

Protect and Safeguard Your Heart

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

My brothers and my sisters, we are living in very, very strange and evil times. Fitan has increased and misguidance is widespread. A time where goodness and righteousness are little, and the means to acquire that are few. A time where evil and the means to gain that evil are widespread and plenty. A deep, evil ocean and many of us—Allāhul-Mustā‘an—are drowning in this ocean. Iblīs and his army are fighting us from every single angle and they strike at our hearts because having a sound heart, that is the foundation and the key to having success in this life and likewise in the hereafter.

So ponder upon these words, look at the battle we are in, how Shayṭān and his army are fighting us from all angles, and the way they are winning this battle is by attacking our hearts. And why is that? It is because their leader has experience in destroying the sons of Ādam and he knows how to bring them down.

The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) focused on the condition and protection of the heart. Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) mentions in the Qur’ān,

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ

إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

“The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, except him who brings to Allāh a clean heart [clean from Shirk (polytheism) and Nifāq (hypocrisy)].” [Sūrah al-Shu‘arā’

26:88-89]

Look at the emphasis our religion gives to the state of our hearts. Why is that? The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) clarifies in the ḥadīth of an-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr (رضى الله عنه) [who narrated that] the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *“Indeed there is a morsel of flesh in the body that if it is sound, then the whole of the body will be sound; and if it is corrupt, then the whole body will be corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart.”* Ponder upon that: Just that one particular thing, if it is corrupt, everything will be corrupt.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab (رحمه الله) explains that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mentioned comprehensive speech (i.e. something that is short but vast in meaning), telling us that all of the actions of Ibn Ādam, whether they are sound or corrupt, depends upon the state of the heart. So we must protect that heart. Shayṭān and his army are focusing just on that one particular muḍghah (morsel of flesh) because they know that if it is corrupted, then everything else that comes after will be corrupted. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) gave us an advice to protect that because if it is protected, then your eyesight will be protected, your hearing, your actions—everything. But if that is gone, then everything thereon after will become corrupted.

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) in his book *Ighāthatul-Laḥfān* talks about the state of the heart and what Shayṭān wants from our hearts. He explains that the Shayṭān wants our hearts to be in a state where we do not even realise or know the purpose of our creation; not knowing Allāh (عز وجل), not having love for Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), not yearning to meet Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and not returning to Allāh (عز وجل). This is what the Shayṭān wants: For our hearts to be in a state where we do not even know why we are here, we do not even have that in our hearts to want to meet Allāh, to return to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

Ibn Qayyim mentions that the heart in that state is affected. Meaning, it gives in to every single desire. Ikhwān, we are in a battle and we are losing. We need to defend ourselves. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has told us what will give us protection and how to fight against Shayṭān and his army. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *“The īmān of a slave will not be upright up until his heart is upright.”*¹

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab (رحمه الله) explains this ḥadīth saying that the intent is regarding the sound heart. Having that firm faith is that the action of your limbs is in accordance to what is pleasing to Allāh. And that will not be established up until your heart is rectified. So how can we rectify and protect our hearts?

The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to often repeat, *“O Turner of the hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion.”*²

And in another narration in Muslim, *“O Allāh, the Controller of the hearts direct our hearts to Your obedience.”*

This is what the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to often repeat. Likewise, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to say, *“O Allāh, I ask You for a sound heart.”*

Reflect my brother and my sister, this is from one of the means to tackle the difficulties we are facing because we need to protect that one last thing that we have. If it goes, then all of the body goes, and Shayṭān knows that. Because if that heart goes, then you will look at everything, you will hear all evil, you will do all evil. All of the doubts will become for you fair seeming. All of the desires will be followed. There is no limit because the heart is gone. So we pray to Allāh (عز وجل) that we can be of those individuals who do not give our hearts

¹ Reported by Aḥmad and authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī (رحمه الله).

² Tirmidhī.

away easily. We fight because it is not easy. The temptation is vast, so we pray to Allāh (عز وجل) that He keeps us firm.

And from the means, my brothers and my sisters, to have that sound heart and to protect our hearts from deviating is to keep close to that particular thing that will give our hearts the cure. Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) likewise mentions in his book *Ighāthatul-Lahfān* that all of the sicknesses of the heart stem from the sickness of having doubts and from the sickness of desires, and the Qur’ān is a cure for both.

The Qur’ān, it is a cure for both—so that is our cure.

Allāh (عز وجل) says,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

“O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Qur’ān, ordering all that is good and forbidding all that is evil), and a healing for that (disease of ignorance, doubt, hypocrisy and differences, etc.) in your breasts.” [Sūrah Yūnus 10:57]

And Allāh mentions,

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We send down from the Qur’ān that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism and act on it).” [Sūrah al-Isrā’ 17:82]

Allāh (عز وجل) and the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) have informed us, so it is upon us to ask the question now: How much of the cure do we have in our lives? That thing which is a cure, how much time do we spend reading it? How close is it to us? For indeed, that is something that will protect us. And we believe in everything that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) informs us.

How much proof do we need? Look at the emphasis that was given. The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would make du‘ā’ and say, “*O Allāh make the Qur’ān the spring of my heart and the light of my chest.*” Look at the emphasis that was given. And it has been made clear to us that particular thing that we have, we need to protect it. If it goes, then what comes thereon after is muṣībah (calamity).

The Companions and the Salaf understood this and implemented it in their lives. Listen to this tremendous statement by ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (رضى الله عنه), “If our hearts were pure, we would never have enough of the Speech of Allāh (عز وجل), and I dislike that a day passes by and I do not look into the muṣḥaf (Qur’ān).” This is who speaking? An individual whom the angels are shy of. This is an individual who had the Qur’ān so close to his heart that even when he was assassinated, he was reciting the Book of Allāh (عز وجل).

They were far better than us, far more God-fearing, yet they kept that cure close to their hearts. And we are nowhere near on their level, yet the cure we have is so far away from us. So we must constantly make du‘ā’, my brothers and my sisters, even if we think that we are upon the ḥaqq (truth), we never know the state of our hearts and what can happen tomorrow. One day Alḥamdulillāh, we can be upon the Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm (Straight Path), things are going well for us and then tomorrow it turns upside down due to something that has deviated in our hearts.

Allāh (عز وجل) says,

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

“(They say): ‘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.’”

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This is a du'ā' that we must constantly make. The first one I address is myself and my own heart and then my brothers and my sisters, let us increase in these prayers.

O Allāh (عز وجل), make our hearts those that are protected and do not become deviated. O Allāh (عز وجل), protect our hearts and let our hearts be of those that are obedient to You Allāh (عز وجل). O Allāh, make our hearts firm upon Your Dīn until we meet You, āmīn.

والحمد لله رب العالمين