



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,  
THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

WHY WE MUST PURITY OUR HEART

INTRODUCTION

The heart is the most significant organ for us to receive Allah's Guidance. When we face Allah on the Day of Judgment, Allah Reminded us that nothing can save us except those with a clean heart:

وَمَا لَآ يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ  
إِلَّا مَنَ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

"The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart [clean from *Shirk* (polytheism) and *Nifaq* (hypocrisy)]."  
26: 88-89

Important hadith:

"Listen carefully! there is a piece of flesh in man's body, if it is healthy then the whole being is healthy and if it is corrupted then the whole being is corrupted. Beware! That piece of flesh is the heart." (Bukhari)

The heart was also mentioned when Allah described the disbelievers and hypocrites at the beginning part of surah al Baqarah:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ  
سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ  
غِشَاوَةً ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearings, (i.e. they are closed from accepting Allah's Guidance), and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment.” 2: 7

Can a person who called himself/herself a “Muslim” become a disbeliever? We discussed last week what can make a person to be out of Islam. For example committing shirk, disbelieving in any verse of the Qur’an, disbelieving and mocking the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the sunnah, etc. So a disbeliever is not just a person whose name is John or Mary who has not reverted to Islam, but also a person whose name is “Muhammad” or “Aishah” but who is arrogant and disbelieves in some verses of the Qur’an. We make du’a that Allah will Protect us from being among these people.

What is the punishment for the disbelievers?

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ  
أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ كُفَّارٌ  
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ  
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ  
الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

“Verily, those who disbelieve, and die while they are disbelievers, it is they on whom is the Curse of Allah and of the angels and of mankind, combined. They will abide therein (under the curse in Hell), their punishment will neither be lightened, nor will they be reprieved.” 2: 161-162

For the hypocrites:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ  
مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا  
كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

“In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.” 2: 10

What is the punishment for the hypocrites?

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ  
الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ  
ارْلَهُمْ نَصِي

"Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths (grade) of the Fire; no helper will you find for them." 4: 145

In relation to the heart, we have even been taught to seek help in Allah to make our heart firm on the Deen so that our hearts are not deviated from the right path:

Anas ibn Malik (radiyallahu'anhu) reports that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) used to recite the following supplication in abundance:

ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي الْقُلُوبِ مُقَلِّبَ يَا  
عَلَى دِينِكَ

*'Ya Muqallibal qulub, thabbit qalbi 'ala dinik.'*

(Sunan Tirmidhi, Hadith: 2140)

O Turner of hearts, keep my heart steadfast on your Din.

Imam Tirmidhi (rahimahullah) has classified this Hadith as hasan (sound).

ذ رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِ  
هْدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ  
رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

"Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower." 3: 8

## WHY THE HEART?

### 1. Heart (Qalb) is the Centre of Intellect

Allah says in the Quran:

يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى  
الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ  
الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

•Have they not travelled through the land, and have they hearts (Qulub) wherewith to understand and ears wherewith to hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts (Qulub) which are in the breasts that grow blind. (Al-Hajj 22-46)

The parallelism in this (among many other) Ayah is self evident. Just as ears and eyes are for hearing and seeing respectively, it is the function of the heart (Qalb) to know and understand metaphysical realities. Hence it is the real centre of intellect.

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ  
أَعْلَىٰ قُلُوبِ أَقْفَالِهِ

•Do they not then think deeply in the Quran, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)? (Muhammad 47:24)

## 2. Qalb is the Place for Taqwa (Piety)

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ  
بِهِمْ لِيَتَّقُوا قُلُوبَهُمْ

•....they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for piety..... (Al-Hujrat 49-3)

The messenger of Allah (SAW) said in a Hadith, reported in the Sahih Muslim that, "Taqwa is here", and he pointed to his chest.

Hence proved that the heart is the place whereupon Taqwa or piety depends. It is the condition of the heart that determines to what extent one can obey his or her true Master.

## 3. Qalb is the Place where Wahi Descends

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ

عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ  
الْمُنذِرِينَ

• Which the trustworthy Rooh (Jibrael (Gabriel)) has brought down; Upon your heart (O Muhammad) that you may be (one) of the warners. (Ash'shu'raa 26: 193/194)

hence proved that the Wahi or divine message is addressed to the Qalb, because this is the organ that has the capability to distinguish between right and wrong. All the rest of the organs are under the command of the Qalb.

• Verily, therein is indeed a reminder for him who has a heart (Qa'af 50: 37)

#### 4. Reward and Retribution depend on the acts of the Qalb

وَلَكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا كَسَبْتُمْ  
مَقُلُوبُكُمْ

• ...but He will call you to account for that which your hearts have earned (Al-Baqarah 2: 225)

#### 5. Ignorance and Negligence are Acts of the Qalb

• Allah has set a seal on their hearts (Al-Baqarah 2: 7)

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ

• and they say their hearts are wrapped (Al-Baqarah 2: 88)

• but on their hearts is the stain (83: 14)

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا

• they have hearts with which they understand not (Al-A'raaf 7-179)

All these Ayaat clearly prove that the centre of ignorance and negligence is indeed the Qalb.

The above Ayaat from the Quran clearly show that it is indeed the heart that is the receiver of divine message (Wahi). It is the heart that has the capacity to

keep the secrets of Allah's cognizance, and the secrets of the unseen. It is gifted with the faculty to receive Allah's Light, and the potential to have visions of the unseen (Kashf-wa-Ilham). It is a treasure well beyond the reach of mind or worldly wisdom.

Allah has placed only one heart in each persons breast. It is purpose-built for receiving Allah's Lights and hence Allah does not like the heart to be possessed by anything other than Him. And when it becomes inhabited by Allah's Lights, all negative traits have no other option but to leave the person's character.

- Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest (Al-Naml 27-34)

So when the heart is reformed, it is not inspired by anything other than Allah, and a person at this stage spontaneously exclaims, 'Is not Allah Sufficient for His slave?' (Az-Zumr 39-36)

It is the heart that goes blind and deaf because of sins, but a true spiritual master cures the illnesses of the heart and turn it into Qalb-e-Saleem.

- The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail. Except him who brings to Allah a clean heart. (As-Shu'ra 28-88/89)

### **THE TYPES OF HEARTS**

Narrated by Ibn Bashir: I heard Allah's Apostle saying: *"Both legal and illegal things are evident but in between them there are doubtful (suspicious) things and most of the people have no knowledge about them. So whoever saves himself from these suspicious things saves his religion and his honor. And whoever indulges in these suspicious things is like a shepherd who grazes (his animals) near the pastures of someone else and at any moment he is liable to get in it. (O people!) Beware! Every king has a pasture and the pasture of Allah on the earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart."* [Bukhari]

It is clear from this Hadith that the heart is the essence of the whole body.

So what do we mean by a good and bad heart? Are we saying a bad heart is on the brink of a heart attack, clogged and cluttered with cholesterol and a healthy heart is of the one who cares for his health, eating well and exercising so his heart is strong. NO!

This Hadith describes the doubtful matters, the matters that are not clearly forbidden or clearly permissible; the matters that one has no knowledge of.

The one who avoids the doubtful matters, is keeping himself clear from what is unlawful. And the one who indulges in these matters, is likely to slip into the unlawful.

Clearly, with the warning that follows this must mean that the dealing in the doubtful and unlawful matters has an effect on the heart. So this is what we mean by the health of the heart.

To further emphasize the importance of the heart, the Hadith transmitted on the authority of Abu Hurairah with some addition: *“Verily Allah does not look to your bodies nor to your faces but He looks to your hearts,” and he pointed towards the heart with his fingers.*” [Muslim]

So if Allah is going to look to our hearts, wouldn't you want your heart to be in the perfect condition? How much effort do we put into making our house, our personal presentation beautiful when we are expecting our fellow Muslims to visit? They are only the creations of Allah, surely we must exert much more effort in our presentation to Allah. We are unaware of what moment our souls will be taken from us forever, so we must make sure the house of our heart is spotless at all times.

To be able to do this we must first understand what condition our heart is in. Understand the different types and conditions of the heart.

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: *“The hearts are four types: polished as shiny as the radiating lamp, a sealed heart with a knot tied around its seal, a heart that is turned upside down and a wrapped heart. As for the **polished heart**, it is the heart of the believer and the lamp is the light of faith. The **sealed heart** is the heart of the disbeliever. The **heart that is turned upside down** is the heart of the pure hypocrite, because he had knowledge but denied it. As for the **wrapped heart**, it is a heart that contains belief and hypocrisy. The example of faith in this heart is the example of the herb that is sustained by pure water. The example of hypocrisy in it is the example of an ulcer that thrives on puss and blood. Whichever of the two substances has the upper hand, it will have the upper hand of that heart.”* [Ahmad]

This Hadith describes the types of hearts.

### **The Healthy Heart**

We start first with the heart that is polished as shiny as the radiating lamp. This is the heart of the believer in Allah and His messengers and the radiating lamp is the light of faith.

There are so many references in the Quran describing the healthy, believing heart. Allah says:

اَلْمُؤْمِنُونَ اِذَا ذُكِرَ اللّٰهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ اِيْمَانًا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ

*"The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a fear in their hearts and when His Verses are recited unto them, they increase their Faith; and they put their trust in their Lord (Alone);"* [Noble Quran 8:2]

*"...who patiently bear whatever may befall them (of calamities)"* [Noble Quran 22:35]

*"And those who give charity and also do other good deeds with their hearts full of fear (whether their charities have been accepted or not), because they are sure to return to their Lord (for reckoning)."* [Noble Quran 23:60]

هُوَ الَّذِي اَنْزَلَ السَّكِيْنَۃَ فِىْ رِجْلِ الْمُؤْمِنِۃِ لِئَلَّا يَصْطَبِحَ قُلُوْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِۃِ اِيْمَانًا مَّعَ اِيْمَانِهِمْ

*"He it is Who sent down (calmness and tranquility) into the hearts of the believers, that they may grow more in Faith along with their (present) Faith..."* [Noble Quran 48:4]

This heart is filled with fear, fear for disobeying Allah, fear of whether their good deeds will be accepted, fear of the Punishment of disobedience, fear of not reaching Paradise. And also patience for whatever befalls them, calmness and tranquility, having Faith in their Creator that everything is the Will of Allah.

Allah also says: "And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord, and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility. And verily, Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Path." [Noble Quran 22:54]

And this is the best part of a healthy heart, is the gift of understanding the knowledge. These hearts are filled with the knowledge that Allah has sent, it wasn't lost in the throat, in the chest, it sank into the heart and cleansed it, polished it so it would shine like a radiating lamp, filling the whole body with the desire to please Allah and fearful of displeasing Him.



## The Dead Heart

Then we have two other types described in the previous Hadith "...a sealed heart and a heart that is turned upside down..."

These are the dead hearts. These are the hearts of the disbelievers, the ones who rejected the signs of Allah and who brought upon themselves the wrath of Allah.

The sealed heart is the heart that never believed. As described in the interpretation of the meaning of the Quran:

*"Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearings, and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be a great torment."* [Noble Quran 2:7]

Again it is most beautifully described in the Quran:

فِي بَحْرٍ أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ

*"Or the state of the disbeliever is like the darkness in a vast deep sea"* [Noble Quran 24:40]

The other type of dead heart, is the upside down heart, the heart of the hypocrite. The one who has had knowledge and rejected it. For him is the lowest, most horrific abode in the Hellfire.

In the Interpretation of the meaning of the Quran, Allah says: *"And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away (from guidance), as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and We shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly."* [Noble Quran 6:110]

They are arrogant in their thoughts:

*"The Hypocrites – they think they are over-reaching Allah, but He will over- reach them: When they stand up to pray, they stand without earnestness, to be seen of men, but little do they hold Allah in remembrance;"* [Noble Quran 4:142]

They oppose the laws of Islam:

*"The Hypocrites, men and women, (have an understanding) with each other: They enjoin evil, and forbid what is just, and are closed with their hands. They have forgotten Allah. so He hath forgotten them. Verily the Hypocrites are rebellious and perverse."* [Noble Quran 9:67]

And they are insulting towards the beloved Prophet of Allah, as Allah explains: *“And behold! The Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease (even say: “(Allah) and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion!” [Noble Quran 33:12]*

Certainly this shows the lowest nature of these hearts.

### **The Sick Heart**

Now we examine the nature of the sick heart.

It is true that words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) come clear and sweet, as only he can explain the sick heart and leave no doubt to its meaning:

*“...As for the wrapped heart, it is a heart that contains belief and hypocrisy. The example of faith in this heart is the example of the herb that is sustained by pure water. The example of hypocrisy in it is the example of an ulcer that thrives on puss and blood. Whichever of the two substances has the upper hand, it will have the upper hand of that heart.”*

This is the heart of the believer in Allah, and the Last Day, but they are wavering in their faith. Their desires pull them away from their Creator and they are focused on the delights of the Dunya with little regard for the ultimate delights that could await them in the Hereafter. They are drowning in sinful behavior and slow to repent.

Their hearts have been described by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) *“...and the other (heart) black and dust-coloured like a vessel which is upset, not recognising what is good or rejecting what is abominable, but being impregnated with passion.” [Muslim]*

We all, as believing Servants of Allah have times where we fall into this category, where our focus is diverted from the Hereafter and we become lost in the trials and delights of this short life we are currently living. It is a time when belief is weakened and fear of Allah is reduced.

Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: *“There is (at times) some sort of shade upon my heart, and I seek forgiveness from Allah a hundred times a day.” [Muslim]*

Surely, on hearing this we must ask ourselves, the heart of the Prophet (peace be upon him) must be the healthiest of all hearts, he has been labelled the best of all Mankind, so if his heart feels a shade upon it and feels that he needs to seek forgiveness 100 times a day, we must ask...what must we do to have a healthy heart?

### The Causes of Sickness of the Heart

The temptations to which the heart is exposed are what cause its sickness. These are the temptations of desires and fancies. The former cause intentions and the will to be corrupted, and the latter cause knowledge and belief to falter.

Hudhayfa ibn al-Yamani, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "*The Messenger of Allah \*saaws\* said, "Temptations are presented to the heart, one by one. Any heart that accepts them will be left with a black stain, but any heart that rejects them will be left with a mark of purity, so that hearts are of two types: a dark heart that has turned away and become like an overturned vessel, and a pure heart that will never be harmed by temptation for as long as the earth and the heavens exist. The dark heart only recognises good and denounces evil when this suits its desires and whims."* (Muslim)

He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, placed hearts, when exposed to temptation, into two categories:::

First, a heart which, when it is exposed to temptation, absorbs it like a sponge that soaks up water, leaving a black stain in it. It continues to absorb each temptation that is offered to it until it is darkened and corrupted, which is what he meant by "like an overturned vessel". When this happens, two dangerous sicknesses take hold of it and plunge it into ruin:

The first is that of its confusing good with evil, to such an extent that it does not recognise the former and does not denounce the latter. This sickness may even gain hold of it to such an extent that it believes good to be evil and vice-versa, the sunnah to be bida' and vice-versa, the truth to be false and falsity to be the truth.

The second is that of its setting up its desires as its judge, over and above what the Prophet \*saaws\* taught, so that it is enslaved and led by its whims and fancies.

Second, a pure heart which the light of faith is bright and from which its radiance shines. When temptation is presented to pure hearts such this, they oppose it and reject it, and so their light and illumination only increase.

Repent sincerely, with full hope of Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness, and strive in His cause to better ourselves and the deeds that we do.

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### **The Four Poisons of the Heart**

*"And keep yourself (O Muhammad \*saaws\* patiently with those who call on their Lord (your companions who remember their Lord with glorification, praising in prayers, etc., and other righteous deeds, etc.) morning and afternoon, seeking His Face, and let not your eyes overlook them, desiring the pomp and glitter the life of the world; and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our Remembrance,*

*one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been lost."* The Holy Quran: 18:28.

You should know that all acts of disobedience are poison to the heart and cause its sickness and ruin. They result in its will running off course, against that of Allah, and so its sickness festers and increases. Ibn al-Mubarak said: I have seen wrong actions killing hearts, And their degradation may lead to their becoming addicted to them. Turning away from wrong actions gives life to the hearts, And opposing your self is best for it.

Whoever is concerned with the health and life of his heart, must rid it of the effects of such poisons, and then protect it by avoiding new ones. If he takes any by mistake, then he should hasten to wipe out their effect by turning in repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah, as well as by doing good deeds that will wipe out his wrong actions.

By the four poisons we mean unnecessary talking, unrestrained glances, too much food, and keeping bad company. Of all the poisons, these are the most widespread and have the greatest effect on a heart's well-being.

### **Unnecessary Talking**

It is reported in al-Musnad, on the authority of Anas, that the Prophet \*saaws\* said: "The faith of a servant is not put right until his heart is put right, and his heart is not put right until his tongue is put right."<sup>1</sup> This shows that the Prophet \*saaws\* has made the purification of faith conditional on the purification of the heart, and the purification of the heart conditional on the purification of the tongue.

In a hadith related on the authority of Mu'adh, the Prophet \*saaws\* said, "*Shall I not tell you how to control all that?*" I said, "*Yes do, O Messenger of Allah.*" So he held his tongue between his fingers, and then he said: "*Restrain this.*" I said, "*Oh Prophet of Allah, are we accountable for what we say?*" He \*saaws\* said, "*May your mother be bereft by your loss! Is there anything more than the harvest of the tongues that throws people on their faces (or he said 'on their noses') into the Fire?*" Sahih hadith, at-Tirmidhi, al-Hakim, ath-Thahabi.

What is meant here by 'the harvest of the tongues' is the punishment for saying forbidden things. A man, through his actions and words, sows the seeds of either good or evil. On the Day of Resurrection he harvests their fruits. Those who sow the seeds of good words and deeds harvest honour and blessings; those who sow the seeds of evil words and deeds reap only regret and remorse.

A hadith related by Abu Huraira says, "*What mostly causes people to be sent to the Fire are the two openings: the mouth and the private parts.*" Sahih hadith, at-Tirmidhi and Ahmad; also al-Hakim and ath-Thahabi.

Abu Huraira also related that the Messenger of Allah \*saaws\* said, "*The servant speaks words, the consequences of which he does not realise, and for which he is sent down into the depths of the Fire further than the distance between the east and the west.*" Al-Bukhari in Kitab ar-Riqaq, and Muslim in Kitab az-Zuhud.

The same hadith was transmitted by at-Tirmidhi with slight variations: "*The servant says something that he thinks is harmless, and for which he will be plunged into the depths of the Fire as far as seventy autumns.*" At-Tirmidhi, Kitab az-Zuhud; he said the hadith is hasan gharib.

Uqba ibn Amir said: "*I said: "O Messenger of Allah, what is our best way of surviving?" He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, replied: "Guard your tongue, make your house suffice for sheltering your privacy, and weep for your wrong actions.*" At-Tirmidhi in Kitab az-Zuhud with a slightly different wording; he said the hadith is hasan. This wording is reported by Abu Na'im in al-Hilya.

It has been related on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd that the Prophet \*saaws\* said, "*Whoever can guarantee what is between his jaws and what is between his legs guarantee him the Garden.*" Al-Bukhari, Kitab ar-Riqaq, 11/308 and Kitab al-Hudud, 12/113

It has also been related by Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "*Let whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day either speak good or remain silent.*" Al-Bukhari, Kitab ar-Riqaq, 11/308; Muslim, Kitab al-Iman, 2/18

Thus talking can either be good, in which case it is commendable, or bad, in which case it is haram.

The Prophet \*saaws\* said: "*Everything the children of Adam say goes against them, except for their enjoining good and forbidding evil, and remembering Allah, Glorious and Might is He.*" This was reported by at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Ma'jah on the authority of Umm Habiba, may Allah be pleased with her.

Umar ibn al-Khattab visited Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them, and found him pulling his tongue with his fingers. Umar said "*Stop! may Allah forgive you!*" Abu Bakr replied; "*This tongue has brought me to dangerous places.*" Hasan according to Abu Ya'la, Baihaqi and as-Suyuti. Musnad, 1/201

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said: "*By Allah, besides Whom no god exists, nothing deserves a long prison sentence more than my tongue.*" He also used to say: "*O tongue, say good and you will profit; desist from saying evil things and you will be safe; otherwise you will find only regret.*"

Abu Huraira reported that Ibn al-Abbas said: "*A person will not feel greater fury or anger for any part of his body on the Day of Judgement more than*

what he will feel for hi tongue, unless he only used it for saying or enjoining good."

Al-Hassan said: "*Whoever does not hold his tongue cannot understand his deen.*" The least harmful of a tongue's faults is talking about whatever does not concern it. The following hadith of the Prohet \*saaws\* is enough to indicate the harm of this fault: "*One of the merits of a person's Islam is his abandoning what does not concern him.*" Sahih, at-Tirmidhi, Kitab az-Zuhud, 6/607; Ahmad, al-Musnad, 1/201; as-Sa'ati, al-Fath ar-Rabbani, 19/257; hadith number 12 in an-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths.

`Abu Ubaida related that al-Hassan said: "One of the signs of Allah's abandoning a servant is His making him preoccupied with what does not concern him."

Sahl said, "Whoever talks about what does not concern him is deprived of truthfulness."

As we have already mentioned above, this is the least harmful of the tongue's faults. There are far worse things, like backbiting, gossiping, obscene and misleading talk, two-faced and hypocritical talk, showing off, quarrelling, bickering, singing, lying, mockery, derision and falsehood; and there are many more faults which can affect a servant's tongue, ruining his heart and causing him to lose both his happiness and pleasure in this life, and his success and profit in the next life. Allah is the One to Whom we turn for assistance.

### **Unrestrained Glances**

The unrestrained glance results in the one who looks becoming attracted to what he sees, and in the imprinting of an image of what he sees in his heart. This can result in several kinds of corruption in the servant. The following are a number of them:::

It has been related that the Prophet \*saaws\* once said words to the effect: "*The glance is a poisoned arrow of shaytan. Whoever lowers his gaze for Allah, He will bestow upon him a refreshing sweetness which he will find in his heart on the day that he meets Him.*" al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, 4/314; Ahmad, al-Musnad, 5/264.

Shaytan enters with the glance, for he travels with it, faster than the wind blowing through an empty place. He makes what is seen appear more beautiful than it really is, and transforms it into an idol for the heart to worship. Then he promises it false rewards, lights the fire of desires within it, and fuels it with the wood of forbidden actions, which the servant would not have committed had it not been for this distorted image.

This distracts the heart and makes it forget its more important concerns. It stands between it and them; and so the heart loses its straight path and falls into the pit of desire and ignorance. Allah, Mighty and Glorious is He, says: --\**< And do not obey anyone whose heart WE have made forgetful in remembering Us- who follows his own desires, and whose affair has exceeded all bounds. (18:28)--<\**

The unrestrained gaze causes all three afflictions. It has been said that between the eye and the heart is an immediate connection; if the eyes are corrupted, then the heart follows. It becomes like a rubbish heap where all the dirt and filth and rottenness collect, and so there is no room for love for Allah, relating all matters to Him, awareness of being in His presence, and feeling joy at His proximity-only the opposite of these things can inhabit such a heart.

Staring and gazing without restraint is disobedience to Allah:

--\**< Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that is more purifying for them. Surely Allah is aware of what they do. (24:30)--<\**

Only the one who obeys Allah's commands is content in this world, and only the servant who obeys Allah will survive in the next world.

Furthermore, letting the gaze roam free cloaks the heart with darkness, just as lowering the gaze for Allah clothes it in light. After the above ayah, Allah, the Glorious and Mighty, says in the same surah of the the Qur'an:

--\**< Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth: the likeness of His light is as if there were a niche, and in the niche is a lamp, and in the lamp is a glass, and the glass as it were a brilliant star, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it. Light upon light. 'Allah guides whomever He wants to His Light. Allah strikes metaphors for man; and Allah knows all things. (24:35)--<\**

When the heart is a light, countless good comes to it from all directions. If it is dark, then clouds of evil and afflictions come from all directions to cover it up.

Letting the gaze run loose also makes the heart blind to distinguishing between truth and falsehood, between the sunnah and innovation; while lowering it for Allah, the Might and Exalted, gives it a penetrating, true and distinguishing insight.

A righteous man once said: "Whoever enriches his outward behaviour by following the sunnah, and makes his inward soul wealthy through contemplation, and averts his gaze away from looking at what is forbidden, and avoids anything of a doubtful nature, and feeds solely on what is halal-his inner sight will never falter."

Rewards for actions come in kind. Whoever lowers his gaze from what Allah has forbidden, Allah will give his inner sight abundant light.

### **Too Much Food**

The consumption of small amounts of food guarantees tenderness of the heart, strength of the intellect, humility of the self, weakness of desires, and gentleness of temperament. Immoderate eating brings about the opposite of these praiseworthy qualities.

Al-Miqdam ibn Ma'd Yakrib said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah \*saaws\* say: *"The son of Adam fills no vessel more displeasing to Allah than his stomach. A few morsels should be enough for him to preserve his strength. If he must fill it, then he should allow a third for his food, a third for his drink and leave a third empty for easy breathing."* Sahih, Ahmad, al-Musnad, 4/132;

Excessive eating induces many kinds of harm. It makes the body incline towards disobedience to Allah and makes worship and obedience seem laborious-such evils are bad enough in themselves. A full stomach and excessive eating have caused many a wrong action and inhibited much worship. Whoever safeguards against the evils of overfilling his stomach has prevented great evil. It is easier for shaytan to control a person who has filled his stomach with food and drink.

The Prophet \*saaws\* and his companions, may Allah be pleased with them, used to go hungry quite frequently. Although this was often due to a shortage of food, Allah decreed the best and most favourable conditions for His Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. This is why Ibn Umar and his father before him-in spite of the abundance of food available to them-modelled their eating habits on those of the Prophet \*saaws\*. It has been reported that Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "From the time of their arrival in Madina up until his death \*saaws\*, the family of Muhammed \*saaws\* never ate their fill of bread made from wheat three nights in a row." Al-Bukhari, Kitab al-At'ima, 9/549; and Muslim, Kitab az-Zuhud, 8/105.

Ibrahim ibn Adham said: "Any one who controls his stomach is in control of his deen, and anyone who controls his hunger is in control of good behaviour. Disobedience towards Allah is nearest to a person who is satiated with a full stomach, and furthest away from a person who is hungry."

### **Keeping Bad Company**

Unnecessary companionship is a chronic disease that causes much harm. How often have the wrong kind of companionship and intermixing deprived people of Allah's generosity, planting discord in their hearts which even the passage of time-even if it were long enough for mountains to be worn away-has been unable to dispel. In keeping such company one can find the roots of loss, both in this life and in the next life.



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## HOW TO PURIFY THE HEART?

### 1. DHIKR (REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH)

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ  
قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ  
اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction." (13:28)

#### Importance of zikr

"O ye who believe! celebrate the praises of Allah and do this often; And glorify Him morning and evening." (33:41,42)

"Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and reject not faith." (2:152)

"...Remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing) without doubt." (29:45)

"No other act of man is more effective for his deliverance from Allah's punishment than dhikr of Allah" (Ahmed)

"The Prophet, peace be upon him, would often tell his Companions, "Shall I tell you about the best of deeds, the most pure in the sight of your Lord, about the one that is of the highest order and is far better for you than spending gold and silver, even better for you than meeting your enemies in the battlefield where you strike at their necks and they at yours?" The Companions replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Remembrance of Allah." (Tirmidhi, Ahmad, and Al-Hakim)

"And the men and the women who remember Allah much with their hearts and tongues. Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward (i.e., Jannah)." (33:35)

### Dhikr-foundation of good deeds

When a man complained, *"The laws of Islam are too heavy for me, so tell me something that I can easily follow,"* the Prophet, peace be upon him, told him, *"Let your tongue be always busy with the remembrance of Allah."* (Tirmidhi)

### Dhikr & the heart:

*"Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction."* (13:28)

*"Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the Remembrance of Allah."* (57:16)

*"Everything has a polish and the polish of the heart is dhikr of Allah."* (Baihaqi)

### Dhikr is life

*The Prophet (SAW) said, "The similitude of one who remembers his Lord and one who does not remember Him, is like that of the living and the dead."*  
(Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

### Dhikr as criterion for leadership:

*"Nor obey any whose heart We have permitted to neglect the dhikr (remembrance) of Us, the one who follows his own desires whose case has gone beyond all bounds".*  
(18:28)

### Methods of dhikr:

#### A. Sustained awareness of Allah

*"Those who remember Allah standing, sitting and on their sides."* (3:191)

Dhikr while carrying out normal activities.

All pervading dhikr - attaining and developing the states of Ihsan.

The Prophet said, *"Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you."* (Bukhari)

*"He is in their midst wheresoever they be."* (58:7)

When a companion asked about the method of purifying himself Prophet (pbuh) replied: *always remember Allah is with you wherever you are.*  
(Tirmidhi)

B .Specific methods:

1. Remembering Allah's names and attributes:

The most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on Him by them; (7:180)

Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: *Ninety nine names, hundred but one, belongs to Allah. Whoever collects them enters Jannah.* (Bukhari)

2. Saying Subhanallah, Alhamdulillah, Allahuakbar, lahoulawala quwwata illah billa and their other variants from ahadith.

3. Durood (Sending Blessings on prophet Muhammad [SAW])

4. Istighfar:

Abdullah b. 'Abbas said, *"If one supplicates without fail for forgiveness from Allah, He finds a way out for him to get out of every distress and difficulty, and gives him sustenance through ways utterly unthought of."* ( Abu Daw'ud, Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, and Al-Hakim.)

5. Dua:

*"Dua is the marrow of worship."*(Tirmidhi)

Mu'adh ibn Jabal reported that the Messenger of Allah took him by the hand and said, "Mu'adh, by Allah, I love you." Mu'adh said, "May my mother and father be your ransom, Messenger of Allah. By Allah, I love you." He said, "Mu'adh, I advise you not to fail to say after every prayer, '*O Allah, help me to remember You and thank You and worship You well.*'". (Abu Dawud and an-Nasa'i)

Times of dhikr:

- After salah (atleast 5 min)
- After fajr and maghrib (at least 20-30 min)
- At tahajjud
- Whole day along with other activities
- Before sleeping muhasaba, zikr, dua, istighfar.

Mu`adh ibn Jabal said that the Prophet also said: *"The People of Paradise will not regret except one thing alone: the hour that passed them by in which they made no dhikr of Allah."* (Bayhaqi, Tabarani)

In a hadith qudsi, the Prophet, peace be upon him, narrated: *"Allah says: 'I am to my servant as he expects of Me, I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me in his heart, I remember him to Myself, and if he remembers me in an assembly, I mention him in an assembly better than his, and if he draws nearer to Me a hand's span, I draw nearer to him an arm's length, and if he draws nearer to Me an arm's length, I draw nearer to him a fathom length, and if he comes to me walking, I rush to him at [great] speed.* (Bukhari and Muslim)

## 2. SALAH (THE PRAYER)

"So establish prayer for My remembrance." (20:14)

Hadith qudsi 'out of all the ways My servant gets closer to Me, salat is dearest to Me.' (Bukhari)

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ  
تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ  
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ  
مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

"...And establish regular prayer, for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds, and remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing in life, without doubt." (29:45)

Hadith: 'My dear son! Be sure to avoid being distracted during salah, for, to become distracted while praying is a disaster'. (Tabrani)

### Tahajjud:

Quality of ibadur Rehmaan

"Those who spend the night in adoration of their Lord prostrate and standing" (25:64)

"Keep up qiyam-ul-layl, it was the way of virtuous before you, it draws you nearer to your lord, atones for your sins, forbids from evil and protects the body from sickness." (Tirmidhi)

### Other nawafil:

2 rakats after zuhar, Maghrib and isha, ishraq, awwaabeen, salaah-ul-haaja, salaah-ul-taubah, istiqara etc.

### Sajda outside salah:

"Nay heed him not: but bow down in adoration and bring thyself the closer (to Allah)!" (96:19)

### Effective salah:

- Involves tongue, mind, heart, limbs
- Checking after every salaah
- Maintaining a log book with a daily Percentage scale of concentration for each salaah.

## 3. RECITING THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an - The Uncreated word of Allah. The Living miracle. The clear Guidance. The cure for the hearts.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ  
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا  
فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ  
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*"O mankind! There hath come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts and for those who believe Guidance and a Mercy." (10:57)*

#### Quran and the qalb:

*"For believers are those who when Allah is mentioned feel a tremor in their hearts and when they hear His signs rehearsed find their faith strengthened and put (all) their trust in their Lord." (8:2)*

*"Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears."(19:58)*

*"Repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises. Such is the guidance of Allah: He guides therewith whom He pleases but such as Allah leaves to stray can have none to guide."(39:23)*

#### **4. REMEMBRANCE OF DEATH**

*"Remember often that which ends all pleasures" (Tabrani)*

#### **5. FASTING**

*"O you who believe! Observing As-Saum (the fasting) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqun (the pious)" (2:183)*

Fasting during Ramadhan and Nafl also (3 days every month, in Muharram, in Zilhijjah etc.)

The prophet said "Fasting is a shield."

#### **6. SADAQAH (CHARITY)**

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ  
أَوْلَادُكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ  
أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَا

اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الْخَاسِرُونَ  
وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ  
قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ  
فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ  
قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُن مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

*"O ye who believe! let not your riches or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. If any act thus the loss is their own. And spend something (in charity) out of the substance which We have bestowed on you before death should come to any of you and he should say "O my Lord! why didst thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity and I should have been one of the doers of good." (63:9, 10)*

## 7. ABSTAINING FROM SINS

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said, "When a believer sins there is a black spot on his heart, and if he repents and asks pardon his heart is polished; but if he does more it increases till it gains the ascendancy over his heart. That is the rust mentioned by Allah Most High, 'Nay, but what they were committing has spread like rust over their hearts'." (Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

## 8. FOLLOW THE SUNNAH (WAYS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD [SAW] ALWAYS - NO INNOVATIONS

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ  
فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ  
وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ۖ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ  
"say (O Prophet peace be upon him), if you love Allah, follow me, Allah will love you and forgive your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (3:31)

If there were a better way of doing anything, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) would have adopted it surely! Following the ways (inner and outer) of the most pure human ever will surely purify us.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ  
سُورَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا

اللَّهُ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ  
وَكَثِيرًا

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad [peace be upon him] ) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much." 33:21

### 9. PIOUS COMPANY

الَّذِينَ وَاصِرِينَ  
يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ  
وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ  
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ  
زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا  
وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا  
قَلْبَهُ عَنِ ذِكْرِنَا  
وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ  
وَآتَبَعَ هَوَاهُ  
افْرُطًا

"And keep yourself (O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)) patiently with those who call on their Lord (i.e., your companions who remember their Rabb with glorification, praising in prayers, and other righteous deeds) morning and afternoon, seeking His Pleasure." (18:28)

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Prophet (Peace be upon him) saying, "Man follows his friend's religion, you should be careful who you take for friends". [At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud].

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Prophet (Peace be upon him) saying, "The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one blowing the bellows. The owner of musk would either offer you some free of charge, or you would buy it from him, or you smell its pleasant fragrance; and as for the one who blows the bellows (i.e., the blacksmith), he either burns your clothes or you smell a repugnant smell".

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, "A person will be summoned with the one whom he loves".

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Another narration is: The Prophet (Peace be upon him) was asked; "What about a person who loves a people but cannot be with them?" (i.e., either he cannot attain their lofty position of righteousness or that he has not met with them in this life). He (Peace be upon him) replied, "A person will be in the company of those whom he loves".

Rasulullah Sallallahu alaihi wasallam has said: "One who sits in the company of the accepted servants of Allah, can never remain wretched. Allah changes his wretchedness into auspiciousness." There is a lengthy hadith, a part of which is, that a person was passing by the gathering of Allah's people - he had not come specially for the gathering, but just decided to sit down. Although Allah knows everything, He asked the malaikah what those people were engaged in. At the end of this hadith it is mentioned that Allah calls the malaikah to bear witness and says: "I have forgiven all of them, even the one who sat in the gathering just as he was passing by, because I do not deprive even those who sit near My accepted servants."

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## CONCLUSION

### **REAL ACCOUNTABILITY IS IN THE HEART**

Allah says in the Quran:

كَذٰلِكَ نَسُكُّهُ فِي قُلُوْبِ  
الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ

• Thus do We let it (polytheism and disbelief) enter into the hearts (Qulub) of the Mujrimoon (criminals, polytheists, pagans, etc.) (AL-Hijr 15: 12)

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللّٰهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ  
وَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ

• ...and if any one believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (Qalb): for Allah knows all things. (At-taghabun 64-11)

### USEFUL DU'A TO ASK ALLAH TO PRESERVE AND GUIDE THE HEART



Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir recorded that Umm Salamah said that the Prophet used to supplicate,

يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ

*"Ya, muqallibal qulubi thabbit qalbi 'ala deenik"*

O, You Who changes the hearts, make my heart firm on Your religion.

He (SAW) then recited,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

*"Rabbana la tuzigh qulubana ba'daidz hadaitana wahlablana milla dunka rahmatan innaka antal wahhab."*

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower.

[Surah Al 'Imran 3: 8]

[Ibn abi Hatim; at Tabari]