

The Heart in Quran

The phrase heart carries special importance and has been used extensively in the Holy Qur'an and narrations. But what is meant with this phrase is not the pine-shaped physical heart located in the left side of the chest which supports the animal life system by continuously pumping fresh blood into various parts of the body. Because, the Holy Qur'an relates things to heart which are not comparable with this pine-shaped heart. e.g.:

1. Reasoning and Comprehension

The Holy Qur'an said:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا

“Have they not traveled in the land and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear.” (22:46)

2. Un-comprehending and Reasoning

The Holy Qur'an said:

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا

“Having hearts wherewith they understand not, and having eyes wherewith they see not.” (7:179)

And said:

وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ

“And their hearts are sealed, so that they apprehend not.” (9:87)

3. Faith

The Holy Qur’an said:

أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ

“These are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith and strengthened them with a spirit from Him.” (58:22)

4. Blasphemy and Disbelief

The Holy Qur’an said:

فَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مُنْكَرَةٌ وَهُمْ مُسْتَكْبِرُونَ

“And as for those who believe not in the Hereafter there hearts refuse to know, for they are proud.” (16:22)

And said:

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ ۗ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

“Such are they whose hearts and ears and eyes God hath sealed. And such are the heedless.” (16:108)

5. Dissension

God–Almighty said in the Holy Qur’an:

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ

“The Hypocrites fear lest a surah should be revealed concerning them, proclaiming what is in their hearts.” (9: 64)

6. To Receive Guidance

God–Almighty said:

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

“And whosoever believeth in God, He guideth his heart. And God is knower of all things.” (64: 11)

And God said:

شَهِيدٌ هُوَ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ

“Most surely there is a reminder in this for him who has a heart or he gives ear and is a witness.” (50: 37)

7. Negligence

God–Almighty said:

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ

“And obey not him whose heart we have made heedless of Our Remembrance, who followeth his own lust.” (18:28)

8. Certainty and Tranquility

God–Almighty has said:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest.” (13:28)

And said:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزِدُوا إِيمَانًا

“He it is who sent down peace of reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith unto their faith.” (48:4)

9. Anxiety and Conflict

God–Almighty has said:

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَرَدَّدُونَ

“They alone ask leave of thee who believe not in God and the Last Day, and whose hearts feel doubt, so in their doubt they waver.” (9:45)

10. Blessing and Kindness

God–Almighty has said:

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً

“And places compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him.” (57:27)

And said:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَيْدَكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ

“He it is who supporteth thee with His Help and with the believers. And (as for the believers) hath attuned their hearts.” (8: 62-63)

11. Hot-temper and Cruelty

God–Almighty said:

وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

“If thou hadst been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from round about thee.” (3: 159)

Therefore, heart in the Holy Qur’an has been assigned the most important privileged position, and various psychic tasks have been related to it, namely: faith, blasphemy, hypocrisy, reasoning, understanding, not understanding, acceptance of truth, unacceptance of truth, guidance, deviation, sin, intention, purification, corruption, benevolence, aggravation, love, invocation, negligence, fear, anger, doubt, conflict, mercy, cruelty, regret, assurance, arrogance, jealousy, rebellion, offense, and other similar acts.

Since the pine shaped piece of flesh called heart could not be the origin of these effects, instead these effects are the consequences of human self and spirit. Therefore, it could be said: What is meant with heart is the same “Celestial Jewel” which controls the degree of human-ness within a human being :

The heart possesses such exalted position in the Holy Qur’an that it is mentioned when the topic of revelation i.e. communication between God and men is discussed. God–Almighty said to Holy Prophet (S):

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ

“Which is the true spirit hath brought down, upon the heart, that thou mayest be (one) of the warners.” (26: 193-194)

And said:

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

“Say (O Muhammad, to mankind) who is enemy to Gabriel! For he it is who hath revealed (this scripture) to thy heart by God's leave.” (2:97)

The heart's position is so eminent that it sees the revealing angel and hears his voice. God–Almighty has said:

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ

“And He revealed unto His slave (Prophet Muhammad) that which he revealed. The Heart lied not (in seeing the angel) what it saw.” (53: 10–11)

Soundness and Sickness of Heart

Our living depends upon spirit and heart because, they are the ones who manage the bodies. All the parts of the body obey their command and all deeds and action initiate from the heart. Therefore, the salvation and cruelty of a person depends upon his hearts condition. It has been inferred from the Holy Qur'an and narrations that like the human bodies which are healthy and sick at different times, his heart's condition may also follow the same cycle (i.e. some times it is healthy while at other times it is sick).

God–Almighty in Holy Qur'an said:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

“The day when wealth and sons avail not (any man). Save him who bringeth unto God a whole heart“ (26: 88–89)

And said:

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِّمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ

“Lo! therein verily is a reminder for him who hath a heart” (50:37)

And said:

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ هَذَا مَا تُوعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيظٍ مَّنْ خَشِيَ
الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُّنِيبٍ

“And the Garden is brought nigh for those who kept from evil, no longer distant. (And it is said): that is that which ye were promised, (it is) for every pertinent and heedful one, who feareth the Beneficent in secret and cometh with a contrite heart.” (50: 31-33)

Therefore, the above verses make it explicit that health of a person is related to his heart's condition and his eternal salvation depends upon his return to God–Almighty with a pure and humble heart. On the other side the Holy Qur'an introduces some examples of hearts which are sick as follows:

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

“In their hearts is a disease, and God increaseth their disease. (2: 10)

And said:

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ

“But as for those in whose hearts is disease, it only addeth wickedness to their wickedness. (9: 125)

And said:

وَإِذْ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا

“And when the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease were saying: God and His Messenger promised us naught but delusion. (33: 12)

And said:

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ

“And thou seest those in whose heart is a disease race towards them, saying: We fear lest a change of fortune befall us. (5: 52)

In these verses the blasphemy, hypocrisy, and friendship with the pagans have been introduced as heart's sicknesses. Similar verses and hundreds of authentic traditions narrated by Holy Prophet (S) and infallible Imams (a.s.) of his Holy Progeny had stated that human heart and soul are susceptible to sickness like human bodies.

God–Almighty the Creator of heart and soul, the Holy Prophet (S), and Infallible Imams (a.s.) who are the specialists of human beings and their hearts had informed us about the sickness of some of the hearts. Why should we ignore this reality?

The real human specialists after identifying the symptoms namely: blasphemy, dissension, unacceptance of truth, arrogance, revenge, anger, criticizing, slander, treason, self–conceit, fear, malevolence, defamation, ill–speaking, back–biting, harshness, oppression, felony, misery, avarice, fault–finding, lying, ambitiousness, hypocrisy, deceit, suspicion, cruelty, self–weakness and many other indecent characteristics, have introduced them as the sickness of heart and soul.

Therefore, those who leave this world with such contaminated hearts will not be returning to God with a pure and sound heart to be worthy of the verse:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ

“The day when wealth and sons avail not (any man). Save him who bringeth unto God a whole heart.” (26: 88–89)

The sicknesses of heart and self could not be considered as small or insignificant rather they are much more dangerous and incurable as compared to bodily diseases. In case of bodily diseases the physical order of the body loses its equilibrium thus, causing pain, discomfort, and inflicting damage upon a specific part of the body.

But this is rather limited and in any case these effects cannot go on beyond the physical life span of the inflicted person. However, the sickness of heart and self are accompanied with continuous anguish, torture, and eternal punishment; the pain and punishment which penetrate until the very depths of heart engulfing the soul with eternal flames.

The heart which remained completely ignorant of God's existence without witnessing His signs by spending a life of disbelief, deviation, and sins in reality is blind and dark, which will be raised on the Day of Judgment with similar condition, and will have no other choice except to be condemned into Hell to live a painful eternal life full of anguish and torture. God–Almighty in Holy Qur'an said:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى قَالَ
رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ
الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى

“But he who turneth away from remembrance” of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection. He will say: 'My Lord! wherefore hast thou gathered me (hither) blind, when I was wont to see?' He will say: 'so (it must be) our revelations come unto thee but thou didst forget them. In like manner thou art forgotten this Day.
(20: 124–126)

And said:

فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى أَفْئِمَّةً يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُون لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ
يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا

الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

“Have they not traveled in the land, and have they hearts where with to feel and ears wherewith to hear ? For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind. (22:46)

And said:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا

“Whoso is blind in here will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet further from the road.”(17:22)

And said:

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۚ
وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ عُمِيَآ وَبُكْمًا وَصُمًّا

“And he whom God guideth, he is led aright, while, as for him whom He sendeth astray, for them thou wilt find no protecting friends beside Him, and We shall assemble them on the Day of Resurrection on their faces, blind, dumb, and deaf “ (17:97)

May be you will find the above, something strange and may ask: How the esoteric eyes will become blind on the Day of Judgment? Do we have eyes and ears other than these apparent bodily eyes and ears? The reply is: Yes! The Creator of human beings and Divine human doctors had informed that human heart and also soul, have their own eyes, ears, and tongue but of their own kind.

Human self is a mysterious existence possessing a special life in his inner essence. Self has his own world in which there is light as well as darkness, there is purity and cleanliness as well as indignation and contamination, and there is seeing and hearing as well as blindness and deafness.

But the light and darkness of that special world is not similar to the light and darkness of this world, rather the belief in God–Almighty, Day of Judgment, Prophethood, and the Holy Qur’an is the illumination for self’s world.

God–Almighty has said:

فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Then those who believe in him (Muhammad) honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: They are the successful. (7: 157)

And said:

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

“Now hath come unto you light from God and a plain scripture. (5: 15)

And said:

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۗ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبِهِم مِّن
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

“Is he whose bosom God hath expanded for the surrender (unto Him), so that he followeth a light from His Lord (as he who disbelieveth) ? Then woe unto those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of God. Such are in plain error. (39: 22)

God–Almighty has informed that Islam, Qur’an, faith, and Divine obligations are all illumination and their obedience makes the heart enlightened; although, in reality this happens in this same world but its final result is declared in the Next World. Also, He had informed us that blasphemy, hypocrisy, sinning, non-acceptance of truth all are darkness and make the heart dark and contaminated, which would certainly become manifested in the Next World.

The Divine Prophets were dispatched by God–Almighty with the mission of leading human beings out of darkness of blasphemy towards the environment of illumination and belief.

God–Almighty has said:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ

“We have revealed unto thee (Muhammad) that thereby thou mayst bring forth mankind from darkness unto light. (14: 1)

The believers, by means of illumination of faith, self–purification, good moral conducts, God's–Remembrance, and righteous deeds make their heart and souls illuminated; witness the sublime realities through their esoteric eyes and ears; and ascend toward God's Nearness through various stages of perfection.

Such souls when leaving this world will turn into absolute illumination, joy, cheerfulness, beauty, and in the Next World will be utilizing the same illumination accumulated by them in this material world. God–Almighty has said:

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَاكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ؟ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“On the day when thou (Muhammad) wilt see the believers, men and women, their light shining forth before them and on their right hands (and will hear it said unto them): Glad news for you this day: Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein ye are immortal. That is the supreme triumph. (57: 12)

Yes! The illumination for the eternal world must be arranged in this world, and it is because of this

reason that the pagans and hypocrites do not have illumination in the Next World. God–Almighty has said:

يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ
ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا

“On the Day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say unto those who believe, look on us that we may borrow from your light! It will be said: Go back and seek for light! (57: 13)

Heart in Traditions

The pioneers of religion and real human specialists have left many interesting narrations about the heart. Following are some of the examples: In some of the narrations the hearts have been classified into three categories:

Imam al–Baqir (a.s.) said:

عن ابي جعفر عليه السلام قال: القلوب ثلاثة: قلب منكوس لا يعثر على شيء من الخير وهو قلب الكافر وقلب فيه نكته سودا فالخير والشر يعتلجان، فما كان منه أقوى غلب عليه، وقلب مفتوح فيه مصباح يزهر فلا يطفأ نوره الى القيامة وهو قلب المؤمن.

“There are three kinds of hearts:

a: First type: Reversed heart which lacks feelings for any sort of righteous deeds. Such heart is the heart of a unbeliever.

b. Second Type: The heart which contains a black spot in which a war is being waged between the truth and falsehood, and whichever becomes victorious will take over the heart's control.

c. Third type: The conquered heart in which there is a lighted lamp which is never going to be turned off. Such a heart is the heart of a believer.”¹

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) has quoted from his learned father:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: كان أبي يقول: ما من شيء أفسد للقلب من الخطيئة، ان القلب ليواقع الخطيئة فما تزال حتى تغلب عليه فيصير أسفله أعلاه وأعلاه أسفله.

“There is nothing worst than sinning for the heart. When the heart is encountered with sin, it struggles against the sin until sin becomes victorious thus, making the heart as a reversed heart.”²

Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) has said:

عن علي بن الحسين عليه السلام في حديث طويل يقول فيه: الآن للعبد أربع أعين: عينان يبصر بهما أمر دينة ودنياه، وعينان يبصر بهما أمر آخرته. فإذا أراد الله بعيد خيرا فتح له العينين اللتين في قلبه فابصر بهما الغيب وأمر آخرته وإذا أراد به غير ذلك ترك القلب بما فيه.

“A man possesses four eyes, with two apparent eyes he sees the affairs relevant to his world, and with two esoteric eyes sees the affairs related to the Next World. Therefore, whenever God-Almighty desired the good for a believer, He opens his heart's eyes to enable him to witness the hidden world and its mysteries. But when He does not desire his welfare, leaves the heart with his esoteric eyes closed.”³

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: ان للقلب اذنين، روح الايمان يساره بالخير والشيطان يساره بالشر فايهما ظهر على صاحبه غلبه.

“The heart possesses two ears, the spirit of belief slowly invites him towards righteous deeds, while the Satan slowly invites him towards evil deeds. Therefore, whoever becomes victorious in this struggle takes over heart's control.”⁴

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) quotes from the Holy Prophet (S)

عن الصادق عليه السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: شر العمى عمى القلب.

“The darkness of the heart is the worst kind of darkness.”⁵

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

عن ابي جعفر عليه السلام قال: ما من عبد الاوفى قلبه نكتة بيضا فإذا أذنب ذنبا خرج في النكتة نكتة سودا. فان تاب ذهب ذلك السواد، وان تمادى في الذنوب زاد ذلك السواد حتى يغطي البياض، فإذا غطى البياض لم يرجع صاحبه الى خير ابدا وهو قول الله تعالى: كلا بل ران على قلوبهم ماكانوا يكسبون.

“Initially there is a white spot and light within the heart of a human being and as a result of his committing sin, a black spot appears. If the person repents the black spot gets wiped out, but if he persisted in sinning, the blackness gradually increases ultimately covering the entire white spot, When this happens the owner of such heart will never return towards goodness and become manifestation of the Qur’anic verse:

‘Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.’⁶

The Commander of the Faithful Imam‘Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال على عليه السلام: ومن قل ورعه مات قلبه ومن مات قلبه دخل النار.

“Every one who lacks self restraint and piety will have a dead heart; whoever have a dead heart will enter inside the Hell.”⁷

He further emphasized this matter in his last will addressing to his son:

فيما اوصى به امير المؤمنين عليه السلام ابنه, قال: يا بني ان البلا القاقاة واشد من ذلك مرض البدن واشد من ذلك مرض القلب. وان من النعم سعة المال وافضل من ذلك صحة البدن وافضل من ذلك تقوى القلوب.

“Oh my son! The poverty is one of the most horrible calamity,. But still severe than poverty is the bodily sickness; and the sickness of soul is harsher than the bodily sickness. Plenty of wealth is one of the God’s blessing, but sound health is better than that, and the piety of heart is even superior than sound

There is a narration quoted from Anas bin Malik from the Holy Prophet (S) who said:

انس من مالك قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ناجى داود ربه فقال
الهي لكل ملك خزانة فاين خزانتك؟ قال جل جلاله: لى خزينة اعظم من العرش
واوسع من الكرسي واطيب من الجنة وازين من الملكوت. ارضها المعرفة
واسماها اليمان وشمسها الشوق وقمرها المحبة ونجومها الخواطر وصاحبها
العقل ومطرها الرحمة وثمرها الطاعة وثمرها الحكمة. ولها اربعة ابواب: العلم
والحلب والصبر والرضا. والاهى القلب.

“The prophet David (a.s.) asked God; ‘Oh God! All the emperors possess treasure then where is Your treasure ? God–Almighty replied: ‘I possess a treasure which is greater than the sky; vaster than the Heaven’s firmaments; smells better than the perfumes of Paradise, and is beautiful than the Celestial Kingdom.

Its earth is enlightenment; its sky is belief, its sun is enthusiasm; its moon is love,. its stars are inspiration and attention towards Me; its clouds are reason, its rain is blessing, its fruits are obedience; and its yield is wisdom. My Treasure has four doors, the first one is the door of knowledge, the second one is the door of reason, the third one is the door of patience, and the fourth one is the door of contentment. Know that My Treasure is –the heart of a believer.’”9

The Divine Heart Specialists have described many interesting topics in these traditions. They have divided the hearts into following three categories:

1) The Heart of an Unbeliever

These Divine Specialists have described that the heart of an infidel is a reversed or over–turned heart which does not contain any goodness in it. Such heart’ is deviated from its primordial nature; does not look towards the Upper–Heavens and keeps itself amused and preoccupied into worldly affairs, therefore, it does not witness the existence of God–Almighty and I. Eternal–World.

It lacks the proper imagination for goodness and righteous deeds, because, the righteous deeds reach the perfection stage and Gods–Nearness only in cases when they are performed with the intention of attaining His pleasure. But since an infidel has reversed his heart, he does not see God–Almighty any more, and therefore, does not have any other aim except this world in all his affairs.

Such an heart in his primordial nature was blessed with esoteric eyes which now have been blinded

because, he cannot witness the most explicit shining realities i.e. the Creator of the Universe. He is blind and will be raised as blind in the Next World too.

In this world he is attached to worldly affairs, and will be raised in the Next World possessed with the same attachment, but since the Eternal-World lacks these worldly amusements, he will burn with the fire of separation. In such heart the light of faith has been extinguished and therefore, it is totally filled with absolute darkness.

2) The Heart of a Believer

Just opposite to the heart of an unbeliever is the heart of a perfect righteous believers; whose doors are open towards the Upper-Heaven and Unseen-World; is illuminated with the light of faith which will never be turned off; and through its two esoteric eyes witnesses the mysteries of the Hidden-World. Such a heart continuously strives for achieving absolute perfection, beauty and salvation and seeks God's Pleasure and Blessing.

Since he wants God-Almighty therefore, continuously strives to move in His Direction by means of good moral conduct and righteous deeds. Such heart is wider than the Celestial Sky and Divine Throne, beautiful than the Paradise, is the Divine Treasure and center of manifestation of Heavenly Light; his earth is enlightenment, his sky is faith; his sun is enthusiasm for God's countenance; his moon is God's love; where the wisdom rules and absorbs the rain of Divine Blessings for producing the fruits of worship and obedience; is filled with absolute light, joy, cheerfulness, purity, and will be raised in the next world in the similar state.

3) The Heart of a Believer- Occasionally Contaminated

The heart of a believer which occasionally gets contaminated with sin is not dark and confined rather is illuminated with the light of faith and remained open for receiving guidance and Divine Blessings. But as a result of sinning it has developed a black spot and Satan has succeeded to make an entry into it.

Although, the esoteric eyes are not quite yet blinded but because of sinning have caught a disease which might render them blind. Both angels as well as Satan have access within such heart. The angels enter through the doors of faith and invite him towards goodness while the Satan influences through the black spot inviting him towards evil.

In such a heart both Satan and angel are engaged in a continuous confrontation. Angel wants to take over the control of entire heart forcing Satan out through good deeds on the other side Satan through seduction and sins makes the darker heart further darkest and strives to take over the control of entire heart by forcing out the angel and permanently closing the gateway of belief forever.

These two are permanently engaged in a continuous war until one of them become victorious over his opponent, and what is the magnitude of victory achieved. The esoteric life and eternal destination of

human being depends upon this struggle. It is here that the struggle with the self becomes of crucial importance, which will be discussed later on in the book.

Hard-heartedness

In his initial primordial nature the heart is bestowed upon with special virtues such as purity, enlightenment, kindness, and blessing. He is sensitive towards other people's difficulties and feels uncomfortable while seeing others in pain even animals. He desires that others should live a pleasant and comfortable life and takes pleasure in doing favors towards them.

In accordance with his pure nature is inclined and pays attention towards God–Almighty; takes pleasure in performing worship, prayer, supplication, and other righteous deeds, while immediately feels ashamed and offer repentance if commits sins.

In case the heart accepted invitation of his pure primordial nature and acted accordingly, he becomes purest, kindest, sincerest, and enlightened, because of the effects of worship and prayers his enthusiasm and love for these things increases day by day. But if he neglects and acts against his inner natural feelings and sentiments, they gradually get subdued and eventually become completely silenced and eventually annihilated.

If after seeing the horrible tragic scenes involving others does not show any reaction, gradually becomes used to such things to the extent that further repetition of such encounters will produce least reaction.

Also, it is possible that one may reach to a point where seeing the poverty, hunger, and wretchedness involving others not only produce any disturbance with in his conscience on the contrary while seeing the painful scenes of imprisonment, torture, and murders feels happy and pleased. 10

If someone commits a sin for the first time, he feels guilty and ashamed about it, but having committed a sin for the first time, to repeat it for the second and third time relatively becomes easier for him, and in case of his persistence in sinning reaches to a point, where not only he does not feel any sense of guilt and shame, on the contrary considers himself victorious and feels happy.

The heart of such persons has become dark and reversed and in the words of the Holy Qur'an and narrations has acquired hard-heartedness. Satan has occupied these hearts forcing the God's Angels out, and the doors of salvation have been closed permanently leaving no hope for repentance and return towards God–Almighty.

God–Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an:

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا

يَعْمَلُونَ

“If only, when our disaster came on them, they had been humble! But their hearts were hardened and the devil made all that they used to do seem fair unto them! (6:43)

And said:

أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“Then woe unto those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of God. Such are in plain error. (39:22)

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

عن ابي جعفر عليه السلام قال: ما من عبد مؤمن الا وفي قلبه نكتة بيضا فان اذنب وثنى خرج من تلك النكتة سواد فان تمادى في الذنوب اتسع ذلك السواد حتى يغطي البيضا فاذا غطى البيضا لم يرجع صاحبه الى خيرا بدا وهو قول الله كلا بل ران على قلوبهم ما كانوا يكسبون.

“There is a white spot inside the heart of each believer. Once he commits a sin or repeats it, a black spot appears inside the heart. In case of persistence of sins, the black spot, increases, gradually in size filling the entire heart with blackness. When this happens the owner of such heart never returns towards goodness, and this, is what God meant in the verse:

كلا بل ران على قلوبهم ما كانوا يكسبون.

“Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.”¹¹

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

قال امير المؤمنين عليه السلام: ما جفت الدموع الا لقسوة القلوب وما قست القلوب الا لكثرة الذنوب.

“The tears of eye never get dried but for the sake of hardheartedness,. the heart never acquires hard-heartedness but for the sake of excess of sins.”¹²

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من علامات الشفا: جمود العين وقسوة القلب وشدة الحرص في طلب الرزق الاصرار على الذنب.

“The following four things are the indicators of human cruelty:

1) Dryness of eyes (ii) Hard-heartedness (iii) Excessive greed for earning a living (iv)And persistence of sins.”¹³

It was because of this reason that the Infallible Imams (a.s.) of prophet's progeny in their supplications took shelter in God–Almighty against hard-heartedness.

Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) said:

قال علي بن الحسين (ع) في دعائه: الهى اليك أشكو قلبا قاسيا، مع الوسواس متقلبا وبالرين الطبع متلبسا وعينا عن البكا من خوفك جامدة وإلى ما تسرها طامحه.

“Oh God! I do complain to you against hard-heartedness –the heart which by means of whims and passions is in the state of continuous revolution and has become contaminated. And I do complain to you against the dryness of eye which does not cry and is not afraid of you, and instead takes pleasure in looking towards whatever makes it pleased.”¹⁴

Therefore, a human being who desires his own prosperity and soundness of heart must prevent himself from committing any sin however small it might seem; should gradually motivate his self for performing righteous deeds namely: worship, prayer, communications with God, sincerity, kindness and help towards others, defense of oppressed and deprived, benevolence, and cooperation for achieving social welfare and social justice, so that it performs them as a matter of habit.

His inner purity and illumination continues striving for perfection and purification fill his heart becomes a special center of God's favorite angels.

Heart's Physicians

It has already been explained earlier that like human bodies, hearts could also be healthy and sick, and the eternal prosperity or salvation of a person depends upon his returning to the Next World with a pure and sound heart. It is therefore, important for us to be knowledgeable about the health and sickness of the heart; must identify the symptoms of the disease; and should understand the causes and factors in order to implement all the health care hygienic measures to prevent its spread.

Do we possess self-sufficiency in this matter or do we need the prophets? There is absolutely no doubt that we lack sufficient knowledge about the special creation of human-self and the secrets and mysteries which have been incorporated by the Creator in this Celestial existence.

In fact we are ignorant about our psychological and esoteric life; do not well recognize the factors and causes responsible for the self's sickness; cannot properly diagnose the symptoms of the disease; and are not well aware about various kinds of diseases, preventive measures required against their spread, and the available methods of their treatment. Therefore, the presence of Divine Prophets is really required in order to provide guidance and lead us in solving the above mentioned problems.

The prophets are the real physicians and specialists of the souls, who through Divine Blessing and revelations understand very well about the pain as well as the treatment of self. They have been educated and trained in various disciplines dealing with human beings and their souls in the school of revelation, and are thoroughly knowledgeable about the secret and mysteries of this special celestial existence.

They understand the straight path of guidance and ascend towards God-Almighty as well as the causes and factors of deviations, and therefore, are in a position to help lead the human beings in following the straight path and can prevent their deviations.

Yes! the prophets are God's physicians who have rendered most valuable services for humanity throughout the history, which are relatively more valuable than the services rendered by physicians of the human bodies. The prophets were able to discover the mysterious abstract (i.e. Celestial Spirit) for themselves, and by introducing this "Celestial Jewel" to human beings succeeded in reviving their human personality.

They were the ones who introduced and enlightened human beings with learning, spirituality, and moral ethics by showing them the path of journey leading towards God's Nearness.

They are the ones who made the humanity familiar with the unseen world and strived for self-purification, self-nourishment and self-refinement of human beings. If there are marks of meaningfulness, sentiments, love, moral ethics, and other virtues found among human beings it is all due to the blessing of painstaking continuous efforts and endeavors of all God's physicians and specially the Last Divine

Messenger Prophet Muhammad (S).

If the Divine Prophets would not have been dispatched for human-guidance, certainly the conditions of human beings would have been something different. Yes! The prophets are real distinguished personalities of the humanity, and because of this distinction have been called as physicians of self in the traditions.

The Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said about the Holy Prophet (S).

طبيب دوار بطبه قد احكم مرهمه واحمى مواسمه يضع من ذلك حيث الحاجة
اليه, من قلوب عمى واذان صم والسنة بكم. متبع بد وائه مواضع الغفلة
ومواطن الحيرة لم يستضيئوا باضوا الحكمة ولم يقدحوا بزناد العلوم الثاقبة,
فهم فى ذلك كالانعام السائمة الصخورالقاسية.

“Muhammad (S) was a traveling physician who continuously endeavored for the treatment of souls. He had prepared ready-made ointments and arranged other tools of surgery for the treatment of wounds and disinfecting the diseases at suitable occasions. He cured the heart's blindness, ear's deafness, tongue's dumbness, and prescribed medicine for all those who were living in the state of confusion and wandering because, they did not utilized the light of wisdom for abstraction of realities and thus, were forced to live like grazing animals.”¹⁵

The Holy Qur'an has been described as a health-giving medicine for the diseased hearts.

God-Almighty has said:

قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ

“There hath come unto you an exhortation from your Lord. A balm for that which is in the breasts. (10:57)

And said:

وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And We reveal of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for believers. (17:82)

The Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said about the Holy Qur'an:

قال على عليه السلام: وتعلموا القرآن فانه أحسن الحديث وتفقهوا فيه فانه ربيع القلوب واستشفوا بنوره فانه شفا الصدور.

“Learn the Holy Qur'an because, it is the best of learning; pay attentions towards its verses because they are like the springs rain; its recital revives the heart; and utilize the Qur'anic illumination for the healing of your hearts.”¹⁶

At some other place he said:

قال على عليه السلام: واعلموا انه ليس على احد بعد القرآن من فاقة ولا لاحد قبل القرآن من غنى فاستشفوه من ادوائكم واستعينوا به على لاوايكم فان فيه شفا من اكبر الدا وهو الكفر والغي والضلال.

“Know that anyone who possesses the Holy Qur'an would not require any thing else, and whoever is deprived of it will never be free from want. By means of the Holy Qur'an heal the sickness of your hearts and strengthen yourself through it while confronting hardships. Because, it contains the cure for the most severe diseases namely: blasphemy, hypocrisy , and deviations.”¹⁷

Yes! the Prophet of Islam is the best physician of the souls. He recognized well our pain and its treatment; brought the Holy Qur'an and presented it to us which the best program of healing for our internal pains. Apart from that various kind of psychic disease and their treatments have been explained for us through the Holy Prophet (S) and Infallible Imams (a.s.) of his Holy progeny Ahlul Bayt which have been preserved for us in the form of traditions.

Therefore, if we are interested in the happiness and soundness of our self, we must practice the hygienic measures for the psychic and physical health of our self. We must identify these diseases within our souls through Qur'anic verses and guidelines issued by the Holy Prophet (S) and Infallible Imams (a.s.) and must seriously strive for their treatments. Any negligence shown in this important and crucial task would result in serious damage inflicted upon ourselves, which will become manifested in the Next World.

Refinement and Perfection of Self

It was already discussed that the self-building and self-nourishment are the most important crucial

tasks, because, the happiness and prosperity of both worlds depends upon them. All of the God's Prophets were dispatched for accomplishment of this aim. Self-building must be undertaken into two stages:

The first stage of self-refinement consists of cleansing of heart from indecent moral conduct and avoiding sins. This act is called refining and evacuation.

The second stage of self-nourishment and perfection consists of acquiring higher learning for abstraction of absolute truth, attaining moral excellence in conduct, and undertaking of righteous deeds. This act is called nourishment and perfection.

Both the above mentioned stages are necessary for achieving self-building, because, unless and until the heart's ground is not thoroughly cleansed from evilness, it would not be available for acquiring higher learning, attaining moral excellence, and performance of righteous deeds. A heart which is contaminated with Satan's presence, how could become a center for the manifestation of Divine Light?

How can God's intimate angels enter into such a heart? On the other hand if faith, enlightenment, moral excellence, and righteous deeds do not exist, through, which means the human self will attain nourishment and perfection?

Therefore, for self building both these stages must be attempted simultaneously. On one side the heart must be thoroughly cleansed and purified from all sort of impurities and falsies, and on the other side it should be encouraged and motivated for performance of righteous and virtuous deeds. Satan must be forced out and God's Intimate Angel should be welcomed.

Any sort of foreign material other than God's should be thrown out from it, and God's Blessing and Illumination must be absorbed. These two stages are complimentary to each other. It is not possible to purify the heart and let postpone the performance of righteous deeds for a later opportunity, and likewise we can not ignore the heart's internal impurities and evilness before undertaking the performance of righteous deeds.

Therefore, it is necessary that both of these stages must be coordinated, and should be undertaken simultaneously. Avoiding sins and shameful moral deeds invites human being towards goodness, and similarly performance of righteous and virtuous deeds result in his acquittal of sins and obscene deeds. But in order to continue detailed discussion for the both stages it would be better to divide them into separate chapter. Firstly the stage of self-refinement will be discussed.

1. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-51.

2. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-54.

3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-53.

4. Bihar al-Anwar vol. 70, p-53.

5. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-51.
6. al-Kafi, vol, 2, p-273.
7. Nahjul Balagha, saying 324
8. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-51.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-59.
10. The video tapes commercially produced by the Serb criminals showing the most horrible brute crime scenes of mass killings, torture, and raping in recent ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina under the very nose of the United Nations, in the heart-land of civilized Europe, and their welcome by the sadists in the Western countries proves the authenticity of this statement [Tr].
11. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 73, p-361.
12. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 73, p-354.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 73, p-349.
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 94, p-143.
15. Nahjul Balagha, sermon, 108.
16. Nahjul al-Balagha, sermon-110.
17. Nahjul al-Balagha, sermon-176.

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/self-building-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/heart-quran>