain from acting upon their sexual desire either through incapacity, fear, embarrassment, or a wish to safeguard their reputations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Merit and great reward follow only when one refrains from such an act for fear of God, while able to perform it and in the absence of obstacles and the presence of suitable circumstances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The refusal of Yusuf AS, despite his ability to accede to Zulaykhā's demand, is praised by God in His Book - One of the seven shaded by God under His Throne on the Day of Arising is a man invited by a woman of beauty and good family to lie with her but he says, "I fear God, the Lord of the Worlds" <p>رجل دعته امرأة ذات جمال وحسب إلى نفسها فقال إنني أخاف الله رب العالمين</p> <p>It is not a good sign that one's desires be made easy of access</p>