



THE INTELLIGENT HEART THE PURE HEART

An Insight into the
Human Heart based on
Quran, Sunnah and
Modern Science

By:

DR. GOHAR MUSHTAQ

THE INTELLIGENT HEART, THE PURE HEART

**An Insight into the Human Heart
In Light of Qur'an, Sunnah and
Modern Science**

By: Dr. Gohar Mushtaq

© Ta-Ha Publishers, London, UK

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	6
Introduction	8
Chapter 1	12
<i>Human Heart is more than Just a Pump</i>	<i>12</i>
Human Heart in Light of the Qur'an	13
Human Heart in Light of the Prophet Sayings (Hadeeth)	14
Heart Rhythm Changes as mentioned in Prophetic Sayings	16
Human Heart according to Muslims Scholars	18
Human Heart in Light of Modern Science	21
Research about Two-Way Conversations between the Heart and the Brain	24
Chapter 2	25
<i>Human Heart - A Unique Organ in the Body</i>	<i>25</i>
Human Heart and Circumambulation of Kaa'ba (Tawaaf)	26
Heart Heart and Congregational Prayers (salatul Jama'ah)	27
Human Heart and Remembrance of Allah (Zikr)	32
Human Heart and Intuition of Men and Women	35
Human Heart and the Acceptance of Islam	36
Chapter 3	40
<i>Human Heart and Mother-Child Bond</i>	<i>40</i>
Unconscious Memory of Mother's Heartbeat in a Child	42
Effects of Mother's Heartbeat on Child during Breast-feeding	43
Chapter 4	47
<i>Human Heart's Influence on the Brain and Emotions</i>	<i>47</i>
Intelligence of Heart versus Intelligence of Brain	47
What is Intelligence?	49
Four Ways in which the Heart Communicates with the Brain	52
Role of the Heart with respect to Emotions	55
Dualist Nature of Human Beings and the Importance of Heart	56
Chapter 5	59
<i>Importance of Purification of the Heart</i>	<i>59</i>
Physical diseases of the heart	61
Story of Luqman the Wise and his master	64
First Open-Heart Surgery – Purification of the Heart of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by Angels	65
Spiritual strength of the heart	67
Importance of the Science of Tazkiyyah (purification)	71
Chapter 6	76

<i>Spiritual Diseases of the Hearts and Their Cures</i>	76
Love of this world and Dislike of death (wahn)	79
Unnecessary Talking	82
Backbiting (gheebah).....	85
Corruption of Heart through Ears	87
Unrestrained Glances and Seduction by the Media.....	92
Envy (hasad)	94
Arrogance (kibr)	98
Anger (ghadhab)	101
Stinginess (bukhal)	104
Ostentation (riyaa)	105
General Cures for Diseases of the Hearts	107
Chapter 7	114
<i>Concluding Remarks</i>	114

About the Author:

Dr. Gohar Mushtaq received his Bachelor of Science degree in Medical Technology from York College of The City University of New York (USA) where he was the valedictorian of his graduating class. Dr. Mushtaq received his doctorate in medical research from Rutgers University, U.S.A. From his childhood, he received thorough Islamic education from his father. Later on, he studied classical Islamic sciences from various Islamic teachers including Sheikh Abdur Rehman Kaashmiri (Brooklyn, New York), Sheikh Dr. Ismael Mehmood al-Azharee (New Jersey), Mufti Abdur Rehman ibn Yusuf (United Kingdom) and Imam Tarek Chebbi al-Tunisi (Florida).

The books of Dr. Mushtaq have a unique style much different from other Islamic books as his books provide boatload of scientific research from physical and social scientific journals with references to explain the wisdom of Islamic teachings. Part of the reason for this unique approach is that Dr. Mushtaq is a scientist who got training in scientific research by some of the best Western scientists. Dr. Mushtaq is a contributing author to nearly 50 scientific research papers published in peer-reviewed high impact scientific journals. Dr. Mushtaq frequently delivers Friday khutbahs (sermons) and lectures at various mosques and Islamic centers in the United States. He contributes articles to Al-Jumuah magazine (English), Batoool (Urdu) and Mesaaq (Urdu) monthly magazines and is the author of the following books:

- The Intelligent Heart, The Pure Heart: An Insight into the Human Heart based on the Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science (Ta-Ha Publishers, London)
- Islam: Its Beauty & Wisdom (Amana Publications, Maryland, USA)
- The Music Made Me Do It – An In-Depth Study of Music through Islam and Science (IIPH, Riyadh)

- Growing a Beard: In Light of Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science (IIPH, Riyadh)
- Encouraging Marriages and Discouraging Divorce – The Scientific Case for Marriage in Light of Quran and Sunnah (Free Press)

Foreword

The book “Human Heart: A Blood Pump or a Source of Intellect? – In Light of Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science” by Gohar Mushtaq is a bold effort to render concept to the ubiquitous adage in almost all literary writings and in common verbal usage of using the heart as an organ of intellect with the capacity for rational thought, inference and discrimination. Affection, emotion, love, hate, courage and multitude other words are used in relation to the heart to depict it as having the capacity of intellect, judgment and capable of distinguishing good from evil.

Old scriptures, religious books including the holy Qur'an frequently refer to the heart as an organ of understanding and judgment. Gohar Mushtaq has given numerous references and quotes to this effect. This is the impetus for his writing the book; he has presented scientific facts and evidence substantiating the role of the heart to this effect. I found myself eager to keep reading to find the evidence provided. I am sure the readers will as well.

This book is not an attempt to compare the functioning of the brain with that of the heart, as pointed out by the author in the text, “*The purpose of the research in this book is not to negate the importance of brain but to emphasize the importance of the heart*”; it may seem like that in some passages though to the questioning reader. Finally the reader will find clearly agreeing that the brain is the repository of knowledge, of learning, ascertaining, satisfying curiosity, memory and all aspects of embedding, storage and quick retrieval and calculations. The reader will also find, given the abundance of facts and quotes, substantiated to an extent scientifically in conjunction with sufficient present understanding of literary

writings and experiences that the heart does possess an ability to affect the brain and play a role in understanding and intellect.

This book contains compelling examples to initiate a process of thinking for the curious and the investigative mind. Somehow we will all agree that if the heart is not inclined we rarely feel good. This feeling from the heart is after all the driving message of the book; the distinction between good and bad, the cure for the heart after all is the contented heart!

I will end with a hadith quoted in this book and a verse from the holy Qur'an.

Our heart knows what is wrong because according to a tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated on the authority of Wabisa bin Mabad, may Allah be pleased with him, who came to the Messenger of Allah: "You have come to ask about righteousness?" I said: "Yes." He said: "Consult your *heart*. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels tranquil and the *heart* feels tranquil, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves back and forth in the breast even though people again and again have given you their opinion in its favor."

From the Holy Qur'an:

"And surely, We have created many of the jinns and mankind for Hell. They have hearts wherewith they understand not, they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the Truth)."
(Surah Al-A'raf: verses 172 & 179)

Dr. Ali A. Javed
(Ph.D. in Genetics, University
of New Brunswick, CANADA)

Director, GeneLink
New York

Introduction

Today we are living in an age of materialism. That is the age of anti-spiritualism or, better yet, the age most suitable for the coming of the anti-Christ. Modern science is a result of the revolt of scientists and masses against the Church in the West. At the very foundation of modern scientific thought lies the materialist philosophies of August Comte, Hegel, Emile Durkheim, Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Charles Darwin. As a consequence of that, in the modern science, the spiritual aspect of the human personality is deliberately ignored. Hence, we see the body/soul split in this age of materialism. It is because of the body/soul split we find in the modern biomedicine and social sciences that most of the research was conducted on the human brain whereas the human heart was regarded as merely a pumping organ. Today, the separation of heart and brain is the consequence of the separation of religious and secular matters in the Western educational system and society. However, in the last twenty years, some interesting research on the human heart has been conducted in the fields of biomedicine, psychology and social science, which shows that the human heart possesses its own kind of intelligence and it affects the brain in various ways. These researches are still in their incipient stages. It will take some time for the secular mainstream scientific community to accept these research findings. It is evident from the history of science that most of the scientific discoveries faced opposition in the beginning but later they were accepted as the universal facts.

A few decades ago, Rudolf Steiner, a German philosopher and education expert, noted that "the greatest discovery of 20th century science would be that the heart is not a pump but

vastly more, and that the great challenge of the coming ages of humanity would be, in effect, to allow the heart to teach us to think in a new way."¹ It seems that now the time has come to show us that the human heart is not just a pumping organ but much more than that. The days of Newtonian mechanics, in which human heart was regarded as a mere pumping organ, will soon become a matter of past.

It may be of interest to the readers to mention the reason that acted as an impetus in my writing of this book. I have felt that one of the reasons people neglected the Science of “*Tazkiyyah*” or purification of the heart is because they do not know how amazing this organ is. The subject of the intelligence of human heart has been mentioned at various places in the Qur'an. The Qur'anic statements are all true and it is only time and knowledge that precludes our immediate understanding. It will take modern science years to understand the wisdom behind the verses (ayahs) of the Qur'an. This means that modern science will reach to this conclusion sooner or later. It was this miraculous aspect ('*ijaz*') of the Qur'an, which was mentioned by Abdullah bin Abbaas (the great commentator of the Qur'an and cousin of the Prophet) when he said:

مِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَا لَا تُفَسِّرُ إِلَّا بِمَرُورِ الزَّمَانِ

(In this book of Allah) there are signs (ayaat), which will only be explained as the time passes by.

Another factor which incited me and excited me to write this book is the fact that recently my book titled "Growing a Beard: In Light of Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science" has been published. In that book, I had accentuated the importance of an outward aspect (*zaahir*) of Islam. I felt a need to also emphasize the inward aspect (*baatin*) of Islam by writing on the subject of human heart since Islam is a balance between the outward and the inward (*zaahir* and *baatin*). We need to purify ourselves both inwardly and outwardly to reach the final stage of "*nafs ul-mutma'innah*" (the pacified soul). In

¹ Pearce, Joseph Chilton (1998). Waking Up to the Holographic Heart: Starting over with Education. *Wild Duck Review* IV (2).

fact, the purification of our hearts from the spiritual diseases is the single most important factor for our success on the Day of Judgment as it is mentioned in the Qur'an:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

*"On that day, neither wealth nor children will benefit human beings except the one who will bring **sound heart**."*

(Surah Ash-Shu'ara: 88-89)

The first part of this book describes the human heart in the light of Qur'an, the traditions (hadith) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), comments of Islamic theologians and the contemporary scientific research. The second chapter presents the unique aspects of the human heart from religious-scientific perspective. The following chapter is about the mother-child heart relationship. The next section of this book presents the scientific research about the influence of the human heart on the brain and emotions. The last part of this book, which I think can be considered as the most important section of the book, deals with the spiritual diseases of the heart and their cures. I have made every attempt in this book to make the scientific language of the book as simple as possible for the non-science readers. I would like to mention this point very clearly right at the beginning of this book that the purpose of presenting the scientific research regarding the heart as an organ of intelligence is not to prove that the Qur'an is the word of Allah because we already know as part of our faith that Qur'an is indeed the word of Allah. The purpose of presenting this research is to accentuate the importance of the science of the purification of heart (tazkiyyah) and to discover some of the details of the Qur'anic and Prophetic wisdoms as they have become available through modern scientific research, and so that these research findings could be presented as such in this context to the Muslim and non-Muslim community of the world. Qur'an encourages us to reflect upon the creations of Allah at various places and emphasizes the importance of knowledge by telling us:

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"Say: 'Are those who know equal to those who do not have knowledge?'" (Surah Az-Zumar: Ayah 9)

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah." (Surah Faatir: Ayah 28)

I would like to express my special thanks to Paul Pearsall, Ph.D. (the author of *The Heart's Code*) and Doc Childre & Rollin McCraty of the HeartMath Institute because their research on human heart had been very valuable for me. I would also like to thank Ali Javed, Ph.D. for his patience in reading the manuscript of my book and his deep and insightful comments about it. I owe a debt of gratitude to my parents and my wife for their encouragement to me in this project.

Gohar Mushtaq

Chapter 1

Human Heart is more than Just a Pump

"We must give up the idea of an artificial heart, since we have found the organ to be far more than just a pumping station."

(Christian Barnard, M.D., the heart surgeon who pioneered in heart transplantation)²

FOR CENTURIES, RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES, poets, physicians and philosophers have argued that the heart is the center of our personalities. They regarded the heart as the source of wisdom and feelings. In every language and tradition of the world, people use words that deal with the heart. For example, when people are in love, they express their feelings in terms of heart such as "she stole my heart" or "you are in my heart". When someone is working with full devotion, we say, "He is working whole-heartedly". To express disappointment of someone, we say, "He has lost his heart". A cruel person is regarded as 'hard-hearted' and an indifferent person as 'cold-hearted'. When we ask people to point to themselves, they usually point to the region of their bodies where the heart resides.

² Pearce, Joseph Chilton (1992). Evolution's End. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

Human Heart in Light of the Qur'an

In Qur'an, references to the heart ("qalb" or "fu'ad") are made at various places. The verb "qalaba" in Arabic means to turn around, turn about, to turn upside down, etc. The word "fawaad" in Arabic means "a place of benefit". The Qur'an clearly specifies the human heart as the center of intellect and wisdom. In Qur'an, Allah the Most Exalted One, says:



*"They have **hearts** wherewith they understand not."*
(Surah al-A'raf: 179)

In Surah al-Hajj, Allah says:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونُ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ
بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ
وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾

*"Do they not travel through the land, so that their **hearts** may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes, rather it is their **hearts** which are in their breasts that are blind."*
(Surah al-Hajj: 46)

In another Surah, Allah says:

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

*"In this (Qur'an), behold, there is indeed a reminder for everyone whose **heart** is wide-awake."* (Surah Qaaf: 37)

Similarly, at several other places in the Qur'an, the subject of sealing of the hearts of disbelievers is discussed (for example 2:6-7, 7:101, 4:155, 63:3 and 16:106-108). Hence, the Qur'an mentions the heart as an organ of intellect and the location of the heart is described within the breast. It is true that when the Qur'an speaks of "al-Qalb", it is much more than the physical heart, but equally important is the fact that the spiritual heart resides in the physical heart. Therefore, the physical heart can be regarded as the point of interaction between the human body and the spiritual qalb.³ The physical heart acts like a gateway to human soul. This will imply that the physical heart is not just a pumping organ and it must have qualities of intelligence that are mentioned in the verses of the Qur'an. The word intellect originated from the Latin word "*intellectus*" which means the faculty that can perceive the transcendent - a quality of the heart.

In explaining verse 179 of Surah al-A'raf, Absar Ahmad, Ph.D., a contemporary Muslim psychologist and philosopher (and brother of Dr. Israr Ahmed), states:

"The Qur'an ... lays great emphasis on *qalb* as a supersensory organ of cognizing metaphysical truths - *tafaquh* in the Qur'anic terminology. *Qalb* - the word for heart in Arabic - imports both the seat of intellectual faculties and understanding as well as the seat of affections and emotions." ⁴

Human Heart in Light of the Prophet Sayings (Hadeeth)

The above-mentioned point becomes even more obvious with the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that goes as follows:

³ Haq, Manzurul. 'Heart': The Locus of Human Psyche in Ansari, Z. A., Ed. (1981). Qur'anic Concepts of Human Psyche. Islamabad, International Institute of Islamic Thought.

⁴ Ansari, Zafar Afaq, Ed. (1981). Qur'anic Concepts of Human Psyche. Islamabad, International Institute of Islamic Thought.

"... Indeed there is in the body a piece of flesh which if it is sound then the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt then the whole body is corrupt. Indeed it is the **heart**."

(Reported by al-Bukhari & Muslim)

This tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is definitely talking about the physical heart. This is part of a long hadith. This tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been given prime importance by the scholars of Islam. According to some Islamic scholars, this tradition is regarded as one of the pillars of Islam. In the commentary of this tradition, Ibn Rajab Hanbali stated that we can regard the heart as the ruler of all organs of the body and all the organs are its obedient soldiers. When the king is pious, all the soldiers will stay pious and when the king becomes corrupt, all the soldiers will become corrupt.⁵ The corruption of the body by the defective heart refers to both the physical diseases as well as the spiritual diseases as it will be shown later in this book.

Similarly, in the Qur'an, Allah mentions about the creation of human heart along with the description of the creation of ears and eyes as follows:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

*"It is He, Who has created for you (the sense of) hearing (ears), sight (eyes), and **hearts** (understanding). Little thanks you give." (Al-Mu'minun: Ayah 78)*

⁵ Ibn Rajab, Hanbali (1995). Jaami Al-Uloom wal Hukam (Commentary on An-Nawawi's Forty Ahaadeth) (Urdu language). Lahore, Al-Faisal Publishers & Booksellers.

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ۖ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنسَانِ مِن طِينٍ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ
نَسْلَهُ مِن سُلَالَةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِهِ ۖ
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

*"Allah has created everything that He has created good; and He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his offspring from semen of no value fluid. Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him the soul, and He gave you hearing (ears), sight (eyes) and **hearts**. What little thanks do you return."* (As-Sajdah: Ayahs 7-9)

In these verses of Qur'an, the creation of physical sense of hearing is mentioned and the organs responsible for that are "Ears". Then, the creation of physical sense of seeing is stated and the organs responsible for that are "Eyes". After that, the creation of "heart" is mentioned which is the organ of understanding and intellect. The heart takes the information that is obtained from the senses of hearing and sight, processes it and then uses that information to differentiate right from wrong.

Heart Rhythm Changes as mentioned in Prophetic Sayings

One of the words used to describe the human heart in the Qur'an is "*qalb*". The word "*qalb*" in Arabic language means to turn around; to turn face up or face down; to turn upside down; to change. It is mentioned in a tradition that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to make the following prayers:

"O You (Allah) Who moves the hearts! Establish our hearts firmly on Your religion."⁶

⁶ Ibn al-Jawzee, Imam Abdur Rehman (1992). Minhajul Qaasideen. Lahore, Idara Maarif Islami.

In another hadith, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

*"The heart is like the feather of a bird which is continuously overturned by the winds of the forest."*⁷

A few decades ago, doctors used to believe that our heart rate stays steady all the times (72 beats per minute always). However, it has been discovered by science within the last 20 years that heart rhythm variability occurs continuously in a person. Heart rate variability has been described as a measurement of changes in the rate of heart at every beat. If we are connected to a heart rhythm monitor, we will see that variation in our heart rate occurs even when we are sitting idle and doing nothing. Research has also shown now that when a person does not have the natural variability in his/her heart rate, this may be a sign of disease and a strong indicator that in the future, that person will be having health problems.⁸ In addition to that, the researchers at the Institute of HeartMath have also discovered that the continuous variability (change) in the heart rate is another way in which the heart communicates with the brain in order to respond to different situations and emotions as we experience them.⁹ The great scholar of Islamic spirituality Abdullah bin Mubarak, whose heart was filled with wisdom of Islam, talked about the heart variability more than 1200 years ago when he said:

السُّكُونُ حَرَامٌ عَلَى قُلُوبِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Dekker, J.M., Schouten, E.G., Klootwijk, P. and others. (1997). Heart rate variability from short electrocardiographic recordings predicts mortality from all causes in middle-aged and elderly men. The Zutphen Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology* **145**(10), 899-908.

⁹ McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., Tiller, W.A. & others (1995). The effects of emotions on short-term heart rate variability using power spectrum analysis. *American Journal of Cardiology* **76**, 1089-1093.

(It is prohibited for the hearts of the friends of Allah to be motionless and static.)¹⁰

Human Heart according to Muslims Scholars

The supreme position of the heart in human body was already known and very well understood by Islamic theologians and scholars centuries ago.

Imam Ghazali, in his intellectual masterpiece, *Ihya Ulum al-Din* (Revival of the Islamic Sciences), has written in detail about the human heart. He writes:

"Although the spiritual heart (qalb), which is the controlling center of the soul, is different from the physical human heart, its functioning is related and directed by it....

Every quality that appears in the heart will have its influence flowing to the organs so they act only in accordance with that quality. In the same manner, the effect of every action that is committed from the organs may reach the heart. And this keeps of occurring in a circular fashion." ¹¹

Allama Ibn al-Jawzee, in his book, *Minhaajul Qaasideen*, expressed the following views about the human heart:

"We should understand that the heart holds the supreme position in the human body. It is this organ that recognizes Allah and works to get close to Allah. Other organs are its subordinates. The heart by its nature quests for the path of righteousness. It is true that whoever has recognized his heart has recognized Allah." ¹²

¹⁰ Ali Hijwairi, Sheikh (1970). Kashaf-ul-Mahjoob. (translated by Mian Mohammad Tufail) Lahore, Islamic Publications.

¹¹ Ghazaali, Imam Abu Hamid (n.d.). Ihya Uloom ud Din. Karachi, Darul Isha'at.

¹² Ibn al-Jawzee, Imam Abdur Rehman (1992). Minhaajul Qaasideen. Lahore, Idara Maarif Islami.

Allama Ibn al-Qayyim, while discussing the human heart, stated:

"The truth, however, seems to be that the intellectual function starts at the heart, then finds its elaboration and fruition in the head." ¹³

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, the Islamic theologian and poet, mentioned the intelligence of human heart in his famous *Mathnawi* in the following poetic verses:

“There are two kinds of intelligence.
One is like that acquired by a child at school,
From books and teachers, new ideas and memorization.
Your intelligence may become superior to others,
But retaining all that knowledge is a heavy load.
You who are occupied in searching for knowledge
are a preserving tablet,
But the preserved tablet is the one who has gone beyond all this.
For the other kind of intelligence is the gift of God:
Its fountain is in the midst of the soul.
When the water of God-given knowledge gushes from the breast,
It doesn't become fetid or impure.
And if its way to the outside is blocked, what harm is there?
For it gushes continually from the house of the heart.
The acquired intelligence is like the conduits
which run into the house from the streets:
If those pipes become blocked, the house is bereft of water.
Seek the fountain from within yourself.”

[Mathnawi Vol. IV, 1960-68 Translated by Camille and Kabir Helminski] ¹⁴

It is worthwhile to note that these Islamic scholars were talking about the functioning of the human heart and its

¹³ Al-Qoz, Anas Abdul-Hameed (Capt.) (2000). Men & The Universe: Reflections of Ibn Al-Qayyim. Riyadh, Darussalam.

¹⁴ Helminski, Kabir (1999). The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation. Boston, Shambhala Publications.

relationship to the intellect with such clarity at a time when no sophisticated biomedical engineering instruments were available that it appears like the writing of a biomedical researcher or a cognitive psychologist of the modern age.

Similarly, Zafar Afaq Ansari, Ph.D., famous contemporary Islamic psychologist, mentions the importance of the human heart in the following words:

"*Qalb*, if properly functioning, can reinforce the positive tendencies of the personality leading to a state of constant awareness and self-understanding. On the other hand the heart can be subdued by the conflicting demands and overcome by the need for immediate gratification. If this state continues it leads to the blocking of the *qalb* which in turn reduces the perceptual and cognitive functions of a person. He becomes subdued to *al-nafs al-ammarah bi al-su*. His God-consciousness and his capacity for knowledge are clouded." ¹⁵

Before delving into the scientific researches regarding the heart, I would like to quote translation from the poetry of Allama Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, famous Islamic poet, philosopher and scholar, just to indicate that Muslim theologians and philosophers never had a doubt about the cognitive abilities of the human heart. Dr. Iqbal's poetry is filled with references to the heart. At various places in his poetry, he talks about the heart intuition as more important than the brain intellect. For example, one of his poems is titled ***Heart and Intellect***, which presents a dialogue between the heart and the brain, which is given as follows:

"Intellect (brain) one day said to the heart:
'I am a guide to those who have gone astray

Though bound to earth, I reach the heaven above
Just see how far reaching is my sway

¹⁵ Ansari, Zafar Afaq, Ed. (1981). Qur'anic Concepts of Human Psyche. Islamabad, International Institute of Islamic Thought.

I am cast in the mould of the legendary Khizr
I am destined in the world to show the way

I am the interpreter of the book of life
I am an attribute of divine display

You are only a drop of blood
I am the envy of ruby's ray'

'This is all true', replied the *heart*
'But look at me, be as it may

You look at life's trauma and drama
I see through life's white and gray

You deal with outer manifestations
And I am aware of the inner fray

Knowledge is to you, intuition to me
You seek God, I show how to pray

Limit of wisdom is restless doubting
I am cure for the malady of dismay

You are a lantern to illuminate a spot
I am a lamp to illuminate the path

You deal with time and space
I deal with Judgment Day

To what lofty place do I belong?
I am the pedestal of God Almighty, I say."

Aql aur Dil (Intellect and heart) by Mohammad Iqbal ¹⁶

Human Heart in Light of Modern Science

The analogy of the heart to a pump was made in the nineteenth century when the steam engine was invented and the pumping movements of its pistons impressed the physiologists so much

¹⁶ Iqbal, Sir Mohammad (Allama) (1987). Bang-e-Dara. Lahore, Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons.
English translation of the poem taken from:
http://underprogress.blogs.com/weblog/2003/10/intellect_and_h.html

that they started calling the heart as a pump.¹⁷ Even if we look at the pumping efficiency of the heart, it is remarkable. The heart beats about 100,000 times a day, 40 million times a year and it beats non-stop for about sixty to seventy years. It pumps 2 gallons of blood per minute and over 100 gallons per hour. The vascular system that is sending this life-giving blood is over 60,000 miles long, which is more than 2 times the circumference of the earth.¹⁸ From the moment it begins beating until the moment it stops, the human heart works tirelessly. In an average lifetime of a person, the heart beats more than two and a half billion times, without ever pausing to rest.

However, the thing that is more interesting is that the heart is not just a pumping organ. Recently, a new medical field has emerged which is known as Neurocardiology - the science of the nervous system (brain) in the heart. J. Andrew Armour, M.D., Ph.D., is a pioneer in the field of Neurocardiology for his groundbreaking research in the area of anatomy and function of the heart's intrinsic nervous system. He has referred to the nervous system of the heart as the "little brain on the heart".¹⁹ This is so because there are more than 40,000 neurons (same kind of cells found in the brain) in the heart. This is such a large number that various small centers of the human brain are made up of that many neurons.²⁰ Furthermore, the nervous system of heart is made up of those neurons, which are capable to process information without the help of neurons from the brain. These neurons (little brain inside the heart) of the heart get the information from the rest of the body and make appropriate adjustments and send back this information from the heart to the rest of the body

¹⁷ Pearce, Joseph Chilton (2002). The Biology of Transcendence. Rochester, Vermont, Park Street Press.

¹⁸ Schiefelbein, S. The Powerful River. In: Poole, R. ed. (1986). The Incredible Machine. Washington, D.C., The National Geographic Society.

¹⁹ Armour, J. Andrew, M.D., Ph.D. & Ardell, Jeffry L., Ph.D. ed. (1994). Neurocardiology. New York, Oxford University Press.

²⁰ Ibid.

including the brain. In addition to that, these neurons possess a kind of short-term memory, which allows them to function independent of the central nervous system.²¹

Even though the timing of the heartbeat could be influenced by the brain (through the autonomic nervous system), the source of the heartbeat is present within the heart. There appears to have no need for nerve connections between the heart and the brain.²² That is why, when a person has a heart transplant, all the nerve connections between the heart and the brain are cut but that does not stop the heart from working when it is placed in the new person's chest.²³

After presenting the research that Dr. Armour and his colleagues have done in the field of neurocardiology, he makes the following comments about the heart in his book, *Neurocardiology - Anatomical and Functional Principles*:

"The heart possesses its own *little brain*, capable of complex computational analysis on its own. Data clearly indicate that the intrinsic cardiac nervous system acts as much more than a simple relay station for the extrinsic autonomic projections to the heart.... An understanding of the complex anatomy and function of the heart's nervous system contributes an additional dimension to the newly emerging view of the heart as a sophisticated information processing center, functioning not only in concert with the brain but also independent of it." ²⁴

²¹ Armour, J. Andrew, M.D., Ph.D. (2003). Neurocardiology: Anatomical and Functional Principles. Boulder Creek, California, Institute of HeartMath.

²² Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Armour, J. Andrew, M.D., Ph.D. (2003). Neurocardiology: Anatomical and Functional Principles. Boulder Creek, California, Institute of HeartMath.

Research about Two-Way Conversations between the Heart and the Brain

During 1970s, the physiologists believed that the brain sends commands to the heart in one-way direction and the heart obeys them. It was during 1970s when two physiologists John and Beatrice Lacey of Fels Research Institute, Ohio, who after many years of research, discovered the two-way communication between the heart and the brain.²⁵ They discovered that when the brain sent a command to the heart through the nervous system, the heart did not obey it blindly. It seemed that the heart was using its own kind of logic. Sometimes, the brain might send an arousal signal to the heart and the heartbeat would speed up as well as the other body parts would be aroused. But, at other times, upon the arousal signal from the brain, the heart would slow down for unknown reasons while the rest of the body would still be aroused. In addition to that, they found that the heart was also sending messages back to the brain that the brain not only understood but also followed.²⁶ In summarizing the research that the Laceys had done in 1960s and 1970s, Rollin McCraty, Ph.D. of the Institute of HeartMath writes in his book *Heart-Brain Neurodynamics: The Making of Emotions*:

"As their research evolved, they found that the heart, in particular, seemed to have its own peculiar logic that frequently diverged from the direction of other ANS responses. In essence, the heart seemed to behave as if it had a mind of its own."²⁷

²⁵ Lacey, Beatrice C. & Lacey, John I. (1978). Two-Way Communication Between the Heart and the Brain: Significance of Time Within the Cardiac Cycle. *American Psychologist*, 99-113.

²⁶ Lacey, Beatrice C. & Lacey, John I. Some autonomic-central nervous system interrelationships. In: Black, Perry. Ed. (1970). Physiological Correlates of Emotion. New York, Academy Press: pp. 205-227.

²⁷ McCraty, Rollin, Ph.D. (2003). Heart-Brain Neurodynamics: The Making of Emotions. Boulder Creek, California, Institute of HeartMath.

Chapter 2

Human Heart - A Unique Organ in the Body

سَنُرِيهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ

*"We will show them Our signs in the universe and **in their own selves**, until it becomes manifest to them that this (the Qur'an) is the truth." (Surah Fussilat: 53)*

HUMAN HEART IS THE STRONGEST OSCILLATOR in the body. Its powerful rhythms affect every organ of the body including the brain. Because of its pivotal and sensitive position in our body, Allah has placed our heart in a strong rib cage. It is interesting to note that the heart of the unborn child develops and starts pumping in the womb of the mother long before the brain comes into existence. The heart is auto-rhythmic. Once the heart starts beating, it keeps on beating even when the brain stops working in cases like 'brain death'. The brain death is described as a condition when the brain activity has stopped forever. Hence, even when the brain dies, the heart can still live. But when the heart dies (unless we find a replacement for the heart), the brain cannot live. There have been cases in which the children suffering from brain death continued to grow and pregnant women who were diagnosed as brain dead after accidents and those women gave birth to

healthy infants.²⁸ Similarly, if the heart stops beating for a few seconds, we lose consciousness. Thus, the brain needs the heart for its survival more than the heart needs the brain. In this chapter, some of the unique aspects of human heart will be discussed.

Human Heart and Circumambulation of Kaa'ba (Tawaaf)

Prior to the advent of Islam, some of the Arab people used to believe that anyone gifted with high intelligence possessed two hearts instead of one.²⁹ When the Qur'an was revealed, the following verse in Surah Al-Ahzab stated:

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّن قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِۦ

*“Allah has not put for any man two **hearts** inside his body.”* (Surah Al-Ahzab: Ayah 4)

Hence, the Qur'an uprooted the superstitious belief of the pagans and clarified that human beings could possess only one heart. It is interesting to note that "tawaaf" (circumambulation) around the 'kaa'ba" (the house of Allah) is done in an anti-clockwise manner, i.e. with the left side facing the kaa'ba. The same kind of motion is observed in nature. All the planets of our solar system (including Earth) revolve around the Sun in an anti-clockwise motion. Electrons revolve around the nucleus in anti-clockwise motion. Some Islamic scholars have said that *tawaaf* is done in anti-clockwise manner around the *Kaaba* because the heart is inclined to the left and, hence, the heart is inclining towards

²⁸ Finucane, Thomas E. (M.D.) (2002 March 7). Brain Death (*Book Review*). *New England Journal of Medicine* **346**(10), pg. 786.

²⁹ Daryabadi, Abdul Majid (1991). Tafsir Majidi (Commentary of the Holy Qur'an). Karachi, Darul Ishaat.

the kaa'ba during tawaaf.³⁰ Since human soul has the yearning to meet Allah, the heart (which is the seat of human soul) is inclining towards the house of Allah during circumambulation to display that desire to meet Allah. *Kaaba* also symbolizes the Islamic concept of monotheism. During circumambulating, we as Muslims testify that Allah is the center of existence and He is the focus of our hearts.

Heart Heart and Congregational Prayers (*salatul Jama'ah*)

The heart cells are similar to the cells of rest of the human body in terms of chemical composition. But, there is one thing the heart cells do different from the rest of the body cells and that makes them unique. The heart cells are the only cells in the body to pulsate (which means they beat rhythmically).

In the laboratory, if a single heart cell is placed on a slide and observed under a microscope, we observe that the single heart cell keeps on beating for a short time, then it loses its rhythm, becomes weak and it dies. Similarly, if we place two heart cells on a slide and keep them at a very far distance, they also die after a short time of beating without rhythm. But, if we take two heart cells and put them close together on a slide (they do not need to touch each other), we will be surprised to see that the two heart cells start to beat in synchrony (with the same rhythm) and they do not die. The same phenomenon occurs at a larger scale in the case of a complete heart. All the heart cells beat in synchrony (with the same rhythm in unity), which makes the heart such a powerful organ.

What is the reason behind the synchronous beating of the two heart cells (even though they are not connected to each other), which prevents them from dying? Since the heart has billions of small cells pulsating in unity, they produce electrical energy, which forms an electromagnetic field. According to

³⁰ Yusuf, Hamza (2004). *Diseases of the Heart: Signs, Symptoms and Cures of the Spiritual Diseases of the Heart*. Chicago, Starlatch Press.

Joseph Chilton Pearce, author of *The Biology of Transcendence*, when the electromagnetic waves produced by the two heart cells on a slide match (synchronize), the two heart cells strengthen each other and start to beat in unity.³¹ This phenomenon can be observed at the macroscopic (grand) level as well. When people are in close proximity in a room, their hearts start to beat with the same rhythm. Even their breathing pattern synchronizes in such instances. From the above-mentioned research about the heart cells, an important commandment of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about straightening the rows in the congregational prayers can be understood. No'man bin Bashir narrates a tradition from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) according to which he used to tell his companions before the prayers:

*"Straighten your rows three times. Otherwise, Allah will make your **hearts** turned against each other."*
(Sunan Abu Dawud)³²

Biophysicists have discovered that the heart generates very strong electromagnetic field that can be measured with instruments such as magnetometers from a distance of up to ten feet away. The electromagnetic field produced by the heart encompasses the whole body. In fact, it is so powerful that we can take an electrocardiogram reading from as far as three feet away from the body. Research has also shown that when people are in close proximity, the electromagnetic energy produced by their hearts is exchanged between the people and this energy exchange can be detected with sensitive instruments.³³ In addition, the heart cells undergo the phenomenon of "entrainment" similar to the pendulums. A

³¹ Pearce, Joseph Chilton (2002). The Biology of Transcendence. Rochester, Vermont, Park Street Press.

³² Abu Dawud, Imam Sulayman bin Ash'as Sajastani (1983). Sunan Abu Dawud. Lahore, Islamic Academy Urdu Bazaar.

³³ McCraty, R. (PhD), Atkinson, M., Tomasino, D. (BA) & Tiller, W.A. (PhD) The Electricity of Touch: Detection and measurement of cardiac energy exchange between people. In: Pribram, K.H. Ed. (1998). Brain and Values: Is a Biological Science of Values Possible. Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: pp. 359-379.

European scientist named Christiaan Huygens discovered this phenomenon, in the 17th century. When we have many pendulums swinging together in a room, no matter how different they are at the start of swinging but soon all the pendulums start to swing with the same rhythm as that of the largest pendulum because it has the largest rhythm. This phenomenon is found in the biological systems as well. The hearts also generate waves when they beat (since they are the largest oscillators in the body). This means that all the hearts start to be affected by the waves generated by the strongest heart (which could be sometimes the heart of the leader) and start to beat in the same rhythm (pulled into entrainment) as that of the strongest heart.³⁴ When the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were sitting in his presence, they used to remember Allah much more than when they were alone. Since the heart of Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him) was always doing the remembrance ('zikr') of Allah (his heart was awake even when his eyes were asleep), his heart would pull the heart of his companions in entrainment.³⁵ When Muslims are praying behind one "Imam" (person who leads the prayer) and they straighten their rows, as a result, their hearts become synchronized. Their hearts beat in unity and, thus, their hearts are strengthened. It is also for this reason that the power of joint worship is recognized in Islam as it is mentioned in the famous hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as follows:

"12,000 Muslims united (as one heart) cannot be defeated." (Sunan Abu Dawud)

Commenting on the underlying wisdom of this hadith, Jeanette Hablullah, N.D., writes:

"We have gathering greater than this in some cities here in the United States at least twice a year but where is our effect? Our hearts have not yet reached the necessary level. The heart must first purify and

³⁴ Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

³⁵ Yusuf, Hamza Putting the Heart into Worship (ISNA 1999) (audio speech). Hawyard, Alhambra Productions.

right the individual in which it resides, then it will join with other purified and righteous hearts. When this happens, there is nothing in this universe that can have a sufficient opposing force." ³⁶

Sheikh ul-Hind, Maulana Mahmood ul Hasan (died in 1922 C.E.), who was imprisoned in the Island of Malta by the British government in India, said that during his years in prison, he contemplated over the cause of the decline of Muslim nation and he reached the following conclusion:

"There appear to be two reasons for the decline of the Muslim ummah today:

- i) Muslims have forsaken the Qur'an, and,
- ii) Muslims are disunited."

Today the defense system (immune system) of the Muslim ummah has become very weak. It seems as if it is suffering from an immunodeficiency disease. One of the features of a healthy body with good defense system is that the antibodies (defense army of the body) learn from the past. When they encounter a virus or any other harmful intruder in the body, they remember it and if it enters the body next time, these antibodies defend the body in unity. It is not wise to blame non-Muslims for the condition of Muslims today. If a virus enters four people and one of them gets sick, we cannot just blame the virus for it. Why did the other three people not get sick? Because they had strong immune system and the person who had weak defense system got sick. Imam Shaafi has rightly said in one of his poetic verses which is translated as:

"We blame time and the fault is in us,
There is no fault in time except us."
(Diwaan ash-Shaafi)

The companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had very strong immunity and defense system and their hearts were united because they had vaccinated themselves with the Qur'an. The Muslims of today also need a vaccine of Qur'an

³⁶ Hablullah, Jeanette, ND (2002). The Magnificent Organ: The Heart of Qur'an, Hadith, Science and Wholistic Healing Experiences. Columbia, MO, Olive Media Services.

and Sunnah at least once a day to make their hearts united once again. In Qur'an, Allah says:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

"And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur'an) and be not divided among yourselves." (Al-'Imran: ayah 103)

In addition, in Surah An-Nisa, Allah has said:

فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ

"If you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger (i.e. Qur'an and Sunnah)" (An-Nisa: 59)

Rasool Allah (peace be upon him) has further clarified this prescription in the following authentic hadith:

"I am leaving with you two things. If you hold them tight, you will never go astray. They are the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and my Sunnah (Hadith)."

(Sahih Muslim)³⁷

If the Muslims of today begin to understand and act upon the message of unity given in the Qur'an and Sunnah and become united, they will be able to uplift themselves from the state of decadence they are in today. This message applies to Muslims all over the world. Today, Muslims have to cultivate tolerance towards their fellow Muslims who differ from them. We, as a Muslim ummah, have to learn to sacrifice our ego in our community, tolerate difference of opinions within the boundaries of the Qur'an and Sunnah and we should not compete in raising our level of living and wealth. When the hearts are united, there is a massive power that goes with them whereas when the hearts are diverse and separate, each one is

³⁷ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

weak. The old adage, which states that unity is strength, is always true and the behavior of heart cells beating in unity testifies to this fact. It is extremely important for the Muslims to be socially active and be associated with a community ("jama'a"). In this light, the famous saying of Umar bin Khattab, the second rightly guided caliph, can be easily understood, which goes as follows:

لَا إِسْلَامَ إِلَّا بِالْجَمَاعَةِ وَلَا جَمَاعَةَ إِلَّا بِالْإِمَارَةِ

(There is no Islam without a congregation and there is no congregation without a leadership.)

Similarly, in light of the above research it becomes clear that when Allah reminds Muslims of His favor of joining their hearts together, that means more than just the metaphorical meanings. The ayah of the Qur'an goes as follows:

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۚ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا

*"And hold fast to the rope of Allah and do not be disunited. And remember Allah's favor on you, for you were enemies and He joined your **hearts** together, so that by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic faith)."*

(Surah Al-Imran: 103)

Human Heart and Remembrance of Allah (Zikr)

Allah has made the heart and the tongue of humans for His remembrance. The heart is purified by the remembrance of Allah (zikr) and good deeds. Commenting on the Islamic zikr, Louisa Young, a British journalist and author, writes in *The Book of the Heart*:

"The simple pulse, the beating of the drum of the heart, is the repetitive rhythm which leads and propels meditation - the voyage into the heart - in all religions....

One Muslim ritual is the recitation of the Qur'an; the flowing, hypnotic rhythm of the Arabic words has often been compared to the heartbeat. Grief caused by the separation from God is assuaged by remembering God: 'Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.' This remembrance is *zikr* - remembrance, the mental and verbal repetition of a verse of the Qur'an or one of the names of God." ³⁸

The human heart is responsive to the *zikr* of Allah. This has been shown by scientific experimentation separately by two Muslim scientists in two different parts of the world. One of the scientific studies was conducted in 1984 and it is still going on at the Akbar Clinics, Panama City in Florida in the United States of America by Dr. Ahmed Elkadi who is using the most sophisticated and state-of-the-art instruments in his research. In these series of experiments conducted and published by Dr. Elkadi, the effects of listening to the Qur'anic recitation on physiological parameters, i.e. the heart rate, the blood pressure and the muscle tension were monitored among three groups of volunteers – Muslims who understood Arabic, Muslims who did not understand Arabic and non-Muslims who did not understand Arabic.

The results of Dr. Elkadi's study showed very clearly that listening to the recitation of Qur'an resulted in relaxation of smooth muscles, reduction of the heart rate and all the physiological changes, which are indicative of release from stress and anxiety. These effects were produced both among Muslims and non-Muslims, regardless of whether they understood Arabic language or not. Another important observation made was that within the Qur'an itself, the recitation of the verses which were promising reward (verses of *Targheeb*), there was more stress-reducing effect (e.g. more tranquility in the heart rate) on the listeners whereas

³⁸ Young, Louisa (2003). The Book Of The Heart. New York, Doubleday.

listening to the recitation of the verses promising punishment (verses of *Tarheeb*) caused less stress-reducing effect on the listeners.³⁹ The Qur'an contains both the verses of *Targheeb* (persuasion) and the verses of *Tarheeb* (dissuasion) because it is constantly reminding us of the rewards of following a virtuous life and the dangers of leading a life of sin. Together the verses of *targheeb* and *tarheeb* steer us on the Straight Path (*siraatul mustaqeem*) through a balance between hope and fear. Hence, this study shows the beneficial effects of Zikr of Allah on the physical heart.

A similar scientific study was done at the University of Khartoum, Sudan, by Dr. Muhammad Khair al-Irgisoosi in his Ph.D. research under the supervision of Dr. Malik Badri (world-renowned Islamic psychologist). The subjects of this study were patients suffering from hypertension due to stressful lifestyle or other reasons. The results of this study also showed that listening to the recitation of the Qur'an contributed significantly to lowering the blood pressure among the patients.⁴⁰ These research findings support the results of the research going on at Akbar Clinics in the U.S. It is not surprising that the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used the Qur'anic zikr to heal the medical conditions of people. That is why, there is a hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in which he emphasized that the recitation of the Qur'an should be done in the best natural voice possible:

زَيِّنُوا الْقُرْآنَ بِأَصْوَاتِكُمْ (سنن أبي داود)

"Beautify the Qur'an with your voices."

(Sunan Abu Dawud)⁴¹

³⁹ Elkadi, Ahmed *Health and Healing in the Qur'an* in Athar, Shahid, M.D., Ed. (1993). Islamic Perspectives in Medicine - A Survey of Islamic Medicine: Achievements & Contemporary Issues. Indianapolis, American Trust Publications.

⁴⁰ Badri, Malik (2000). Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study. London, The International Institute of Islamic Thought.

⁴¹ Abu Dawud, Imam Sulayman bin Ash'as Sajastani (1983). Sunan Abu Dawud. Volume 1. Lahore, Islamic Academy Urdu Bazaar.

Human Heart and Intuition of Men and Women

According to Webster's dictionary, 'intuition' is an immediate knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning. Therefore, intuition is a process by which knowledge is acquired without reasoning. In other words, it is the process by which information is perceived by us which is normally outside the range of our conscious awareness. People use terms like "intuitive insights", "sixth sense" and "gut feelings" to describe their intuitive feelings about a future event or a distant object. Often, the person having an intuiting feeling is certain about the experience. The intuitive feelings can include positive emotions such as hope and excitement or negative emotions such as pessimism, fear or terror. People across all the cultures generally know that our heart plays an important role in our intuition. However, in the scientific realm, not much research has been conducted to elucidate the role of human heart with respect to intuition. In order to reproduce and extend the results of previous experiments showing that our body has the ability to respond to an emotionally arousing stimulus seconds before it actually happens to us, a group of scientists did a series of experiments using the latest biomedical instruments to a group of 26 participants.⁴² This extensive research titled "Electrophysiological Evidence of Intuition: Part 1 - The Surprising Role of the Heart" has been published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. The experimental measures those researchers used on the participants to measure intuition were: skin conductance, EEG (electroencephalogram) to measure brain's intuitive signal and ECG (electrocardiogram) to measure increases/decreases in the heart signal. They used these measures to investigate where and when in the brain and body the intuitive information is processed.

⁴² McCraty, Rollin, Ph.D., Atkinson, Mike & Bradley, Raymond T., Ph.D. (2004). Electrophysiological Evidence of Intuition: The Surprising Role of the Heart. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* **10**(1), 133-143.

The results of this study were very astounding. They found that both the heart and brain appear to receive and respond to intuitive information. A significantly greater heart rate deceleration (decrease in rate of heart beat) occurred before the happening of future emotional stimuli as compared to future calm stimuli. This research study revealed that the heart plays a direct role in processing and decoding intuitive information. Another very interesting finding was that there appeared to be significant differences in the way men process the intuitive information as compared to the way women process the same kind of information. The results indicated that, in females, the heart was controlling the electrical signals in the cortex of the brain when the intuitive information was processed. Thus, "females are more attuned to information from the heart."⁴³ This means that feminine intuition relies more on the heart than on the brain. This has deep implications. When a society has a disintegrating family system, it does not have a balance between masculine intuition (brain-inclined) and feminine intuition (heart-inclined). As a result, we see destruction of the social system in the society.

Human Heart and the Acceptance of Islam

We have seen in the previous section that recent scientific research has shown that intuition in females relies more on the response from the heart as compared to the brain. This could be due to the fact that women are more sensitive to feel the emotions. No wonder that women are regarded more emotional than men. In other words, we can say that women, as compared to men, more often use their hearts along with their brains in thinking. With this point in mind, it can be easily understood why 4 out of every 5 people who accept Islam are women. It should be clarified that the decision to accept Islam is not based on mere emotions because almost all of these women stay steadfast on their decision of accepting Islam until their death. One of those many women

⁴³ Ibid.

converts is Jeanette Hablullah, a doctor of neuropathy from the United States of America, who chose Islam after many years as a Catholic. In her book about the heart, *The Magnificent Organ*, she describes the human heart not only as a vital organ and a physical entity but also as the source of judgement and wisdom.⁴⁴ She also explains that a pious and God-fearing heart heals our bodies and souls.

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662 C.E.), the French scientist and religious philosopher (who is famous for Pascal's wager) once said about the human heart: "The heart has its reasons the mind will never know." In this oft-quoted statement, Pascal was referring to our intuition. In another statement he explained that religious truth is often known through intuition when he said: "Those on whom God has imparted religion by intuition are very fortunate and justly convinced."⁴⁵

The Qur'an speaks about the pledge taken from all the souls before the birth. It seems that the heart contains the primordial memory of our covenant with Allah that was taken from every soul before coming to this world as it is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows:

"And [remember] when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their offspring descendents and made them testify as to themselves (saying): 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes! We testify,' lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection: 'Verily, we have been unaware of this.'"

"And surely, We have created many of the jinns and mankind for Hell. They have hearts wherewith they understand not, they have eyes wherewith they see not, and they have ears wherewith they hear not (the Truth)."

⁴⁴ Hablullah, Jeanette, ND (2002). The Magnificent Organ: The Heart of Qur'an, Hadith, Science and Wholistic Healing Experiences. Columbia, MO, Olive Media Services.

⁴⁵ Clouser, Roy (1999). Knowing with the Heart: Religious Experience & Belief in God. Downers Grove, IL, InterVarsity Press.

(Surah Al-A'raf: verses 172 & 179)

In the light of this ayah, the role of the heart in the acceptance of Islam by new converts can be understood. We may notice here that right after mentioning about the covenant taken by all human beings in verse 172 of Surah Al-A'raf, the Qur'an talks about the heart as an organ of understanding and intellect in verse no. 179 of the same surah. This is not a mere coincidence. The fact that we are reminded about our covenant with Allah and then right after that the Qur'an speaks about the heart as an organ of intellect implies that our hearts carry the primordial memory of our covenant with Allah taken from our souls. Similarly, at another place Qur'an asks non-Muslims a question by speaking directly about their hearts:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا ﴿٢٤﴾

"Do they not then think deeply in the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up (from understanding it)?"
(Surah Muhammad: 24)

In addition, this issue can be further clarified by the remarks made by Dr. Mohammad Iqbal (1876 - 1938), famous Islamic philosopher and poet of the twentieth century, when he expressed the need for an Islamic movement that would work on the hearts of the people. He said to one of his students:

"According to my understanding, human heart and brain process information in different ways. Brain may sometimes reject many strong proofs and would not care about them. But the heart on the other hand may be impressed by a small incident and, all of a sudden, the whole life pattern may change. The matter of acceptance of Islam is related to the heart much more than the brain. The actual thing, which an Islamic preacher (daa'ee) should know, is what are the things that touch the heart of non-believers. We have many mental proofs to testify the truth of Islam but we have very few 'heartly proofs'.... In the acceptance of Islam, the heart is the actual thing. When the heart agrees on a change and it is convinced about a matter,

then the whole body has no choice except to obey the heart." ⁴⁶

It is true that the matter of accepting or rejecting the Divine Guidance depends upon the heart more than the brain. When the heart opens to the truth, the whole body follows it. As Allah says in the Qur'an: "*And whomsoever, Allah will to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomsoever He will to send astray, He makes his breast closed and constricted, as if he is climbing up to the sky.*" (Surah Al-An'am: 125) During our everyday life, our brain is placed at a higher position than our heart but that sometimes results in the arrogance of our brain. However, when we prostrate to Allah, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, our heart attains a higher position in our body than our brain and that is the state of a human being in which he/she is closest to Allah because according to a Prophetic tradition:

"The closest a slave ever is to his Lord is when he is in prostration, so make much supplication."
(Sahih Muslim)⁴⁷

Perhaps it would be appropriate to quote one incident (from amongst many incidents) from the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to describe such a change as it is narrated by Allama Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in his book *Zaad al-Maad* as follows:

"After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet was circumambulating the house when Fudāla ibn 'Umayr decided to kill him. He drew near to him. The Prophet said, "Fudāla?" He replied, "Yes! Fudāla, O Messenger of Allah!" He said, "What were you saying to yourself?" "Nothing!" He said, "I was invoking Allah!" The Prophet laughed then said, "Ask Allah for forgiveness!" Then he placed his hand on his chest and there was peace in his heart. Fudāla used to say

⁴⁶ Khan, Wahiduddin (1994). Tablighi Tahreek. New Delhi, Al-Risala Books.

⁴⁷ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

later on, "By Allah! By the time he took his hand off my chest, none of Allah's creation was dearer to me than him! As I was returning to my family I passed by a woman I used to converse with, she said, "Come over!" I said, "No, Allah will not allow it, nor will Islam!" ⁴⁸

Chapter 3

Human Heart and Mother-Child Bond

*"And Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight and **hearts** that you might give thanks (to Allah)."*

(Surah An-Nahl: Ayah 78)

The period of nine months a child spends in its mother's womb is a notable period of its life. Allama Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah mentions five different types of relations between the soul (Rooh) and the body and one of them is the period when the child is in the womb of its mother. The five kinds of soul-body connections are as follows:

1. In the womb of the mother because there is soul in the unborn child,
2. After birth and this connection between soul and body stays until the death,
3. During sleep when there is partial disengagement of the soul from the body,

⁴⁸ Ibn Al-Qayyim, al-Jawziyyah (1997). Zaad al-Maa'd. Karachi, Nafees Academy.

4. After death, in the barzakh, because even though the soul had come out of the body but still a connection remains between the two, and lastly,

5. In the life hereafter, after the Day of Judgement and that will be the strongest connection between the soul and the body because after that there will be no death, sleep or any changes in the body. ⁴⁹

In the last few decades, a wide variety of scientific research has been conducted regarding the relationship between the pregnant mother and the unborn child (known as fetus in the scientific terminology) in her womb. Usually, a person's heart is about the size of that person's fist. As the body develops, the heart grows at the same rate as the fist. Hence, an infant's heart and fist are about the same size at birth. In the womb, however, that similarity is not always true. During the first few weeks after conception, the fetal heart occupies most of the fetus' mid-section. The ratio of the heart size to body size is nine times greater in the fetus than in the infant. It is a common knowledge now that the heart of the unborn child develops and starts pumping long before the brain comes into existence. The first cells of the unborn baby are sensitive to sound and even though the actual thing which triggers the beating of the heart cells of baby is not known, it is suspected as Paul Pearsall, Ph.D. writes, that "the mother's heart energy conveyed in primal sound waves contains the information that is the code that jump-starts our life." ⁵⁰ Once the heart starts beating, it keeps on beating even when the brain stops working in cases like 'brain death'.

By the time the unborn child is four and half weeks old in the womb of the mother, its sense of hearing (auditory system) is complete and the unborn child can hear the sounds produced in the body of the mother. Of all the sounds that the child hears in the womb of the mother, the most predominant one is the continuous rhythmic sound of its mother's heartbeat. As long as the mother's heartbeat is normal and regular, the unborn

⁴⁹ Ibn Al-Qayyim, al-Jawziyyah (1997). Kitaab ur-Rooh (in Urdu). Lahore, Shabbir Brothers.

⁵⁰ Pearsall, Paul Ph.D. (1998). The Heart's Code. New York, Broadway Books.

child feels safe. In 1940s, Lester Sontag, M.D., was the first one who discovered that the mother's heartbeat affects the heartbeat of unborn child in the womb.⁵¹

Unconscious Memory of Mother's Heartbeat in a Child

The unconscious memory of the mother's heartbeat in the womb remains in the child even after birth and for the rest of his or her life. Several evidences support that view. Thomas Verny, M.D. in his book *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child* has mentioned that it is because of the unconscious memory of the mother's heartbeat that after the birth, a child feels comforted when it is held to somebody's chest or an adult goes to sleep when listening to the steady ticking of the clock and that could be the reason why people in the office are rarely distracted by the rhythmic clacking of typewriters or other such things.⁵² Some people who suffer from insomnia (loss of sleep) use sound machines, which actually mimic the sound of a heart beat. Similarly, the most soothing music usually beats about 70 to 80 tones per minute, which resembles the natural rhythm of a heartbeat. The most definite characteristic of jazz (a type of music popular in the whole world) is its pulsating rhythm. The drumbeat in jazz resembles the heartbeat. This kind of music takes those people who are listening to it into their womb-stage. Such music may be triggering in its listeners the unconscious memory of their mothers' heartbeat, and, hence, they feel psychologically secure.

In order to explore the effects of the unconscious memory of the mother's heartbeat on the child after birth, a group of researchers played the tape of human heartbeat in a nursery filled with newborn babies on certain days and compared it with the babies which were there on the days the heartbeat tape was not played. The researches wanted to know that if

⁵¹ Bernard, J. & Sontag, L. (1947). Fetal Reactions to Sound. *Journal of Genetic Psychology* **70**, 209-210.

⁵² Verny, Thomas M.D. & John Kelley (1981). The Secret Life of the Unborn Child. New York, Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

there were any emotional effects of the sound of maternal heartbeat, they would show up in the newborn babies for which the tape was played. The results of that experiment were surprising. The researchers found out that the heartbeat babies did better in every respect as compared to the babies in the nursery on the days when the heartbeat sound tape was not played. The heartbeat babies ate more, slept more, breathed better, cried less and became sick lesser.⁵³ This was all due to the fact that those babies felt they were in protection of their mother when they listened to the heartbeat sound.

Effects of Mother's Heartbeat on Child during Breast-feeding

It is known now that when the heart waves and the brain waves match (synchronized), our body functions at "optimum capacity".⁵⁴ Similarly, when matching of the wave-frequencies of the mother's heart and the newborn baby's heart occur, as Joseph Chilton Pearce puts it, "the mother's developed heart furnishes the model frequencies that the infant's heart must have for its own development in the critical first months after birth."⁵⁵ One of the ways this matching up of the mother-child heart waves occurs is when the mother is breast-feeding her child. At the time of birth, the sense of hearing of a child is fully functional whereas children cannot see or recognize objects beyond a certain distance. It takes infants few weeks until they can recognize faces of different people. In Qur'an, Allah tells us: "*Say it is He Who has created you, and endowed you with hearing (ears), eyes (seeing), and hearts. Little thanks you give.*" (Surah Al-Mulk: Ayah 23) Hence, in Qur'an the reference to 'hearing' is made first because the sense of hearing is developed first in the child. Then, Qur'an mentions about the eyesight. The Qur'an gives

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁵⁵ Pearce, Joseph Chilton (2002). The Biology of Transcendence. Rochester, Vermont, Park Street Press.

the reference to an infant's faculty of understanding (i.e. the heart) the last because it takes years for a child to develop the moral sense of right and wrong.

The above discussion tells us how important it is to breast-feed. About fifty years ago, in the wave of modernism, many mothers in Europe and America started to bottle-feed their children because they thought it backward to breast-feed. Even today, about 97% of the babies in the U.S.A. are bottle-fed. Research has shown that breast-fed infants are more intelligent than bottle-fed infants. There are myriads of other obvious benefits of breast-feeding over bottle-feeding.^{56, 57} That is why, the reference to breast-feeding the child for about 2 years is made in the Qur'an itself (Surah Luqman: Ayah 14). Even UNICEF and WHO as Jack Newman wrote in Scientific American have now recognized the importance of the Qur'anic injunction, which was revealed more than 1400 years ago, to breastfeed the child for at least 2 years:

"And although it is not the norm in most industrialized cultures, UNICEF and World Health Organization both advise breast-feeding to "two Years and beyond." Indeed, a child's immune response does not reach its full strength until age five or so."⁵⁸

Mother's milk contains just the right amount of fatty acids, lactose, water, and amino acids for human stomach (for digestion), brain development, and growth. It also contains many types of immunities a baby needs in early life while her own immune system is maturing. In addition, the concentration of fats and proteins is the lowest in human milk as compared to the milk of other mammals. This makes feeding of human infant necessary after about every 20 minutes. If we just take the example of rabbit milk, it has such a high concentration of fat and protein that feeding the baby

⁵⁶ Blum, Deborah (1996). Is Mother's milk key to child's growth, future? *Sacramento Bee* **July 8**, A-1.

⁵⁷ Pearce, Joseph Chilton (1992). *Evolution's End*. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁵⁸ Newman, Jack, M.D. (December 1995). How Breast Milk Protects Newborns. *Scientific American*.

rabbit once a day is sufficient. The frequency of feeding the baby is also very low in all other mammals. This is obviously not the case with human beings. The fact that the human milk is poor in nutrients and digested quickly makes it necessary for the mother to have frequent contacts (several times a day) with the baby through breast-feeding. There is a profound wisdom of Allah in the need for high frequency (many times a day) of breast-feeding of human infants. During breast-feeding, the child is close to the mother's heart and listens to the heartbeat of its mother. As Joseph Chilton Pearce writes: "On holding her infant in the left-breast position with its corresponding heart contact, a major block of dormant intelligences is activated in the mother, causing precise shifts of brain function and permanent behavior changes."⁵⁹ Perhaps this could be why most mothers instinctively place their babies to their left breast, keeping those hearts in proximity. The importance of close body-contact, or better yet, close heart-to-heart contact of mother and her newborn is stressed by James W. Prescott, Ph.D. of the Institute of Humanistic Science as follows:

"Only in the human mammal do we find the newborn separated from its mother at birth and the mother not breastfeeding her newborn and infant. We have discovered that such aberrant behaviors which violate millions of years of evolutionary biology and psychobiology have exacted a terrible price upon the physical, emotional and social health of the newborn and infant and as a child, adolescent and adult - depression, impulse dyscontrol, violence and substance abuse."⁶⁰

The Qur'an has specifically mentioned the pregnancy period of the mother in Surah Luqman as:

⁵⁹ Pearce, Joseph Chilton (1992). Evolution's End. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁶⁰ Prescott, James W. (Spring 1997). Breastfeeding: Brain Nutrients in Brain Development for Human Love and Peace. *Touch The Future* Newsletter.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلَهُ فِي
عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾

"And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship (during pregnancy), and his weaning (stopping of breast-feeding) is in two years - Give thanks to Me and to your parents - unto Me is the final destination."

(Surah Luqman: Ayah 14)

Furthermore, the Qur'an elevates kindness to parents (especially mothers) to a status second only to the worship of Allah:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ
عِنْدَكَ الْكَبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا
وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

"Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor."

(Surah Al-Isra: 23)

Similarly, in praising the status of mothers, Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said in one tradition:

"The ones who are most deserving of your companionship are your mothers."

(Bukhari)⁶¹

⁶¹ Bukharee, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Ismael (1981). Sahih Bukharee. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan.

Chapter 4

Human Heart's Influence on the Brain and Emotions

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT BOTH the human brain and the human heart possess intelligence but the two kinds of intelligences are different in many respects. The intelligences of the brain and the heart operate differently and as a consequence, the two organs perceive truth in different ways. Hence, we will begin our discussion first with the differences in the intelligence of the two organs and what are the outcomes of that.

Intelligence of Heart versus Intelligence of Brain

Human brain works in a linear, logical way. Its basic functions are to analyze, memorize, compartmentalize, compare, and sort the information obtained from our senses. Based on the previous information, experiences and memories, the brain sorts the incoming messages from our senses and transforms that data into perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. While this approach of our brain is necessary for our survival, there are many disadvantages to this ability. The brain can easily get stuck on a fixed pattern. This means that since there is already information in the head (it does not matter whether that information is based on truth or not), the brain always compares the new information to the old model it has and sees unconsciously if the new information matches with the old ideas and perceptions it has. That is the reason why it is so hard for us to change our old habits and perceptions.⁶²

⁶² Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

Emmanuel Kant wrote in his *The Critique of Pure Reason* that intellect is totally inadequate for the comprehension of God's Essence. That is true because Allah says about Himself in the Qur'an: "There is nothing like unto Him." (Surah Ash-Shura: Ayah 11) This means that the brain always compares the new information with the information that it already has. In the case of Essence of Allah, the brain does not have anything to compare it with because there is nothing like unto Allah. Therefore, the brain becomes helpless to discern Allah directly. The only way brain can understand Allah is by indirect knowledge - by contemplating about the creations of Allah. That is why, Abu Bakr Siddique said the following statement about recognition of Allah:

العَجْزُ عَنْ دَرْكِ الذَّاتِ إِذْرَاكُ

"Glory to God who has not given to his creatures any other way to attain the knowledge of Him except by means of their helplessness and their hopelessness of ever reaching such attainment." ⁶³

Heart Intelligence cuts through any needless complexity or confusion, very similar to a flashlight beam that illuminates the darkness and allows you to see what's actually important. The intelligence of the heart processes incoming information in a different way that is less linear, more intuitive and more direct. In fact, there are many things in our life, which we cannot explain logically. For example, parents love their children so much that they are always willing to sacrifice their life in order to save the life of their children, in case of a danger. This love cannot be explained logically. But the heart can understand that love because the heart processes the information in a less linear and more intuitive way. We should remember that during prostration, the position of the heart lies above the brain and according to a tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), a person is closest to Allah while in prostration. Hence, the state of prostration ('sujood') to Allah is the real status of a human being. Imam Malik, the great jurist and the founder of the Maliki school of

⁶³ Ghazali, Imam Abu Hamid (n.d.). *Ihya Uloom ud Din*. Karachi, Darul Isha'at.

jurisprudence, must be talking about the superiority of heart intelligence (light; intuition) over brain intelligence (plenty of information means the data processing ability of the brain) when he described true knowledge as follows:

لَيْسَ الْعِلْمُ كَثْرَةُ الرِّوَايَاتِ وَلَكِنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ
قَذَفَهُ اللَّهُ بِقَلْبِ الْمُؤْمِنِ

"Knowledge does not refer to plenty of information; rather, knowledge is a light that Allah puts into the heart of a true believer."

What Imam Malik referred to here is that even if a person is a 'walking encyclopedia', he does not have real knowledge if he does not recognize who created him and the whole universe? What is the purpose of his creation? It is this kind of intelligence which Rumi referred to in his poetic masterpiece *Mathnawi* as follows:

"The intelligent person sees with the heart
the result from the beginning;
the one lacking in knowledge
only discovers it at the end.

[Mathnawi, Vol III, 4129] ⁶⁴

What is Intelligence?

The brain can work without the intervention of heart intelligence but, in that case, the brain is devoid of any kind of mercy or emotional intelligence. People who possess sharp brainpowers may get the worldly and mundane benefits in this world even if they are evil geniuses. Such people, possessing acute brainpowers, are sometimes referred to as "master-minds". However, only people who have intelligent hearts (which is referred to in the Qur'anic terminology as '*Qalbun*

⁶⁴ Rumi, Jalaluddin *Mathnawi* quoted in Helminski, Kabir (1999). The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation. Boston, Shambhala Publications.

saleem' or sound heart) are successful in the next world. Prior to 1980s, it was widely believed that there is only one kind of intelligence, which is expressed by our brain and can be measured by IQ tests. In 1983, Howard Gardner, the Harvard University researcher and developmental psychologist, in his book *Frames of Mind* revolutionized the whole concept of intelligence. He propounded that there are different kinds of intelligences such as linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal (dealing with one's own knowledge) and interpersonal (dealing with knowledge of others).⁶⁵ Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is in stark contrast it with the prevailing scientific view of intelligence as a single, general faculty of mind. According to Dr. Gardner, every person possesses a blend of those seven intelligences, most of which are overlooked in our educational system. Hence, intelligence is far more complicated than IQ-rating suggests. IQ-rating only measures aspects of intelligence, i.e. logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligence. As a result of Gardner's research, many people started to reconsider their definitions of intelligence. Presently, there is a growing recognition among educators, neuroscientists, psychologists and others that human beings possess a range of potentials and capacities that cannot be easily quantified.

In 1996, Daniel Goleman presented a more holistic view of intelligence in his famous book *Emotional Intelligence* based of his own research as well as the research of many other scientists. Goleman argued that success in our life depends more on ability to manage our emotions as compared to merely using our mental abilities. He explained through research that many people have very high IQ's (a test which measures intelligence of brain) but still their lives are a failure. Conversely, many people with ordinary IQ are more successful in their lives just because they are emotionally more intelligent.⁶⁶ According to Goleman, IQ measures are inadequate as determiners of an individual's future success (or happiness). Emotional intelligence, even though it is not a

⁶⁵ Gardner, Howard (1985). Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York, Basic Books.

⁶⁶ Goleman, Daniel (1995). Emotional Intelligence. New York, Bantam Books.

wholly quantifiable thing, is more important contributor to an individual's potential success. The heart plays a major role in regulating our emotions. More detail of heart's role in emotions will be given in the next chapter. The heart has a direct link to the emotional intelligence, even though that is not the only kind of intelligence that the heart possesses. The intelligence of the heart is more of the humanistic type, which cares about other people as well. The intelligence of the brain is more of a selfish kind, which is more concerned about its own survival. As Paul Pearsall writes:

"The brain itself never truly falls completely asleep. It has different levels of vigilance, but it never gives up its hold on the body.... The brain is mortality phobic."
67

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi states in his book *The Evolving Self* that our brain is inclined more towards pessimism and always expects worse to happen. In this way, it remains ready for the unexpected.⁶⁸ It is this fear and pessimism of human brain that is exploited by the Satan (devil) when our heart wants to spend in the path of Allah:

"Satan threatens you with poverty."
(Surah Al-Baqarah: 268)

Similarly, Satan takes advantage of the hidden fears of brain and, as a consequence, the brain makes the heart spiritually sick as well. As a consequence, both the sinful brain and the sinful heart will get punishment on the Day of Judgment as it is mentioned in the Qur'an:

كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ ﴿١٥﴾ نَاصِيَةٍ كَذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

"Let him beware! If he does not stop, We will drag him by the Forelock (front portion of the *brain*), a lying, sinful forelock."

⁶⁷ Pearsall, Paul Ph.D. (1998). The Heart's Code. New York, Broadway Books.

⁶⁸ Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1993). The Evolving Self. New York, HarperCollins.

(Surah Al-'Alaq: Ayah 15,16)

نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمُوقَدَّةُ ۖ الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْآفِئَةِ ۖ

"The fire of Allah, kindled, which leaps up over the hearts."
(Surah Al-Humazah: Ayah 6,7)

Other types of intelligences to which our heart is directly related are intuition and insight. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, great Islamic poet, philosopher and Islamic scholar, in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* made the following remarks about the heart:

"The *heart* is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense-perception. It is, according to the Qur'an, something which 'sees', and its reports, if properly interpreted, are never false." ⁶⁹

Four Ways in which the Heart Communicates with the Brain

In the past, the scientists believed that only the brain exerts its influence on the heart. However, the scientists at the HeartMath Institute (a non-profit institute in Boulder Creek, California, which is committed to research on the human heart) discovered after years of research that the heart communicates with the brain and the rest of the body in four different ways as described in their publications *The*

⁶⁹ Iqbal, Sir Mohammad (Allama) (1994). The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. New Delhi, Kitaab Bhavan.

HeartMath Solution and *The Science of the Heart*.^{70,71} These four ways of heart-brain communication are summarized as follows:

1. Neurological Communication (through nervous system)

The heart contains more than 40,000 neurons (same types of cells as found in the brain) as described in Chapter 1 of this book. The neurons in the heart sense and respond to different types of biological processes such as heart rate, pressure information, hormones, etc. and sends that information to the brain through afferent neural pathways (the nerves which carry information from the heart to the brain). In the brain, the information is sent to the brain centers involved in reasoning and decision-making.⁷² Commenting about the neural connections between the heart and the brain, Rollin McCraty, Ph.D. writes:

"Remarkably, we now know that the heart sends more neural traffic to the brain than the brain sends to the heart."⁷³

2. Biochemical Communication (through hormones and neurotransmitters)

A hormone is a chemical substance, which is produced in one part of the body, and it is taken by blood to other part of the body or organ for its action. In the early 1980s, it was discovered that the heart secretes a very powerful hormone called atrial natriuretic factor (ANF). This hormone regulates the blood pressure and body fluid retention. This hormone

⁷⁰ Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁷¹ McCraty, R, Atkinson, M. & Tomasino, D. (2003). Science of the Heart: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance. Boulder Creek, California, Institute of HeartMath.

⁷² Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁷³ McCraty, Rollin, Ph.D. (2003). Heart-Brain Neurodynamics: The Making of Emotions. Boulder Creek, California, Institute of HeartMath.

affects the blood vessels, kidneys and even some of parts of the brain. ANF, which is also called the "balance hormone", also exerts its influence on the thalamus and the pituitary gland in the limbic part of our brain, portion of the brain involved in our memory, learning, and emotions.⁷⁴ In our body, there are two kinds of systems: (i) Sympathetic (which speeds us up for action) and (ii) Parasympathetic (which slows us down for relaxation) which operate. The balancing of these two systems is important for the normal functioning of the brain. It is ANF, the hormone secreted by the heart, which achieves this balance.

3. Biophysical Communication (through pressure waves)

Another way in which the heart communicates with the brain and the rest of the body is through the pressure waves generated when the blood is pumped through the heart to the whole body. This occurs with every heartbeat. Scientists at HeartMath Institute did various experiments and found out that when the pressure wave of the heart beat traveling through the blood arteries reaches the brain, the electrical activity of the brain changes and it can be recorded.⁷⁵ The heart is the only organ in the body that pulsates and its effects reach every part of the body at every moment. The pulsating effects of the heart reach the brain, rest of the body organs, arteries, veins and every tissue of the body.

4. Energetic Communication (through electromagnetic fields)

The heart's electromagnetic field is much more powerful than the brain and the rest of the body. It is 5000 times more powerful than the electromagnetic field generated by the brain.⁷⁶ The heart's normal electrical frequency is 250 cycles

⁷⁴ Cantin, Marc & Genest, Jacques (1986). The Heart as an Endocrine Gland. *Scientific American* **254**(2), 76-81.

⁷⁵ Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁷⁶ Pearsall, Paul Ph.D. (1998). The Heart's Code. New York, Broadway Books.

per second whereas the brain's electrical activity is between 0 and 30 cycles per second. The heart's field not only influences the brain and the body but also it can be measured with instruments such as magnetometers from a distance of up to ten feet away. In addition, the researches done at HeartMath Institute show evidence of interaction between the electromagnetic field of the heart and the brain.⁷⁷

Role of the Heart with respect to Emotions

In the past, scientists thought that the brain was the source of all emotions that we experience. However, that view is changing now. It has been shown now that our emotions are much faster than our thought process and they surpass the linear reasoning process of the brain due to their fast speed. Since the thought processes of the brain are much slower than the speed with which emotions appear, emotions could not be the result of a normal thinking process of brain. Hence, as LeDoux showed in *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*, it is not true that emotions originate in the brain.⁷⁸ The center of the brain that plays the most important role in our emotional memory processing is called the amygdala. Recent researches have shown that the heart affects this center of the brain.⁷⁹ This means that our heart influences our emotions because amygdala directly affects our heart.

The idea that our mind and body are distinct entities originated when Rene Descartes (1596-1650 C.E.), French mathematician and philosopher, proclaimed, "I think, therefore I am." Ever since, philosophers were considering mind and body as separate entities, a concept also known as

⁷⁷ Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

⁷⁸ LeDoux, J. (1996). The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life. New York, Simon and Schuster.

⁷⁹ Armour, J. Andrew, M.D., Ph.D. & Ardell, Jeffry L., Ph.D. ed. (1994). Neurocardiology. New York, Oxford University Press.

Cartesian dualism. Antonio Damasio, head of neurology at the University of Iowa and a prominent researcher on human brain function, has recently challenged this premise in his book *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*. Damasio showed that psychology's separation of reason from emotion is wrong and emotions play a central role in human decision-making. He showed through case studies of patients (in his own lab as well as from outside) whose emotion-interpreting centers in their brains were damaged in accidents. Despite their perfect memory and no physical impairment, those individuals were lacking the ability to make correct decisions. Damasio showed that rational decisions are not the result of logic alone but they need support of emotions and feelings.⁸⁰

Moreover, researchers like Candace Pert, M.D., the author of *Molecules of Emotion*, have shown that it is not just our body biochemistry that affects our emotions but also our emotions affect the biochemicals in our body. Hence, our whole body is the source and bio-molecular basis of our emotions.⁸¹ The brain actually acts as a "complex pattern-matching system" for the emotions and the heart has the major influence on the brain in this respect due to "its consistent generation of dynamic rhythmic patterns that are closely coupled with changes in emotional state."⁸²

Dualist Nature of Human Beings and the Importance of Heart

Human beings are comprised of two things: (1) dust, and (2) spirit. Our whole life on this earth is in reality a story of conflict between our spiritual and the material being. This struggle ends upon our death when the spirit leaves the body.

⁸⁰ Damasio, Antonio (1994). Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain. New York, Quill Publishers.

⁸¹ Pert, Candace, (Ph.D.) (1997). Molecules of Emotion. New York, Scribner.

⁸² McCraty, Rollin, Ph.D. (2003). Heart-Brain Neurodynamics: The Making of Emotions. Boulder Creek, California, Institute of HeartMath.

It is mentioned at various places that our body is made from the soil of this earth. For example:

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

“And among His signs is that He created you from dust.”
(Surah Rum: 20)

Then, to this material being, Allah sends an angel to blow the spirit into, as mentioned in the Qur'an:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

“So when I have fashioned him and breathed into him (his) soul created by Me. then you (angels) fall down prostrate to him.” (Surah Saad: 72)

This angelic soul blown into human beings is unique among humans and they do not share it other living creatures on this planet. The reference to the dual nature of human beings is made in the Qur'an when Allah says describing the creation of Adam:

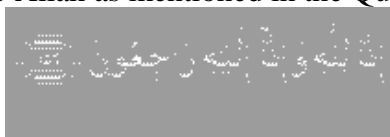
قَالَ يٰٓإِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإَيْدِي

“(Allah) said: "O Satan! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with Both My Hands” (Surah Saad: 75)

Thus, the human body is made from the ingredients of this world but soul (*rooh*) is blow into his body by an angel. Therefore, there is a body-soul conflict that happens inside a human being. Humans are an optimum combination of angelic as well as bestial elements. Human body possesses desires similar to those of animals whereas human soul strives for the heavenly desires. The worship instinct is the desire of

human soul whereas instincts for hunger, thirst and sex are the desires of the body. Islamic teachings want us to have a balance between the soul and the body. That is why Islam is against monasticism as well as hedonism. All the ingredients of food for our physical body come from the soil of this earth because our physical being originated from this earth. However, our soul was blown into our body by an angel – a heavenly being – therefore, its food must be something from the heavens. In fact, the food for our soul is the heavenly revelation of Allah – The Qur'an – which is the book of Allah. The Qur'an is the spring of life for our soul. In discussing the soul-body duality in the nature of human beings, Dr. Israr Ahmed, a contemporary Islamic scholar, medical doctor and commentator of the Qur'an, said the following:

"The source of human volition and also the center of human soul is the heart. Human beings have a spiritual being as well as a physical being. Human soul is from Allah and it will return back to Allah as mentioned in the Qur'anic ayah:



'Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.' (Surah Al-Baqarah: 156) On the other hand, our physical body came from this world and it will return back to this world:

﴿مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَىٰ﴾

'Thereof (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out once again.' (Surah Ta-Ha: 55)

Human heart is like a mirror between the two. The example of heart is like a glass (zujajah), which contains a lamp (misbaah) which is present inside a niche (mishkat) as described in Surah An-Nur (ayah 35). Our chest or ribcage looks similar to a niche. Our heart is like a glass (zujajah) inside which the lamp of soul is glowing. Human soul wants to attract the heart towards itself whereas human *nafs* (self) wants the heart to incline towards it. The decision is based on the heart. If the heart inclines towards the *nafs* and ignores the soul then it results in its 'darkness upon darkness'. Conversely,

if the heart turns itself towards soul then it lights up itself and lights up the whole human being. The last stage of the lighting up of the whole being was achieved in the personality of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)." ⁸³

Chapter 5

Importance of Purification of the Heart

⁸³ Israr Ahmed, Dr. (2004). Falsafa Siam-o-Qiam-e-Ramadan (Urdu Lecture). Lahore, Anjuman Khuddamul Qur'an.

"Treat your heart because what Allah wants from the humans is rectification and purification (*tazkiyyah*) of their hearts."
(Hasan Basari's advice to a man)

IN QUR'AN, ALLAH THE MOST EXALTED ONE, says:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾

*"On that day, neither wealth nor children will benefit human beings except the one who will bring **sound heart**."* (Surah Ash-Shu'ara: 88-89)

A sound heart (*qalb saleem*) is free from the spiritual defects and blemishes. Even though the 'heart' mentioned here refers to the spiritual heart and not the physical heart, the spiritual heart is centered in the physical heart and the two are linked to each other. The heart is the midpoint between the body and soul. Therefore, there is always a struggle going on between the forces of body and soul. If the heart inclines more towards the passionate desires of body, it first becomes veiled, then it gets hardened and finally it becomes diseased. Conversely, if the heart inclines more towards the desires of soul, it starts to receive spiritual power that strengthens it.

According to the Qur'an, people have three kinds of hearts (spiritually):

1. Mo'min (believer in Oneness of Allah) - somebody whose heart is alive.
2. Kaafir (disbeliever in Allah) - somebody whose heart is dead.
3. Munaafiq (hypocrite) - somebody whose heart has a disease.

It should be pointed out that the disease of hypocrisy, which the heart of a munaafiq has, is something which makes the munaafiq worse than a kaafir according to the Qur'an because the munaafiq tries to deceive Allah. On the other hand, there are spiritual diseases such as envy, backbiting, arrogance, etc., which could infect the heart of a 'mo'min' (believer) and there are cures for these spiritual diseases, as it will be shown later in this chapter. Sheikh Ibn Taymiyyah in his book *Diseases of the Hearts and Their Cures* quotes from Ali bin Abi Taalib, about the different kinds of spiritual hearts, who said:

"The hearts are of four types: the clear heart that is illuminated by a torch - this is the heart of the believer. The encased heart - this is the heart of the disbeliever. The inverted heart - this is the heart of the hypocrite. And, the heart that has two attractions, a time when it is called to faith, and a time when it is called to hypocrisy - these are a people that have mixed good actions with evil ones."⁸⁴

Physical diseases of the heart

Among the physical diseases of the heart, the major one is coronary artery disease that results in heart attack. When the heart is diseased, it results in the deterioration of our body. Coronary artery disease is one of the major causes of death in U.S.A. According to the statistics provided by the Center for Disease Control (Atlanta, Georgia) about one million people die every year from cardiovascular disease (heart attack and its complications). This means two people die every second in the U.S. due to heart attacks.⁸⁵ When the arteries of the heart (coronary arteries) are blocked due to the deposition of cholesterol, less blood flows to them and, as a result, the oxygen supply to the coronary arteries is not enough to meet the demands of the heart resulting in heart attack. The treatment of heart disease includes medicines (which improve

⁸⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah, Sheikhul-Islam (2003). Diseases of the Hearts and Their Cures. Birmingham, Daar us-Sunnah Publishers.

⁸⁵ Athar, Shahid, M.D. (1995). Health Concerns for Believers: Contemporary Issues. Chicago, Kazi Publications, Inc.

blood circulation in the heart), angioplasty and/or coronary bypass surgery (which involves replacing a blocked artery). In addition, it is important for the heart patients to avoid risk factors for the heart, e.g. food habits or lifestyle.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prescribed an Islamic lifestyle in his teachings. If we follow those guidelines, it is unlikely that we will suffer from cardiovascular disease. Prayers are given prime importance in Islam. In one tradition, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

أَذْيَبُوا أَطْعَامَكُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةِ - (رواه ابو نعيم)

"Dissolve and digest your food through the process of remembrance of Allah and offering of prayers."

(Reported by Abu Nuaym)

It is for this reason that the five obligatory prayers are arranged in such a way that those prayer times which come at the empty stomach [i.e. 'fajr' (before sunrise), 'asr' (afternoon) and 'maghrib' (right after sunset) prayers] are brief but those prayers which are after the meal [i.e. 'zuhr' (noon) and 'isha' (night) prayers] are longer and hence they give more exercise to our body. Similarly, in another tradition, Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

*"Do not go to bed immediately after the meals; it will harden your **heart**. Avoid any hard or large quantum of exercise immediately after meals; it will also cause a damage."* (Reported by Abu Nuaym)

Islam teaches us to observe moderation in our eating habits. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), more than 80% of the diseases in the U.S. are related to diet intake. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) disliked excessive eating. He lived with a flat belly and he died with a flat belly. Once he said:

"No man fills a vessel worse than his stomach. A few morsels are enough for son of Adam (human being) to keep his back upright. But if he must eat more, then he

should fill one third of his stomach with food, one third with drink and leave one third empty for the air (for easy breathing)."

(Reported by At-Tirmidhi) ⁸⁶

It is important to exercise moderation in our eating habits. The consumption of small amounts of food assures tenderness of the heart, strength of the intellect, humility of the self and weakness of desires. Immoderate eating brings about the opposite of these praiseworthy qualities. 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 behavior. Disobedience towards Allah is nearest to a person who is satiated with a full stomach, and furthest away from a person who is hungry."

The spiritual diseases of the heart can also have a negative impact on the physical heart. Similarly, curing those spiritual diseases of the heart have a positive impact on the physical heart. Laboratory experiments at the HeartMath Institute have shown that when the subjects of an experiment focus on their hearts and activate a core heart feeling such as love, care or appreciation, this focus changes their heart rhythms immediately. When positive emotions such as happiness, compassion, care and appreciation are activated, they result in increase of DHEA production in the body, a hormone that fights aging in our body. If we are suffering from the spiritual diseases of the heart such as envy, anger, hate, as a result, we suffer from stress. During stress, DHEA production is reduced and the production of the stress hormone Cortisol is increased, resulting in aging and reduction in our life.

Also critical for the spiritual and physical health of the heart is the eating of pure food. In Qur'an, in the Chapter of Cave (Surah Al-Kahaf), when the sleepers of the cave (a group of five to seven pious young men who had fled the persecution of a tyrant ruler and hid in a cave where Allah put them to sleep for about 300 years) woke up after their long sleep and send one of them to the nearby town market to buy some food,

⁸⁶ Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Esa (1988). At-Tirmidhi. Lahore, Zia ul Ihsan Publishers.

they advised him to get the food which they described as "*Azkaa ta'aman*" (pure food). Those sleepers of the cave knew that eating pure and lawful food is important for a sound heart. Today, the hearts of the Muslims are destroyed partly because of the fact that present day Muslims are not careful in terms of choosing pure food. Instead of eating homemade food filled with *baraka*, they prefer fast food, which in the words of Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, is "made with haste and waste, two attributes of the devil."⁸⁷ It is important for us to be conscious of the purity of the food we are eating for the sake of physical and spiritual health of our hearts.

Story of Luqman the Wise and his master

Luqman was a wise man from the Continent of Africa. He has been praised for his wisdom in the Qur'an. In the early part of his life, Luqman was a slave. The man who bought him as a slave was a good as well as an intelligent man. He was able to detect that Luqman was not an ordinary man and tried to test his intelligence.

One day, Luqman's master ordered him to slaughter a sheep and to bring its worst part to him. Luqman slaughtered the sheep and took its heart and tongue to his master. On receiving them his master smiled, fascinated by Luqman's choice of the 'worst'. He understood that Luqman was trying to convey some deep meaning, though he could not make out exactly what.

A few days later, Luqman was again instructed by his master to slaughter a sheep, but this time he was asked to take the best parts of the animal to the owner. Luqman slaughtered a sheep, and to his master's amazement, again brought the same organs (the heart and the tongue). His master asked Luqman how the heart and the tongue could be both the worst and the best parts. The wise Luqman answered: The tongue and the heart are the sweetest parts of the body if its owner is pure; and if the person is wicked, his tongue and heart are the worst

⁸⁷ Yusuf, Hamza (2001). Agenda to Change Our Condition. Hayward, Zaytuna Institute.

parts of his body! Thereafter, Luqman's owner held him in great respect and instructed his family to free Luqman after the owner's death. When his owner died, Luqman was granted freedom. The lesson we learn from this story is that our heart and tongue can make us good or bad. It is up to us how we use them.

First Open-Heart Surgery – Purification of the Heart of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by Angels

An important incident happened in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he reached the age of about five. At that time, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was living with his wet nurse, Halimah, a Bedouin woman from the tribe Banu Sa'd in her village. That incident scared Halimah so much that she decided to take the child (Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) back to his mother, Aminah, in Makkah. The details of the incident as Safi-ur-Rehman Mubarakpoori has described it in his book *The Sealed Nectar* (which is the biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) go as follows:

"Then, as related by Anas in *Sahih Muslim*, angel Jibrael (Gabriel) came down and ripped his chest open and took out the heart. He then extracted a blood clot out of it and said: "That was the part of Satan in thee." And then he washed it with the water of Zam-zam in a gold basin. After that the heart was joined together and restored to its place. The boys and playmates came running to his mother, i.e. his wet-nurse, and said: "Verily, Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has been murdered." They all rushed towards him and found him all right, only his face was white." ⁸⁸

Historian and biographer Ibn Sa'd in his *Kitab Al-Tabaqat Al-Kabir* has also added that the water used by angels to wash

⁸⁸ Mubarakpuri, Safi ur Rehman (1996). The Sealed Nectar (in Urdu). Lahore, Al-Maktabatul Salafiyya.

the heart of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was ice-cold.⁸⁹ When this miracle was performed, no body could imagine that the human heart could be taken out of the body after cutting open the chest and then placed back into it. Today open-heart surgeries are a normal procedure. That also tells us about the knowledge of the Prophet who could see in the future, centuries ahead. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf has made very interesting comments about miracle of the opening of chest of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He explained that the angels are light. Today we know that heart surgeries are done using the laser light. When we cut the veins and arteries connecting the heart to the body and take it out of the body, it keeps on beating. The continuous beating of the heart cells after being disconnected from the body can eventually lead to their death. Therefore, we keep the heart in ice-cold saline (salty) water in order to slow down its metabolism and to keep it alive. Historically, the Zamzam water had more salt content 1400 years ago as compared to today. The angels took out the heart of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) after ripping his chest open and washed it with ice-cold saline water of Zamzam and then the heart was joined together and restored to its place. This looks very similar to modern day heart surgery.⁹⁰ In fact, in a tradition narrated by Haakim (a book of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Anas bin Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him), the companion and personal servant of Prophet (peace be upon him), also reported seeing the imprints of sutures in the middle of the chest of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This tradition has been regarded as authentic (sahih) by Haakim as mentioned by Allama Jalaluddin Sayyuti in his book *Al-Khasaais ul Kubraa*.⁹¹ Those imprints of sutures on the chest of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were caused due to his heart surgery by the angels of Allah.

⁸⁹ Ibn Sa'd, Abu Abdullah Muhammad (n.d.). *Kitab Al-Tabaqat Al-Kabir*. New Delhi, Kitab Bhavan.

⁹⁰ Yusuf, Hamza *Al-Isra' wal Mi'raj* (video speech; 2001). Hawyard, Alhambra Productions.

⁹¹ Sayyuti, Imam Jalaluddin (2003). *Al-Khasaais ul Kubraa*. Lahore, Maktaba A'la Hadhrat.

The purpose of the miracle of the opening of chest of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the purification of his heart and to make his heart ready and capable to receive the direct revelation from Allah in the form of Qur'an:

وَإِنَّهُ لَنَزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٩٢﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ ﴿١٩٣﴾ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

*"And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of the 'Alamin (all living creatures in the Universe), Which the trustworthy "Rooh" (Gabriel) has brought down, Upon your **heart** (O Muhammad) that you may be (one) of the warners."*

(Surah Ash-Shu'araa: ayaat 192-194)

Allah chose the heart of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for the direct revelation of the Qur'an on it. No other human beings' heart had the strength to receive the direct revelation. The miracle of the purification of his heart was also performed to enable his heart to see the Greatest Signs of his Lord during Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) night journey (*Al Isra wal Mi'raj*) to the heavens as described in the Qur'an:

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ أَفَتَمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾

*"The (Prophet's) **heart** lied not (in seeing) what he saw. Will you then dispute with him (Muhammad peace be upon him) about what he saw."*

(Surah An-Najm: 11, 12)

Spiritual strength of the heart

The first step towards our rectification is contemplation about the purpose of our creation, our relationship to Allah, our accountability to Allah on the Day of Judgment and the ways we can rectify ourselves, by concentrating on our hearts. Frequent remembrance of death makes the tastes of this life distasteful for us and we are less likely to follow our desires

that lead us to our disobedience of Allah. If we are indulged too much in this world, our hearts are likely to be affected by it. Dr. Iqbal writes about this condition in his book *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* as follows:

"In our constant pursuit after external things we weave a kind of veil around the appreciative-self which thus becomes completely alien to us. It is only in the moments of profound meditation, when the efficient-self is in abeyance, that we sink into our deeper self and reach the inner centre of experience."⁹²

Similarly, Ibn Ata illah Iskandari, the great Egyptian saint and scholar, in his book *Al-Hikam ul Ataa'iyah* mentioned:

"If we do not get upset whenever we miss an act of virtue or prayer and if we do not feel shame after committing an act of disobedience to Allah then that is a sign of the death of our (spiritual) heart."⁹³

That is so because just like the life of our body depends upon food, similarly, the life of our spiritual heart depends upon "imaan" (belief in Allah), acts of virtue and prayers. Just like the diseases of the body are harmful for our health and life, similarly, spiritual diseases of the heart are dangerous for its health and, if left untreated, could result in the death of the heart. The feelings of shame and guilt found in human beings are not found in such a level in any other animals. Therefore, if a human being does not feel shame or guilt upon doing an act of disobedience to Allah, this means the heart of that person is dead. The ultimate goal of the purification of our heart is to reach the stage of having what the Qur'an calls "Qalb Saleem" (Sound Heart). This is the kind of heart about which Rumi noted as follows:

"If the heart is restored to health
And purged of sensuality,

⁹² Iqbal, Sir Mohammad (Allama) (1994). The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. New Delhi, Kitaab Bhavan.

⁹³ Iskandari, Ibn Ata illah (1984). Al-Hikam ul Ataa'iyah (urdu title: *Ikmal-ush-Shiyam*; translated by Khalil Ahmed Siharanpuri). Karachi, Idarah Islamiyaat.

then *the Merciful God is seated on the throne*.

After this, He guides the heart directly,

Since the heart is with Him.

[Mathnawi, Vol I, 3665-66]⁹⁴

Our heart knows what is wrong because according to a tradition of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) narrated on the authority of Wabisa bin Mabad, may Allah be pleased with him, who came to the Messenger of Allah:

"You have come to ask about righteousness?" I said:

"Yes." He said: "Consult your **heart**. Righteousness is that about which the soul feels tranquil and the **heart** feels tranquil, and wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul and moves back and forth in the breast (in your heart) even though people again and again have given you their opinion in its favor."

(Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal; Ad-Darimi)⁹⁵

Similarly, in another tradition narrated by Nawas bin Sam'aan, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

*"Virtue is good ethics and behavior and wrong action is what irritates the **heart** and you do not desire other people to see it."* (Sahih Muslim)⁹⁶

Hence, the heart is not only an organ of consciousness but also an organ of conscience (having the ability to differentiate between right and wrong). In explaining the above-mentioned prophetic traditions, Ibn Rajab Hanbali writes in his *Commentary on An-Nawawi's Forty Ahadeeth* that the issues regarding which there are no clear injunctions of Qur'an, Sunnah and Ijmaa and there are no Islamic legal rulings on

⁹⁴ Rumi, Jalaluddin *Mathnawi* quoted in Helminski, Kabir (1999). The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation. Boston, Shambhala Publications.

⁹⁵ Ibn Rajab, Hanbali (1995). Jaami Al-Uloom wal Hukam (Commentary on An-Nawawi's Forty Ahaadeth) (Urdu language). Lahore, Al-Faisal Publishers & Booksellers.

⁹⁶ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

those issues, the only choice the believers have is to get the guidance from their hearts because the heart feels peace and tranquility with truth and falsehood and disobedience to Allah irritates the heart.⁹⁷ The moral sense of right and wrong has been revealed to our hearts as mentioned in the Qur'an: "*Then He (Allah) revealed to him (human being) what is wrong for him and what is right for him*" (Surah Ash-Shams: Ayah 8) and "*Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.*" (Surah Ad-Dahr: Ayah 3) In discussing the education of the heart, Kabir Helminski, states:

“The heart is not merely a vague metaphor for some undefined capacity for feeling. The heart is an objective cognitive power beyond intellect. It is the organ of perception that can know the world of spiritual qualities. It is the heart that can love, that can praise, that can forgive, that can feel the Majesty of God...

But the human heart in most cases has suffered so much artificial conditioning that it has become a distorted and distorting instrument. In order for the heart to be an adequate cognitive instrument, it needs reconditioning. The reconditioning of the heart is a task that must be guided by objective principles. We have the means to offer the world a true psychology of the human being, a true science of the soul, a true education of the heart.”⁹⁸

As Muslims we have Qur'an and the practical example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that we can offer to the world for education, purification and rectification of the heart.

⁹⁷ Ibn Rajab, Hanbali (1995). Jaami Al-Uloom wal Hukam (Commentary on An-Nawawi's Forty Ahaadeth) (Urdu language). Lahore, Al-Faisal Publishers & Booksellers.

⁹⁸ Helminski, Kabir (1999). The Knowing Heart. Boston, Shambhala Publications.

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

*“O mankind! There has come to you a good advice from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your **hearts**, and for those who believe, a guidance and a Mercy.”* (Surah Yunus: Ayah 57)

Importance of the Science of Tazkiyyah (purification)

Islam is not merely a religion but a complete code of life. The injunctions of Islam dealing with the outward aspects of our life are the subject of the science of Fiqh (jurisprudence). On the other hand, the commandments of Islam dealing with the inward aspects of our personalities are described in the science of "Tazkiyyah" (science of the purification of our hearts).

If we look at the Qur'an, we can see that Allah's purpose of sending all the prophets to the humankind and the religious scriptures revealed to them has been the tazkiyyah (purification) of those people's hearts. The prayer Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) made for the coming of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) among the people of Arabian Peninsula goes as:

رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٣٩﴾

*"Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall recite unto them Your Verses and instruct them in the Book (this Qur'an) and 'Al-Hikma' (traditions of Prophet Muhammad), and **purify** them.*

Verily! You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."
(Surah Al-Baqarah: 129)

Allah accepted Prophet Ibrahim's prayer and has revealed the purpose of the prophet hood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the following verse:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيكُمْ آيَاتِنَا
وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ
تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

*"Similarly We have sent among you a Messenger of your own, reciting to you Our Verses and **purifying** you, and teaching you the Book (i.e. Qur'an) and the 'Hikma' (i.e. Sunnah), and teaching you that which you used not to know."* (Surah Al-Baqarah: 151)

Similarly, the Qur'an regards the purpose of the prophet hood of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) also as tazkiyyah:

أَذْهَبَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَّكَ إِلَٰهٌ أَن تَزْكِيَ
﴿١٨﴾ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾

*"Go to Pharaoh, verily, he has transgressed all bounds. And say to him: 'Would you **purify** yourself.' And that I guide you to your Lord, so you should fear Him?"* (Surah An-Na'ziat: 17-19)

Furthermore, the Qur'an tells us that tazkiyyah is a necessary requirement for a person to become successful in the Life Hereafter. This point also indicates that the main purpose of sending the prophets to mankind and revealing religious scriptures was tazkiyyah of the humanity. Allah says in the Qur'an:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا ﴿٩﴾ ﴿١٠﴾

"Indeed he succeeds who **purifies** his own self. And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self."
(Surah Ash-Shams: 9-10)

Ibn Abaas, the great interpreter of the Qur'an and companion of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

تَعَلَّمْنَا الْإِيمَانَ ثُمَّ تَعَلَّمْنَا الْقُرْآنَ

(Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us "Imaan" first and then he taught us Qur'an.)⁹⁹

The place where 'Imaan' (faith) is nurtured is in the heart - the place to perform tazkiyyah (purification) on. A study of the early history of Islam tells us that just like the rules of the sciences of tafseer (Qur'anic commentary), hadeeth (traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) were not compiled during the time of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but they nonetheless existed during the time of Prophet and his companion, the science of the purification of the heart also existed from the very inception of Islam. During the time of 'taabi'oon' (pious predecessors to the companions), the rules of all these sciences were compiled. Ibn Khaladun, the Islamic historian, in the *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomena of History) pointed out that in the first three generations of Islam, the science of Islamic spirituality was too general to have a specific name. However, when worldliness became prevalent and people started to become more and more occupied with the activities of material pursuits of life, a group of people dedicated themselves to the worship of God and they distinguished themselves from the materialist people.¹⁰⁰

99 Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir (1992). *Jaami Al-Bayan Fi Ta'wil ayi'l Qur'an*. Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Khaldun, Abdur Rehman (1993). *Muqaddimah Taarekh Ibn Khaldun*. Lahore, Al-Faisel Publishers and Traders.

All great scholars during the early stages of Islam were aware of the science of purification of hearts and many wrote books on this subject. For example, the following are the names of some of the names of Islamic scholars who wrote books about the science of the purification of the heart:

- Imam Abdullah bin Mubarak (118-181 Al-Hijra (A.H.)) – *Kitaab az-Zuhd* (Book of Piety)
- Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal (164-241 A.H.) – *Kitaab az-Zuhd* (Book of Piety)
- Imam Harith bin Asad Al-Muhaasibi (165-243 A.H.) – *Kitaab az-Zuhd* (Book of Piety)
- Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzali (450-505 A.H. or 1050–1111 CE) – *Ihya Uloom ad-Din* (Revival of the Religious Sciences)
- Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (661-728 A.H.) – *Amraadhul Quloob wa Shifa'uha* (Diseases of the Hearts and Their Cures), a treatise that can be found in his multi-voluminous *Fataawa Imam Ibn Taymiyyah*
- Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (691-751 A.H.) – *Madaarij us-Salikeen*
- Abdur Rehman Ibn Jawzee (511-597 A.H.) – *Minhaaj ul Qaasideen*
- Shah Wali Ullah Dehlawi – *Hujjatullah Al-Baalighah*
- Sheikh Abdul Qaadir Jilaani (470-561 A.H.) – *Ghaniyatul Taalibeen*, and
- Abu Taalib Makki (died 386 A.H.) – *Qoowatul Quloob* (Strength of the Hearts)

These scholars were well versed in the science of tazkiyyah and at the same time they were great scholars of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ('muhaditheen'). They were strict followers of the Sunnah (way) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Later on in the Islamic history, just like any other institution of Islam, the institution of Islamic spirituality (science of tazkiyyah or "tasawwuf") also experienced decline. After the science of Islamic spirituality underwent decline, some people started to make it appear a secret science. Hellenistic ideas and Greek philosophies crept into "tasawwuf" under the guise of Islam. Some people tried to prove the status of some of the saints superior to the Prophets in terms of knowledge and being infallible. The pagan concept of pantheism (*wahdatul wujood*), which originated among the Neo-Platonist philosophers from Alexandria, became an article of faith when it entered into tasawwuf.

However, at different times in Islamic history, some righteous scholars appeared like Imam Ibn Jawzee, Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, Imam Abu-Ghazzali, Sheikh Abdul Qaadir Jilaani, Shah Wali Ullah, etc. and presented the clear and untarnished picture of Islam to humanity based on the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Such righteous scholars never tried to prove the science of tazkiyyah to be a secret science which was known only to a few of the companions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and later on transmitted only to a selected few people of every generation. In fact, the above-mentioned scholars of Islam wrote books on the subject of Islamic spirituality and made it open to everyone. In Islam, there is no room for esotericism. However, the decline in the institution of Islamic spirituality does not invalidate this science. We can still benefit from the books written by our great scholars (ulama salaf). These people were in reality the Islamic psychologists who excelled in the science of Islamic Spirituality and Islamic Psychology. We should remember the famous advice of Sheikh Junaid Baghdadi (who is considered to be one of the greatest experts of the science of Tazkiyyah) when he said:

"If a person appears to be a great saint of Allah and he is walking on water and saying prayers on a 'sajjadah'

in the air but if he is performing a single act against the 'Sunnah' (method) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) then:

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِوَلِيِّ إِنْهُ شَيْطَانٌ

which means "this person is not a saint of Allah; rather he is a devil."

Chapter 6

Spiritual Diseases of the Hearts and Their Cures

“Verily Allah does not look to your faces and your wealth but He looks to your heart and to your deeds.”

(Narrated by Abu Huraira in *Sahih Muslim*)¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

WE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR ACTIONS on the Day of Judgment. We have to protect our body from sins. Satan (Shaitaan; devil) does not have access to the thoughts, which come in our heart. However, he has the ability to whisper into our hearts. "(Satan) who whispers in the breasts of mankind." (Surah An-Nas: 5) If the heart is spiritually very healthy, the whisper of Satan is weak. On the other hand, if the heart is spiritually weak, the whisper of Satan is very strong and effective. One of the interesting things about Satan is that he lacks originality. He keeps on using the old tricks on humans, possibly because he knows that his tricks work on humans. Satan uses and abuses the weaknesses of human beings to cause disease in their hearts. As Maryam Jameelah said about the human nature:

"Man's disposition, his biological and psychological needs, his physical and mental capacities, the temptations which make him succumb to evil and his eternal quest for the moral and spiritual values that give human life its meaning and purpose and distinguishes him from the lower animals, have not changed at all since the emergence of *homo sapiens*!"¹⁰²

Because of the lack of originality on the part of Satan in manipulating the human nature to cause diseases of the heart, it becomes somewhat easy to understand the ways Satan deceives humans to fall into his trap. In this section, some of the major spiritual ailments of the heart will be discussed and some suggestions about their cures will be presented. It should be pointed out here that owing to the vastness of the subject of purification of the heart, justice couldn't be done to this subject in the present book. In other words, what is presented in this book about the purification of the heart can be considered just the tip of the iceberg. In the words of a Punjabi spiritual poet, Sultan Mohammad Bahoo:

"Hearts are deeper than rivers and oceans,
Who knows all the secrets of the hearts."

¹⁰² Jameelah, Maryam (1981). The Generation Gap: Its Causes & Consequences. Lahore, Mohammad Yusuf Khan & Sons.

(Kalaam Sultaan Bahoo)

Imam Ghazzali in his book 'Ihya Uloom ud Din' (Revival of the Sciences) says that every organ of our body has a function. When that organ fails to perform its function properly, it means it is not well. The function of the heart is to know its Creator and to seek the pleasure of Allah. If the heart fails in this function, then that means that the heart is sick and diseased.¹⁰³

According to Allama Ibn Al-Qayyim, the diseases of the hearts can be reduced to two major categories:

1. Disease of "*Shubuhaat*" (doubts)
2. Disease of "*Shahawaat*" (desires)

Qur'an has prescribed general prescription of those two categories in Surah Al-Asr. For the diseases of doubts, the treatment is mentioned as follows:

"And (the believers) recommend one another to the truth" (Surah Al-Asr: ayah 3)

Similarly, for the diseases of desires, the treatment prescribed by the Qur'an is:

"And (the believers) recommend one another to patience" (Surah Al-Asr: ayah 3)

Hence, the spiritual diseases of "*shubuhaat*" (doubts) can be healed by believing in the truth. On the other hand, the spiritual diseases of "*shahwaat*" (desires) can be cured by having patience and controlling our desires. The ailments of the heart are in certain respects much more dangerous, devastating and hideous than the ailments of the body. The reason is that the ailments of the heart affect a person's religion, and, consequently, they destroy that person's life in the Hereafter, which is the life of eternity. Conversely, physical diseases of the body only harm a person's body. In fact, sometimes the physical diseases could be beneficial for

¹⁰³ Ghazaali, Imam Abu Hamid (n.d.). *Ihya Uloom ud Din*. Karachi, Darul Isha'at.

a person's life in the Heareafter because Allah promised great rewards for the hardships a person encounters in this world. In addition, sometimes the physical diseases can make a person humble and remember Allah more than while he was in perfect health. In addition, the diseases of the heart are not only destructive but also they cannot be easily perceived by the senses as they are hidden and hard to recognize and study. Therefore, most of the people pay little attention to diagnose them and cure them. Following are some of the spiritual diseases of the hearts and their cures:

Love of this world and Dislike of death (*wahn*)

Just as many Muslim individuals suffer from certain spiritual diseases of the heart, the Muslim *ummah* (nation) is also suffering from a disease of love of the world and dislike of death. If we look at the root cause of 'Love of this World', it is greed. Similarly, the source of 'Dislike of Death' is fear. When we look at priorities in the lives of many present day Muslims (and non-Muslims), the whole thing boils down to the desire to accumulate wealth, something that has been mentioned in the Qur'an in Surah At-Takathur as follows:

"The mutual rivalry for piling up (the good things of this world) diverts you (from the more serious things). Until you come to the graves. Nay! You shall soon know (the reality), Again, you shall soon know. Nay! If you had known with certainty of knowledge, You shall certainly see Hell-Fire! Again, ye shall see it with certainty of sight! Then on that day you shall most certainly be questioned about the pleasure (you indulged in)." (Surah At-Takathur)

The desire to pile up is a fruit of the age of materialism. People have completely forgotten that one day they will visit the graves because the desire to accumulate has diverted them. However, when we die, we will indeed see with the surety of knowledge the end result of piling up. More precisely, the reason Muslims are in such a horrific condition as a nation in the present times and they are humiliated in front of the whole

world is because, in the words of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), their hearts are suffering from the disease of "*wahn*" which means love of this world (materialism) and detesting death. In a tradition narrated on the authority of Thawbaan, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"The People will soon summon one another to attack you as people while eating invite others to share their food." Someone asked, "Will that be because of our small numbers at that time?" He replied, "No, you will be numerous at that time: but you will be froth and scum like that carried down by a torrent (of water), and Allah will take the fear of you from the breasts (hearts) of your enemy and cast *al-wahn* into your hearts." Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah, what is *al-wahn*?" He replied, "Love of the world and dislike of death."

(Sunan Abu Dawud and Ahmad)^{104,105}

Love of this world includes things like extreme desire for money, power, position and fame and they make the heart to be sick. In another tradition, it is reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Two hungry wolves in a herd of sheep are not as destructive and harmful as the love of the money and extravagance are for the religion of a person."

(Al-Tirmidhi)

Today, Muslims may find comfort by blaming non-Muslims for the miserable condition of Muslims but that is only part of the problem. We have to remember that it is Allah Who is controlling the whole world, not someone else. Qur'an clearly gives us the answer to the dilemma faced by Muslims today as: "*Nor would your Lord be the One to destroy communities for a single wrong-doing, if its members were likely to mend.*" (Surah Hood: 117) Similarly, Qur'an tells us: "*So each We punished for his sin and it did not beseem Allah that He should be unjust to them, but they were unjust to their own souls.*" (Surah Al-Ankaboot: 40) Who brought television, cable TV

¹⁰⁴ Abu Dawud, Imam Sulayman bin Ash'as Sajastani (1983). Sunan Abu Dawud. Lahore, Islamic Academy Urdu Bazaar.

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed (1949). al-Musnad. Egypt, Daarul Ma'arif.

channels, satellites dishes, Hollywood & Bollywood movies on videos and DVDs, video games, internet, etc. into the homes of Muslims? Non-Muslims did not force the Muslims to import those weapons of soul-destruction into their homes. This was an option that Muslims had full freedom to accept or reject. But, unfortunately, many Muslims made a conscious choice to bring the satanic devices into their homes. Satan does not force people to disobey Allah. Satan has the ability only to whisper into the heart of a person. But if the heart is not healthy, it will not have the strength to resist the temptation of the whisper. Today, Muslims want to amuse themselves to death even though Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught us that "Be in this world as though you were a stranger or a traveler."¹⁰⁶ The slogan of materialism is the continuous search for the epicurean (pleasure seeking) style of life for our body. There is nothing the materialistic way of life has to offer to nourish and pacify the human soul. If we pick up any products catalogue from any shopping store, we will notice that there are millions of things advertised to give pleasure to our body but we will find not a single item to give pleasure to our soul. That is the sickness of the present age. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, lamenting about the condition of present day Muslims in his book *Agenda to Change Our Condition*, writes:

"Now, both the heartland and the hearts [of Muslims] are under the oppression of the inward and outward enemies of Islam, who, for the first time in the history of humanity, have made a powerful alliance in which the outward technology facilitates the inward corruption of the hearts.

These enemies set up schools to inculcate their ideas and ways into the hearts of the young. They undermined the spiritual authority of the scholars of Islam, making them appear backward and foolish as their religious cosmologies paled before the impressive pillars of modern science and industry.... Slowly, the dress of Muslims changed; the veils fell from the heads of our women and the beards from the faces of our men. Robes and modest dress were

¹⁰⁶ An-Nawawi, Imam (n.d.). Matan al-Arba'in. Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Book Trust.

replaced first by ridiculous brimmed hats, starched suits, and ties and finally by jeans and t-shirts, clothes that reek of infidelity and shamelessness, causing Muslims to appear not as Caliphs of God but as wage-slaves of the Western factories sprouting up all over the world. Sandals, so beloved to the Prophet of God (peace be upon him), were replaced with Nike shoes with a pagan *swoosh* to remind literate people of the idolatrous roots of the culture that could produce such ugly footwear. One need only look at photographs taken by the first Europeans to the lands of Islam one hundred years ago to see the nobility of Muslim dress."¹⁰⁷

Unnecessary Talking

The study of human anatomy will reveal to us that the tongue is the strongest muscle in our body. This should not be surprising because human tongue is something about which Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzali said:

"The tongue is a great endowment from Allah; though small in size, its crime is enormous."¹⁰⁸

The ability of human beings to speak and articulate distinguishes them from all other animals. "*He (Allah) created man. He taught him eloquent speech.*" (Surah Ar-Rehman: Ayah 3 & 4) No other species on this planet has the ability to combine the syllables and articulate speech as human do. Owing to its great potential, human tongue has the ability to make heaven of hell and hell of heaven. Free tongue destroys its owner and causes him/her calamities and evils. There are various destructive qualities of tongue, including backbiting, gossiping, obscene and misleading talk, two-faced and hypocritical talk, showing off, quarrelling, bickering, singing, lying, mockery, derision and falsehood, etc. all of which can affect and ruin a person's heart. The least of these sins is unnecessary talk, which is the root of all of those

¹⁰⁷ Yusuf, Hamza (2001). Agenda to Change Our Condition. Hayward, Zaytuna Institute.

¹⁰⁸ Ghazaali, Imam Abu Hamid (n.d.). Ihya Uloom ud Din. Karachi, Darul Isha'at.

sicknesses mentioned here. It is reported in al-Musnad, on the authority of Anas, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) 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."

(Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal)¹⁰⁹

At-Tirmidhi relates in a hadith on the authority of Ibn Umar:

"Do not talk excessively without remembering Allah, because such excessive talk without the mention of Allah causes the heart to harden, and the person furthest from Allah is a person with a hard heart."

(At-Tirmidhi)¹¹⁰

In another hadith related by Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"What mostly causes people to be sent to the Fire are the two openings: the mouth and the private parts."

(At-Tirmidhi)¹¹¹

Abu Huraira also related that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"The servant speaks words, the consequences of which he does not realize, and for which he is sent down into the depths of the Fire further than the distance between the east and the west."

(Sahih Bukharee)¹¹²

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 Judgment more than what he will feel for his tongue, unless he only used it for saying or enjoining good."

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed (1949). al-Musnad. Egypt, Daarul Ma'arif.

¹¹⁰ Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Esa (1988). At-Tirmidhi. Lahore, Zia ul Ihsan Publishers.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Bukharee, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Ismael (1981). Sahih Bukharee. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan.

The least harmful of a tongue's faults is talking about whatever does not concern it. The following hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) 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."

(At-Tirmidhi)¹¹³

The heart grows weary from participation in unnecessary and foolish talking. Frivolous talk, if not abandoned, eventually leads the person into quarrels, obscenities, lies, backbiting, mockery, etc. In one hadith, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

"When a man gets up in the morning, all the limbs humble themselves before the tongue and say, 'Fear Allah for our sake, for we are dependent on you. If you are straight, we are straight. But if you are crooked, then we are crooked.'" (At-Tirmidhi)

According to the Prophetic wisdom, unnecessary talk results in a diseased heart. In fact, excessive talking is not only harmful for our spiritual health but also for our physical health. James J. Lynch, M.D., a U.S. researcher and scientist, in his book *The Language of the Heart: The Body's Response to Human Dialogue* states that after over 20 years of research, they found that whenever we speak, it affects our whole body especially our cardiovascular system and our blood pressure rises.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, when we listen, our blood pressure lowers. Traditionally, when doctors would take the blood pressure of a patient, it was taken in a state of silence and that silence prevented clinicians from discovering that our blood pressure increases whenever we speak. Dr. Lynch and his colleague researchers performed tests on various kinds of people including hypersensitive and healthy individuals from different age groups. They summed up their research in the following words:

¹¹³ Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Esa (1988). At-Tirmidhi. Lahore, Zia ul Ihsan Publishers.

¹¹⁴ Lynch, James J. (1985). The Language of the Heart: The Body's Response to Human Dialogue. New York, Basic Books, Inc.

"The results were the same. Blood pressure and heart rate rose rapidly whenever people talked. We asked students to read aloud from a bland text. Their blood pressure and heart rate rose rapidly every time.... For people like Ed who were hypertensive, the rise caused by talking was much greater than for healthy people - often well into the danger zone."¹¹⁵

Hence, unnecessary talk is not only spiritually harmful but it also causes hypertension, the major contributing factor towards heart attack.

Backbiting (*gheebah*)

Backbiting is a sinful practice that prevails in many societies of the world. Backbiting is prohibited in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. It means that we talk about someone in his/her absence in a way that would upset him if he would have heard it and whatever is said is a truth. If it does not correspond to the truth, then it is called calumny ("*buhtaan*"), which is even a greater sin because it comprises of both a lie and backbiting. In Qur'an, Allah says:

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ
أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكْرِهُهُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

"And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting). And fear Allah. Verily, Allah is the One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful."

(Surah Hujuraat: 12)

¹¹⁵ Lynch, James J. (Aug/1996). Why Listening is Good for You. *Readers Digest*, 122-124.

In this verse of the Qur'an, Allah has made the analogy of backbiting to eating the flesh of dead brother. Just like the dead person is absent and cannot defend himself, the person against whom backbiting is done is also absent and cannot defend himself. Also, backbiting is in reality a bite into a man's honor and reputation. In a hadith mentioned in Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawood and At-Tirmidhi, when a group of companions asked Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) about backbiting (*ghibah*; gossip), he explained clearly that backbiting (*ghibah*) refers to mentioning something about your Muslim brother that he hates. The Prophet was asked, "What if that thing I mentioned was something truthful about him?" The Prophet said, "If it was in him, then you have committed backbiting (*ghibah*), and if it was not in him, then you have committed *al-buhtan*"--which is a sin more enormous than backbiting.

Many people fall into backbiting as a result of negligence or not having proper control over their tongues or they are getting bored so they kill the time by gossiping about other people. Some examples of gossiping are to say about another Muslim such statements such as: "He is short", "She is rude", "He eats too much.", "Her house is messy", "His parent-in-laws are pain in the neck", "His son is rude", "He is controlled by his wife", "He is too fat", "She does not know how to cook the food", etc.

Passive backbiting is also a sin just like ***active backbiting***. Passive backbiting means people are backbiting somewhere and we are listening to it and we do not stop them from doing so even when we have the authority or we do not leave that place.

Perhaps, it would be appropriate to relate here a short story about backbiting, relevant to the point being discussed. Once upon a time, an Islamic scholar was invited to a dinner. At the dinner table, he heard a couple of people backbiting about someone. The Islamic scholar said to them: "Brothers! It is interesting that most of the people start their dinner with bread but you two have started your dinner with meat. You were eating the flesh of your dead brother before you started your dinner today."

One of the things about which we have to be careful when we want to carryout the duty of "*amr bil Ma'ruf wa nahee anil munkar*" (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil) in order to avoid any kind of backbiting situation is to remember the following hadith:

"A believer is a mirror to his brother. A believer is a brother of a believer: he protects him against any danger and guards him from behind."

(*Al Adab Al Mufrad* and *Sunan Abu Dawud*)¹¹⁶

When a person looks himself in a mirror, the mirror does not hide anything from him but tells him the truth of his personality. The mirror does not engage in flattery of the person and also does not degrade the person who sees himself in it. In addition, the person seeing in the mirror leave the site, the mirror does not keep the image of that person to show it to other people. In other words, the mirror shows the true face directly to the person who is standing in front of it but the mirror does not tell other people about the weaknesses of that person. The best way to avoid backbiting is that if we personally have a complaint against someone, we should go and talk to that person directly instead of talking to other people about it.

Corruption of Heart through Ears

There are many ways in which the heart gets corrupted though the route of hearing. It is true that it is hard to protect our ears, more so even than our eyes. In Qur'an, Allah says:

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٦﴾

"Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allah)."

(Surah Al-Isra': Ayah 36)

¹¹⁶ Bukharee, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Ismael (1983). Al Adab Al Mufrad. Karachi, Nafees Academy.

In the Qur'an, the sense of hearing is mentioned before sight. The importance of the sense of hearing can also be understood by the fact that the sense of hearing has been mentioned along with intellect in the Qur'an as:

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ
السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾

"And they will say: 'Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we would not have been among the dwellers of the Blazing Fire!'" (Surah Al-Mulk: Ayah 10)

Similarly, at another place in the Qur'an, the sense of hearing is associated with understanding:

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا

*"Our Lord! Verily, we have **heard** the call of one (Muhammad peace be upon him) calling to Faith: 'Believe in your Lord', and we have believed."*
(Surah Al-Imran: Ayah 193)

Also, the relationship of the heart and the ears is described in the Qur'an as follows:

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِّمَن كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

*"Verily, Therein is indeed a reminder for him who has a **heart** or gives **ear** while he is heedful."*
(Surah Qaaf: Ayah 37)

If we look at the sense of hearing, it is circular as opposed to sight, which is linear. We can hear from the all directions but we can see only what is in front of us. If there is an act of disobedience to Allah happening in front of us, we can close

to eyes or turn our faces away very easily but to protect our ears, we have to physically leave that place. Mohammad Usman Najati in his book *Qur'an and Ilm un Nafs* mentions that the sense of hearing can work in dark as well as light whereas eyes cannot see in the dark.¹¹⁷ Eyes can only see in the presence of light. Similarly, the sense of hearing stays active even when we are asleep whereas the sense of seeing stops operating when the person goes to sleep.¹¹⁸ A loud sound can awake a sleeping person (For this reason, smoke detectors produce loud sound, not bright light because, in case of a fire even while people are sleeping, they can wake up upon hearing a loud sound). In the Qur'an, in the story of the cave dwellers (*Ashaabul Kahf*), Allah tells us that He covered their sense of hearing so that their sleep would not get disturbed:

﴿فَضَرَبْنَا عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِينَ عَدَدًا﴾

*"Therefore We covered up their (sense of) of **hearing** (causing them, to go in deep sleep) in the Cave for a number of years."* (Surah Al-Kahf: Ayah 11)

Hence, it is harder to protect the ears from sins as compared to the eyes. In the words of Jalaluddin Rumi, animals become fat by eating their fodder through their mouth and the human *nafs* (ego or self) becomes fat through human ears.¹¹⁹ We have to protect our ears from listening to idle talk as well as music. If the ears and eyes are not protected, the harmful effects of sins reach the heart causing sickening of the heart. In the twentieth century, the epidemic of music has reached its zenith because of the invention of electronic musical instrument and their use in almost every form of media. Music has spread to such an extent that it is afflicting every Muslim

¹¹⁷ Najati, Mohammad Usman (1999). Qur'an and Ilm un Nafs. Multan, Tayyib Academy.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Akhtar, Maulana Hakeem Mohammad (n.d.). Sermons on Divine Love (Muwa'iz dard-e-Mohabbat). Karachi, Kutab Khana Mazhari.

in this modern era. Today, music is played in nearly all department stores and super markets. Owners of the markets use the biggest hit musical songs to unconsciously seduce the customers to shop more. Even whilst walking in the streets, we find cars blaring with music. No matter which direction we go, we are blasted with music. Ibn Mas'ood, a companion of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is reported to have said the following, as mentioned by Ibn al-Qayyim in his book *Ighaathatul Lahfaan*:

"Singing fosters hypocrisy in the **heart**, just as water brings forth vegetation. And 'zikr' (remembering Allah) fosters Imaan (true belief) in the **heart**, just as water brings forth vegetation."¹²⁰

In the Qur'an, Allah tells us regarding how Satan exploits the sense of hearing of human beings to misguide them from the path of righteousness:

وَأَسْتَفْزِزُ مَنِ اسْتَفْطَعَتْ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِم بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ
وَشَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعِدَّهُمْ ۖ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا

" 'And excite any of them whom you can with your voice. Assault them with your cavalry and infantry, be a partner with them in their wealth and children, and make them promises.' But Satan promises them nothing except deceit." (Surah al-Israa, ayah 64)

Some of the taabi'een such as ad-Dahhaak and Mujaahid interpreted Satan's exciting mankind with his voice to mean through the use of music, song and amusement. Ad-Dahhaak said it was the sound of wind instruments.¹²¹

Also, Allah says:

¹²⁰ Ibn Al-Qayyim, al-Jawziyyah (1993). *Ighaathatul Lahfan Min Masaa'id ash-Shaitaan*, Dar Al-Bayan.

¹²¹ Mustafa Al-Kanadi, Abu Bilal *The Islamic Ruling on Music and Singing*. Jeddah, Abul-Qasim Bookstore. (online version at: http://members.tripod.com/ooum_abdulaziz/music.html)

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ
 عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٦﴾

"And there are among men those who purchase idle talk in order to mislead others from Allah's Path without knowledge, and who throw ridicule upon it. For such there will be a humiliating punishment."
 (Surah Luqmaan: ayah 6)

Ibn Masood (may Allah be please with him) said about this verse: "I swear by the One other than Whom there is no God that it refers to singing [ghinaa]", and he repeated this three times. Ibn Abbaas (may Allah be please with him), cousin of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), said it referred to 'singing and the like' while Jaabir (may Allah be please with him) is reported to view its meaning to signify singing and listening to songs. Many taabi'oon such as Mujaahid, Ikrimah, Mak'hool and Umar ibn Shu'ayb viewed it as a censure of music and song.¹²²

There is one hadith of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from Sahih Bukhari, the most authentic Book of Hadith, which further confirms unlawfulness of music and singing, which goes as:

*"There will be people of my Ummah who will seek to make lawful; fornication, wine-drinking and the use of ma`aazif (musical instruments)."*¹²³

The Arabic word "*ma`aazif*" refers to musical instruments, the sounds of those musical instruments and singing with the accompaniment of instruments. There is another tradition by our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on this subject:

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Bukharee, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Ismael (1981). Sahih Bukharee. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan.

"A people of my Ummah will drink wine, calling it by other than its real name. Merriment will be made for them through the playing of musical instruments and the singing of female singers. Allah will cleave the earth under them and turn others into apes and swine." (Sunan Ibn Majah)¹²⁴

The great Islamic scholars of our nation understood the importance of protecting the ears. For example, Sheikh Anwar Shah Kaashmiri, the great muhaddith and Hanafi scholar of the twentieth century from India, was gifted with photographic memory from Allah. Whenever he would go to the market, he used to put plugs in his ears so that the vain talk and music in the market would not reach his ears and pollute his heart.

Unrestrained Glances and Seduction by the Media

We are responsible for guarding our eyes. In Qur'an, Allah says:

"Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their modesty and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like the palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way) and to draw their veils all over "Juyubihinnah" (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.)."

(Surah An-Noor: Ayah 30-31)

If a person does not restrain his/her glances, it 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 the pollution in the heart of the person. It has

¹²⁴ Ibn Majah, Imam Abu Abdullah (1990). Sunan Ibn Majah. Lahore, Islamic Academy Urdu Bazaar.

been related in *Musnad Ahmed* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) once said to his companions:

"The glance is a poisoned arrow of Satan. 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."

(Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal)¹²⁵

Satan (shaitaan) enters into the body of a person with the glance. He makes what is seen appear more beautiful than it really is, and transforms it into an idol for the heart to worship. Then, Satan promises it false rewards, lights the fire of desires within it, and fuels it with the coal of forbidden actions, which the person would not have committed if he had not seen that distorted image. In the language of Fine Arts, there is a term called "seduction" which means to entice away from duty, rectitude or chastity. This is precisely what Satan does. With the advent of print media, television, film media and computers, the seducing job of Satan to lead the people astray from rectitude and chastity has become extremely easy. At the same time, restraining the glances in such an environment has become all the more difficult.

Today's media is amazing. It has amazing picturesque views, stereophonic sound system, fast-moving images, all of which encapsulate the human beings who view them. The purpose of media is not to inform people but to influence them through the art of seduction. The cameras of the Hollywood film industry can show an 18-inch King Kong as a big monster climbing the skyscraper buildings or a two-story building in *X-Files* movie to be a 22-story building or generating the water through the computer's special effects during the whole *Titanic* movie through the use of the green screen and, hence, seduce and fool the people who watch them.

In such an age of materialism, *haraam* (prohibited by Islam) images are depicted openly on billboards, movies, advertisements and Internet. It is important to guard our glances against looking at those images; otherwise, the

¹²⁵ Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed (1949). al-Musnad. Egypt, Daarul Ma'arif.

morally lethal effects of those *haraam* images can reach the heart through the eyes and they can sicken the heart. Those images can condition and even manipulate our hearts to conform to their message. Between the eye and the heart there 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 to reside in such a heart. Letting the gaze run loose also makes the heart blind to distinguishing between truth and falsehood; while lowering it for Allah, the Almighty and Exalted, gives it a penetrating, true and distinguishing insight.

Envy (*hasad*)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Abstain from envy (jealousy). Indeed, envy finishes all the good acts and their rewards as the fire does away with the firewood."

(Reported in Sunan Abu Daw'ud)¹²⁶

Envy (*hasad*) is a disease of the heart in which the envier wishes to see the blessings removed from the envied, e.g. hoping that someone loses his job, wealth, social status, etc. Envy is without a doubt one of the most corrosive of all human emotions.

The phenomenology of envy is important because of its pervasiveness in human nature, and societies worldwide. Envy was also the root disease of Satan. The reason Satan refused to obey the command of Allah to bow down to Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was his envy towards Adam. Hence, envy was the first manifestation of wrong in the heavens. Satan's envy for human kind resulted in the eventual expelling of Adam and Eve from the paradise. Similarly, the first murder in the human history occurred because of envy. Cain, son of Prophet Adam (peace be upon

¹²⁶ Abu Dawud, Imam Sulayman bin Ash'as Sajastani (1983). Sunan Abu Dawud. Lahore, Islamic Academy Urdu Bazaar.

him) felt jealous of his brother, Abel's high status with Allah and the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice. As a result of his envy, Cain murdered his brother Abel. Similarly, the stepbrothers of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) felt envious of their father Prophet Yaqoob's (Jacob) love towards Prophet Yusuf. Blinded by their feelings of envy, the stepbrothers of Yusuf conspired a plot, took Yusuf out to jungle (by pretending to their father that they were going for hunting), threw Yusuf into a well and later told their father that a wolf devoured Yusuf while they were busy hunting in the jungle. The destructive nature of envy is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows:

*"Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Day-break.
From the evil of what He has created. And from the
evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its
darkness. And from the evil of the witchcrafts when
they blow in the knots. And from the evil of the envier
when he envies.*

(Surah Al-Falaq: 1-5)

Satan wants us to become ungrateful to Allah. The way Satan accomplishes that is by making our own self (*nafs*) to rebel against us regarding our present condition by looking at the blessings given to other people by Allah. This creates a feeling of envy in a person. The causes of envy or jealousy are many, which include the envious person's sense of supremacy, pride, enmity, fear and love of authority.

Abu Huraira narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَلَا تَنَاجَشُوا وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا وَلَا تَدَابَرُوا وَلَا يَبِعْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَيْعِ بَعْضٍ وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يَخْذُلُهُ وَلَا يَكْذِبُهُ وَلَا يَحْقِرُهُ. التَّقْوَى هَهُنَا، وَيُشِيرُ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ. بِحَسْبِ امْرِئٍ مِنَ الشَّرِّ أَنْ يَحْقِرَ أَخَاهُ الْمُسْلِمَ، كُلُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ حَرَامٌ دَمُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعِرْضُهُ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

"Do not be envious of one another; do not artificially inflate prices against one another; do not hate one another; do not shun one another; and do not undercut one another in business transactions; and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah.

A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. Piety is here - and he pointed to his chest three times. It is evil enough for a Muslim to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property and his honour."

(Sahih Muslim)¹²⁷

Helmut Schoeck, a German sociologist, has written a detailed and comprehensive book on the subject of envy titled *Envy: A Theory of Social Evolution*. Schoeck defines envy as "a drive, which lies at the core of man's life as a social being...[an] urge to compare oneself invidiously with

¹²⁷ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

others."¹²⁸ He maintains that envy as an emotion is inherent in our nature and he cites such evidence as sibling rivalry among small children. Because envy is ever-present, powerful when aroused, and highly destructive, a society's "civilizing power of achievement" depends on how well it controls envy. Unfortunately, several forces in modern life are turning envy loose according to Schoeck as he observes:

"This public self-justification of envy is something entirely new. In this sense it is possible to speak of an age of envy.... We are thus confronted by an antimony, an irreconcilable contradiction: Envy is an extremely anti-social and destructive emotional state, but it is, at the same time, the most completely socially oriented.

Now, the twentieth century has gone further toward the liberation of the envious man, and toward raising envy to an abstract social principle, than any previous society since the primitive level, because it has taken seriously several ideologies of which envy is the source and which it feeds in precisely the degree to which those ideologies raise false hopes of an ultimate envy-free society. And in the twentieth century, too, for the first time, certain societies have grown rich enough to nourish the illusion that they can afford the luxury of buying the good will of the envious at ever steeper prices."¹²⁹

In the present age of materialism, due to the influence of advertisement industry as well as the desire for attaining maximum luxury, people try to compete with each other to get the maximum share of this world. As a consequence, they are jealous of each other. In the business world, there exists cutthroat competition among the capitalists. It is the kind of envious environment in which the bigger fish eats the smaller fish in the pond. Similarly, we notice professional jealousy among people in the same profession, e.g. among medical doctors or among scientists or among people within any

¹²⁸ Schoeck, Helmut (1969). Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour. Indianapolis, Liberty Press.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

academic discipline. It is true that envy is present in human nature but only religion has the solution and ability to control the destructive effects of envy. Islam makes it clear that if we want to compete, we should compete with each other only in pleasing Allah. In one hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"There is no desirable form of jealousy except for two types: a person whom Allah has given the Qur'an and he recites it day and night, so when a person hears him he says, 'If only I were given the likes of what he has been given so that I may act upon it the way this person is.' And a person to whom Allah has bestowed wealth and he spends in the cause of Truth, so a person says, 'If only I were given the likes of what he has been given, so that I may act upon it the way this person is.'"

(Sahih Bukhari)¹³⁰

Arrogance (*kibr*)

Arrogance is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart, known in Arabic as *takabbur*. Arrogance stems from egotism and overestimation of oneself and one's abilities or merits. In English, "to arrogate" means to make an unjust claim to something. An arrogant person makes an unjust claim of his abilities or merits, which in reality have been granted to him by Allah. He also shows his pride by humiliating others. In Islam, arrogance has been condemned very strongly. Allah (S.W.T.) demonstrated to us that arrogance is an exclusive attribute of Himself. In a *Qudsi hadith* reported in Sahih Muslim, Allah says:

"Dignity is my lower garment, and arrogance is my covering. If anyone competes with Me in either of these two, surely I torture him." ¹³¹ (Sahih Muslim)

¹³⁰ Bukharee, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Ismael (1981). Sahih Bukharee. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan.

¹³¹ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

Similarly, Allah (S.W.T.) says in Surah Luqman, (Verse 18), which can be translated as follows:

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾

"And do not turn your face away from men with arrogance, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah does not like each arrogant boaster."

In another authentic *hadith* reported by Imams Muslim and At-Tirmidhi, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"One will not enter Paradise, if one has an atom's weight of arrogance in his/her heart."
(Sahih Muslim and At-Tirmidhi)

Arrogance and envy go together a lot of times. The reason of expulsion of Satan from the Paradise was his arrogance and envy towards Prophet Adam. It is mentioned in Qur'an as:

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ آلَا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَن تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

Allah said (to Satan), "What prevented you from bowing yourself when I commanded you?" Iblis (Satan) said, "I am better than him; You have created me of fire, while You have created him of clay." So Allah said, "Then you get down from this (heavenly station), it is not for you to be arrogant here. Get out! You are among the humiliated ones."
(Surah Al-A'raf: Ayah 12, 13)

The reason Pharaoh did not believe in Allah after he was shown the signs and miracles of Allah by Prophet Musa was

the arrogance of Pharaoh. He said to his followers: "*I am your Most High Lord.*" Therefore, God seized him with punishment." (Surah An-Naaziat: Ayah 24, 25)

Arrogant people are in a state of delusion when they are thinking that they are better than other people. They take it for granted that the qualities (intelligence, power, wealth) they possess will stay with them forever. They do not realize that Allah is the One who granted them this talent or wealth in the first place. Disease of arrogance could infect an individual and it could also be collective. Some Muslims fall into the pitfall of spiritual pride when they think that they are superior to the people of other religions. Such kind of arrogance of some Muslims becomes the biggest obstacle in the path of da'wah (spreading the message of Islam) to non-Muslims because we can not give da'wah to someone we hate and think that we are superior to that person.

Another type of arrogance is called "*Ujb*" which is a state in which a person suffers from self-admiration of his abilities and merits. *Ujb*, in itself, is a destructive vice, which ruins faith and actions and is a product of self-love or "narcissism". However, *Ujb* applies to both good and bad actions. A virtuous person may become conceited about his good deeds. Similarly, a doer of wicked deeds may feel proud of his actions.

The best treatment of the diseases of arrogance and self-admiration is much remembrance of death. U.S. psychologist M. Scott Peck, Ph.D. writes in his book *The Road Less Traveled* about the people who are narcissists (arrogant as well as self-lovers) that when those people suffer small failures in their lives, their pride in themselves is injured which is called "Narcissistic Injury" in the language of psychology and, on any scale, death is the most severe narcissistic injury.¹³² Therefore, much remembrance of death is a severe blow to the feelings of arrogance and self-admiration. We should also cultivate the feelings of modesty in ourselves. We have to remind ourselves always that we are

¹³² Peck, M. Scott (1998). The Road Less Travelled. New York, Simon & Schuster.

the servants and slaves of Allah. We totally depend on Him for our being and existence. At the time of the conquest of Makkah, when Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) entered the city as the head of the army of 10,000 people, he was riding a camel and, out of humility, he had bowed down his head so much that his forehead was touching the hump of the camel. Congregational prayers and pilgrimage are also training programs to make one realize that he or she is nothing but an ordinary servant of Allah like thousands and millions of His other servants who belong to different races and different segments of society.

Sheikh Hasan al-Banna (1906 - 1949 CE), an Islamic scholar and Founder of "*Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimoon*", in his personal diary mentions about one of his teachers, Sheikh Mohammad Abu Shosha, during his student life. Sheikh Abu Shosha used to take his students (including Hasan al-Banna) every week to a graveyard and remind them that one day all of us will have to come back here. Sometimes, he would ask any of his students (including Hasan al-Banna) to lie down inside the grave and imagine that they are dead and people have just buried them in the grave. He would tell his students that this is their destiny and they will be left alone in the darkness of grave. Sheikh Abu Shosha used to cry while admonishing his students, which would move his students also to tears.¹³³ The effects of just reading books or hearing about death are nothing in comparison with the feelings Hasan al-Banna and his classmates experienced in those awesome moments. Hasan al-Banna's teacher knew that much remembrance of death is the cure for many spiritual diseases of the heart. The indelible imprints of such kind of teachers are immense on the personality of students in terms of creating the fear of Allah and humility.

Anger (*ghadhab*)

Anger is a mechanism given to human beings as a means of their self-defense, but if not properly controlled, it becomes a

¹³³ al-Banna, Hasan (n.d.). Diary of Hasan al-Banna. Chanarkot, Manshoorat-e-Islami.

very destructive quality. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in a tradition:

"Anger is from Shaitaan and Shaitaan has been created from fire. Since water extinguishes fire, therefore, when one of you is overtaken by anger let him make Wudhu'

(Sunan Abu Dawood)¹³⁴

If we look at fire, we will notice that it is chaotic by its nature and it can go out of control very easily. Fire is beneficial to us as long as it is under our control. Once fire gets out of our control, it becomes destructive. Another feature of fire is that it rises in the upward direction, which is not like dust which is attracted in the downward direction and hence, the ideal state of human beings is to be humble. Since Satan is created from fire, he is arrogant. It is for this reason that when a person gets angry, a lot of times Satan fuels the anger of the person by igniting that person's ego and arrogance. It was also reported in another prophetic tradition: "The best of you are those who are slow to anger and swift to cool down...Beware of anger, for it is a live coal on the heart of the descendants of Adam." (At-Tirmidhi)¹³⁵

Scientific research at the HeartMath Institute has also shown that when negative emotions such as anger, hate and envy are aroused in the people, that causes an increase in the production of cortisol in our body, resulting in stress and increase in blood pressure which is detrimental to our health.¹³⁶ In one study, the participating HeartMath Institute scientists Glen Rein, PhD and his colleagues studied the impact of anger on our immune (body-defense) system. In this study, they measured the impact of one five-minute episode of recalled anger on the defense system antibody Salivary-

¹³⁴ Abu Dawud, Imam Sulayman bin Ash'as Sajastani (1983). Sunan Abu Dawud. Lahore, Islamic Academy Urdu Bazaar.

¹³⁵ Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Esa (1988). At-Tirmidhi. Lahore, Zia ul Ihsan Publishers.

¹³⁶ Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). The HeartMath Solution. New York, HarperSanFrancisco.

IgA, heart rate and mood of the thirty participants in the study over a six-hour period before and after experiencing the emotional state. The research demonstrated very clearly that one-five minute experience of recalled anger can impair the effectiveness of our immune system for over six hours. Clearly, it takes a long time for our body to come back into balance once anger kicks in. If simply remembering an angry feeling can have such an enormous impact on our body's defense mechanisms, we can imagine the impact when we have a real-time anger outburst!¹³⁷ In fact, feelings of anger do much damage to our body, ultimately resulting in different diseases in our bodies. Anger is unhealthy for the individual who is angry and it is unhealthy for the society as well.

Anas bin Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) was the personal servant of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for the last ten years of Prophet's life. Anas bin Malik said that during ten years of serving, the Prophet scolded him not a single time. If Anas would make a mistake, the way he would find about it would be the presence of a smile on the Prophet's face. Qur'an has described this magnificent quality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the following words:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ

"It was by the mercy of Allah that you were lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if you had been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have dispersed from round about you. So pardon them and ask (Allah's) forgiveness for them"

(Surah Ale-Imran: 159)

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be please with him) reported that a man came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said to him:

¹³⁷ Rein, Glen, PhD, Atkinson, Mike and McCraty, Rollin, MA (Summer 1995). "The Physiological and Psychological Effects of Compassion and Anger" Journal of Advancement in Medicine. Vol 8, No 2.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَجُلًا قَالَ لِلنَّبِيِّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْصِنِي، قَالَ: لَا تَغْضَبْ. فَرَدَّدَ
مِرَارًا؛ قَالَ: لَا تَغْضَبْ - رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ.

"Advise me! "The Prophet said, "Do not become angry and furious." The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet said in each case, "Do not become angry and furious."
(Sahih Bukhari)¹³⁸

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised us that when we get angry, we should change your environment (e.g. move to other room), change our position (if we are standing, we should sit), and drink some water. We should try to remember the wise saying of someone that goes as follows:
"A moment of patience at the time of anger saves one from years of regret and sorrow".

Stinginess (*bukha*)

Stinginess is another spiritual disease of the heart. Our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us to seek Allah's refuge from stinginess. Stinginess originates from selfishness. It means lack of care and consideration for others. Prophet (peace be upon him) said in a tradition:

"Be aware of stinginess. It destroyed many nations before you. It made them to shed the blood of each other and misappropriate what was sacrosanct."
(Sahih Muslim)¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Bukharee, Imam Abu Abdullah Mohammad bin Ismael (1981). Sahih Bukharee. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan.

¹³⁹ Muslim, Imam Abul Hussain Qasheeri (1981). Sahih Muslim. Lahore, Khalid Ihsan Publishers.

Stinginess is such a horrible disease that even stingy people do not like a stingy person. The best cure to the disease of stinginess is spending in the path of Allah. In fact, spending in the path of Allah is a short-cut cure to many diseases of the heart. Further details on this subject will be given in the section on general cures for the diseases of the hearts.

Ostentation (*riyaa*)

Ostentation is regarded as “hidden idolatry” (al-shirk al-khafiyy) in the Islamic teachings. It refers to a desire to show off and seek praises from others. It takes away sincerity and seriousness from the act of virtue a person is performing. If a person gets too much into showing off behavior, his actions become superficial. Many times ostentation leads a person into hypocrisy. Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri narrates that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in a tradition:

"Shall I not tell you what I fear for you more than Al-Maseeh Ad-Dajjal?" They replied: "Yes." He said: "It is hidden Shirk (*riyaa*) such as when a person stands in prayer and he improves his prayer when he knows that others are watching."

(Musnad Ahmed bin Hanbal)¹⁴⁰

Rasool Allah said these words about *riyaa* because whereas the danger of dajjal is confined to a specific time, the danger of *riyaa* is present at all the times and places and also because a lot of times it is hidden. It is a common human weakness to enjoy being praised. When we look at human psychology, children like to show off and they like to be praised. It is hard for many people to grow out of it when they become adults.

The scholars and righteous people in Islamic history were always conscious of this disease of the heart, always trying to flee away from fame among the people. They disliked their name to be mentioned much. Below are a few quotes from our

¹⁴⁰ Ibn Hanbal, Ahmed (1949). al-Musnad. Egypt, Daarul Ma'arif.

righteous scholars regarding ostentation and the fear of fame¹⁴¹:

Prophetic companion **Abdullah ibn Mas'ood** said:“(O people!) *Be the springs of knowledge and the lamps of guidance! Stick to your homes and be like a light in the night, revivers of hearts, wearing worn-out clothes, you will then be known by the people of the heavens and be hidden among the people of the earth.*”

Ibrahim ibn Adham: *‘A slave who loves fame has not been truthful to Allah.’*

Dawud al-Ta’i used to say: *‘Flee from people just like you would flee from a lion.’*

Imam Ahmad: *‘Glad tidings be to the one whose mention has been hidden by Allah!’* And he would say, *‘I wish for something that will never be... I wish to be in a place devoid of other people.’*

Dhul-Nun: *‘Being pleased with being around people is from the signs of bankruptcy’*

Fudhayl ibn ‘Iyyadh: *‘If you can get by without being known, then do so. What does it bother you that people will not praise you, and what does it bother you that you may be blameworthy in the sight of people if in the Sight of Allah you are praiseworthy?’*

Muhammad ibn al-‘Alaa ibn Musayyib from Basra wrote to Muhammad Yusuf al-Asbahani saying, *‘O my brother, whoever loves Allah loves that he remain unknown (to the people).’*

Bishr ibn al-Harith: *‘I do not know a single man who loves fame except that he loses his religion and becomes disgraced.’*

141 Quoted from: [fajr.wordpress.com/2008/10/27/the-fear-of-fame-a-lost-characteristic -](http://fajr.wordpress.com/2008/10/27/the-fear-of-fame-a-lost-characteristic/)
Quotes taken from the book: *Ta’ir al-Anfas min Hadith al-Ikhlās* by Dr. Sayyid al-‘Affani
(original sources include Tahdhib al-Hilyah, Siyar A’lam al-Nubalaa, Tanbih al-Mughtarin and Sifat al-Safwah to name but a few)

No-one who has fear of Allah, loves to be known amongst the people.'

He (rahimahullah) also said: *'A man who loves that everyone should know him, will never find the sweetness of the Hereafter.'*

'Abdullah ibn Abbas: *'Indeed Allah has slaves who have been silenced by the fear of Allah although they are eloquent in speech.'*

Sufyan al-Thawri: *'If you can become a scholar without being known, then do so. For indeed the people, if they knew what was in you, they would eat your flesh.'*

Rumi said that animals gain weight by eating fodder whereas human *nafs* (ego) becomes fat through the ears.¹⁴² What he meant was that human ego becomes fat by listening to its praise. The best cure for the disease of *riyaa* is to check the "intention" (*niyyah*) before performing any action. As a believer, our goal should be only to please Allah because *"To our Lord (Allah) is the End"* (Surah An-Najm: 42).

General Cures for Diseases of the Hearts

We as human beings are prone to making mistakes. In fact, according to some Islamic scholars, the word *"Insaan"* (Arabic word for human being) came from the Arabic word *"nasa yansee"* which means, "to forget". In one hadith, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "All children of Adam make mistakes and the best among you are the ones who repent (to Allah for their mistakes)."¹⁴³ It is never too late to mend and rectify. The heart which turns in repentance to Allah is beloved to Allah: *"Who feared the Most Beneficent (Allah) regarding the Unseen, and brought a heart turned in repentance (to Him), 'Enter you therein in peace and security (into the paradise); this is a Day of Eternal Life!'"* (Surah

¹⁴² Akhtar, Maulana Hakeem Mohammad (n.d.). Sermons on Divine Love (Muwa'iz dard-e-Mohabbat). Karachi, Kutab Khana Mazhari.

¹⁴³ Tirmidhi, Imam Abu Esa (1988). At-Tirmidhi. Lahore, Zia ul Ihsan Publishers.

Qaaf: 33, 34) An old English saying goes: "The only difference between the saint and the sinner is that the saint has a past and the sinner has a future." The door of repentance is not closed until the death of the person, i.e. until the time when the person sees the Angel of Death. We should never procrastinate when it comes to the purification of our hearts. Who has the guarantee to live forever? We should arise now to do our '*tazkiyyah*' or there will be no tomorrow.

When we do our rectification, we have to remember also that human brain has tremendous capability of rationalizing. Human mind quickly tries to justify a matter that appears appealing to desires of the self (*nafs*), a phenomenon that can deceive the heart. In other words, the veils of conditioned thought could obscure the mirror of the heart. As Scott Peck, Ph.D. writes, when Cain (son of Prophet Adam) murdered his brother Abel and he was questioned about his act, he replied: "I am not the keeper of my brother!" Hence, he was using his brain's capability to rationalize his evil act.¹⁴⁴ It is easy to confuse the ego's emotions with the feelings of the heart. Certainly, Satan uses the rationalizing capability of the human brain to silence the truth-seeking voice of the heart. Allama Iqbal must be referring to this tremendous capability of the human brain to rationalize when he said in one of his poetic verse:

"Angel Gabriel (Jibreel) told me at the dawn of Life,
Do not accept the heart that is slave of the brain.
Falsehood likes dual nature (hypocrisy) whereas truth is one,
Do not accept the compromise of truth and falsehood."
(Kulliyat Iqbal)

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi once told his disciples that Satan has three good qualities (three A's) but he lacks the fourth one, resulting in his expulsion from the paradise. Satan is a great 'Aabid' (one who prayed a lot), a great 'Aalim' (scholar of the teachings of all prophets of Allah) and a great 'Aarif' (one who knows the attributes of Allah). However, Satan is not a good 'Aashiq' (lover of Allah). If Satan were a

¹⁴⁴ Peck, M. Scott (1998). The Road Less Travelled. New York, Simon & Schuster.

true lover of Allah, he would have definitely obeyed the command of Allah to bow down to Adam without using any reasoning.¹⁴⁵

Here I would like to quote from my book *Growing a Beard: In Light of Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science* the following statement that is pertinent to this subject:

"In addition to growing our beards, we should also engage in the purification of our inward self, i.e. purification of our hearts. We need to have intellectual as well as spiritual attachment to Islam. One of the major reasons that we see beardless faces amongst the Muslims today is because of the lack of spiritual aspect of Islam.... We cannot have a pure heart which contains two contradictory things at the same time, i.e. love of Allah and disobedience of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)." ¹⁴⁶

In order to keep our hearts pure, we must avoid indulging in anything the permissibility of which is not clear in the Islamic injunctions. We should try to avoid the doubtful things just for the sake of keeping our hearts healthy. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in his famous tradition:

"Truly, what is lawful is evident, and what is unlawful is evident, and in between the two are matters which are doubtful which many people do not know. He who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless, and he who indulges in doubtful things indulges in fact in unlawful things, just as a shepherd who pastures his flock round a preserve will soon pasture them in it. Beware, every king has a preserve, and the things Allah has declared unlawful are His preserves. Beware! In the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt, and behold, it is the heart." (Sahih Bukhari & Muslim)

¹⁴⁵ Akhtar, Maulana Hakeem Mohammad (n.d.). Virtues of Repentance (Tawbah). Karachi, Kutab Khana Mazhari.

¹⁴⁶ Mushtaq, Gohar, Ph.D. (2003). Growing a Beard: In Light of the Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science. London, T-Ha Publishers Ltd.

While the death of the body cuts the person off from this world, the death of the heart results in the punishment in the Life Hereafter. A righteous man once said, "How odd is it that some people mourn for the one whose body has died, but never mourn for the one whose heart has died-and yet the death of the heart is far more serious!"

Thus acts of obedience are necessary for the well being of the heart. The acts of obedience include compulsory (*fard*) and supererogatory (*nawafil*) prayers, seeking Islamic knowledge, fasting, among the many other acts of virtue. As a general cure to the diseases of our hearts, Islam has prescribed the following:

1. Compulsory prayers – To cure the disease of heedlessness ('ghaflaa')
2. Spending in the path of Allah – To cure the disease of love of this world
3. Fasting – To cure the disease of worldly desires and lusts (*shahawaat*)
4. Pilgrimage to the House of Allah (*Hajj*) – A general cure of all the above-mentioned diseases¹⁴⁷

Compulsory prayers (*salaat*) five times a day makes the person God-conscious. It also involves remembrance (*zikr*) of Allah and according to the Qur'an:

﴿ ٢٨ ﴾ لَا يَذْكُرِ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!”
(Ar-Rad: 28)

One of the best ways to purify our hearts and to cure the spiritual diseases of our hearts is to spend wealth in the path

¹⁴⁷ Islaahi, Amin Ahsan (2002). Tazkiyyah Nafs. Faisalabad, Malik Sons Publishers.

of Allah. The greatest benefit of spending in the path of Allah is that it connects the person's heart with Allah. It is human nature that wherever a person stores his wealth, his heart is always inclined to that place. If a person has deposited a big sum of money in the bank, his heart will be attracted towards the bank. If a person spends his money in the path of Allah, his heart will be inclined towards Allah because that is where his money is. Our heart stays wherever your wealth stays.

Just like prayers (*salaat*) represent our relationship to Allah, in the same way spending in the path of Allah represents our relationship to His creatures. That is why, *salaat* and *zakat* appear together in the Qur'an. *Salaat* is an indication of our love for Allah and *zakat* is an indication of our love for His people. Moreover, in the Qur'an, the word "*taqwa*" (God-consciousness) has almost always appeared along with "*Infaaq fi sabeel illah*" (spending for the sake of Allah). This means that purification of the heart cannot be achieved without spending for the sake of Allah. When our hearts become pure of the diseases of love of wealth and miserliness, then it becomes easier for us to perform acts of virtue. In Qur'an, Allah says:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ ۖ وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ۖ
وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ ۖ وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ
لِلْعُسْرَىٰ ۖ

"So he who gives (in charity) and fears (Allah), And (in all sincerity) testifies to the best, We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Bliss. But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, And rejects the best, We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Misery." (Surah Al-Lail: 5-10)

In Qur'an, we will also notice that whenever the subject of spending in the path of Allah (*Infaaq*) is mentioned, it opposite, i.e. either subject of interest (*Ribaa*; usury) or miserliness (*bukhal*) is mentioned along with it. By contrasting it with its opposites, the concept of *infaaq* is made

even clearer. In Arabic there is a saying that translates as follows:

تُعَرَفُ الْأَشْيَاءُ بِأَضْدَادِهَا

“Things are recognized by their opposites.”

Another benefit of spending in the path of Allah is that Allah grants wisdom to those who spend in His path as mentioned in the Qur'an:

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ
وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾ يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَن يُؤْتَ
الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾

“Shaitaan (Satan) threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit Fahshâ (evil deeds, lewdness, etc.); whereas Allah promises you Forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower. He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and he, to whom wisdom is granted, is indeed granted abundant good....”

(Surah Al-Baqarah: 268-269)

This spending in the path of Allah is much more than "zakat" which is the obligatory charity (2.5% of the wealth on capable Muslims at the end of the year). Unfortunately, when most of the Muslims are asked to spend in the path of Allah, they happily and complacently reply: "O Yes! We pay zakat at the end of the year!" Actually, paying *zakat* is a must on every financially capable Muslim. In order to purify our hearts, we must have to sacrifice more than the minimum amount set forth by Islamic law. This is also one of the reasons why Muslims are in this humiliating condition today. We may even encounter Muslims who say that they could not find any poor Muslim to pay 'zakat'. Those Muslims must be sleep

walking because majority of the world refugee population (about 80%) are Muslims. Examples of spending for the sake of Allah include feeding the poor people (there are Muslim countries where children die due to hunger), financial help of our poor relatives as well as other less fortunate people, to support the building of mosques, hospitals and Islamic educational institutions. In the present age, many Muslims spend their savings to decorate their houses and to raise their level of living to compete with the richer people of the society and when they are asked to spend for the sake of Allah, they give the excuse: "I am sorry brother, I do not have so much savings left to spend in the path of Allah." It is strange that when they are spending their money to fill their homes with all the luxuries and electronics available in the market, they do not stop for a single moment and think that the only thing we will take along with us after our death will be our good deeds (*baaqiat us saalihaat*). We will all leave this world with empty hands just like all the kings of this world did at their deathbeds. The only thing we take with us will be "*al-baqiatus Salihaat*" – the righteous deeds.

The great Islamic scholars and Imams were well aware of the importance of spending in the path of Allah. Here only one glittering example from Islamic history will be given to elucidate the point. This example is about *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah (661 – 728 AH) who is one of the greatest scholars in Islamic history. In the cause of Islam, he suffered severe opposition and his quote about the heart is very famous: "What can my enemies possibly do to me? My paradise is in my heart; wherever I go it goes with me, inseparable from me. For me, prison is a place of (religious) retreat; execution is my opportunity for martyrdom; and exile from my town is but a chance to travel." Once, Sahykh Ibn Taymiyyah issued a legal verdict (*fatwā*) regarding three pronouncements of divorce in one sitting being equivalent to only one divorce, in opposition to the opinion the scholars of the four schools of *Fiqh*. As consequence, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah was thrown into prison, and in '*al-Fatwā*', he made beautiful comments regarding his experience in prison:

"I would provide for some families before I was put in prison, and when I was imprisoned, this aide was cut off to these poor families. So, I was extremely

pained at this, and the news would come to me from these families while I was in prison: “You still come to us in the same physical form, and you pay us the same amount that you used to give us.” So, our brothers from the *jinn* are stepping up to take over from what we used to do. If the Earth is empty of anyone to do good, the world of the believing *jinn* and Angels are with the believer.”

(*Majmoo al-Fatawa* by Imam Ibn Taymiyyah)

Chapter 7

Concluding Remarks

HUMAN BEINGS ARE COMPRISED OF body and soul. The body represents the terrestrial aspect of humans whereas soul is the celestial aspect. Human heart is the meeting place between the two. In other words, the heart acts as a window between the terrestrial and celestial. It is clear from the statements of the Islamic scholars of the past that they regarded the heart as the locus of human self. In order to achieve salvation in the Life Hereafter, human heart must be purified from spiritual blemishes. According to the Islamic scholars, the 'self' comprises the soul (nafs), intellect (aql), heart (qalb) and spirit (rooh). The self constitutes a psycho-spiritual entity. This is different from the modern psychology's view of the self as merely a psychological entity in which all the actions of human beings are reduced to biological and chemical processes using the reductionist approach.

The concept of human body as a biological machine devoid of any spiritual value was based on the Newtonian worldview of the universe operating on mechanical laws. Islam does not negate the biological and chemical aspects of our self but, instead, it adds another dimension (spiritual dimension) of

'rooh' to it from which the modern science is very much scared. The reasons of modern science's allergy to spirituality is that at the very foundation of all the social sciences lies the Darwinian thought which considers everyone as merely animals. The materialistic philosophy of Karl Marx and Adam Smith and the atheistic philosophy of Sigmund Freud provide further intellectual nurturing to the modern social sciences. We should remember that some of the great Western thinkers and philosophers became insane during the last parts of their lives because they were relying too much on their brains and ignoring their hearts. Their dead hearts finally resulted in their insane brains. For example, August Comte (1798-1857 C.E.), French philosopher who is considered to be the father of modern sociology, became insane during the last years of his life. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860 C.E.) was partially insane at various periods through out his life. Friederich Nietzsche (1844-1900 C.E.), the German philosopher who declared, "God is Dead", became permanently insane for the last ten years of his life. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939 C.E.) made most of his scientific discoveries while he was on cocaine as the British researcher E. M. Thornton later showed it in her well-documented and groundbreaking book *The Freudian Fallacy: Freud and Cocaine*.¹⁴⁸ Freud was so much disappointed at his deathbed that he finally committed suicide by telling his doctors to end his life by injecting him with high doses of morphine. Those brilliant brains forgot their Creator and, as a consequence, they were made to forget themselves. In the words of Qur'an:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ

هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

“And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own souls! Such are the transgressors.” (Al-Hashr: Ayah 19)

¹⁴⁸ Thornton, E. M. (1986). The Freudian Fallacy: Freud and Cocaine. London, Paladin Grafton Books.

The idea that we can think with our hearts is no longer just a metaphor, but it is a true phenomenon. We now know this because the combined research of different scientific fields is proving that the heart is the major center of intelligence in human beings, as shown in this book. There is quite literally "a little brain" inside the heart because of the fact that more than sixty percent of the cells in the heart are made up of exactly the same material as the brain cells (those are neural cells, not the muscle cells as it was believed earlier). The heart profoundly and continually influences the brain through various routes as shown in the previous chapters of this book. There is a twenty-four-hours-a-day dialogue or two-way communication going on between our hearts and brains that we are not even aware of. Furthermore, the heart can be regarded as an organ both of conscience and consciousness. On the other hand, brain is an organ of consciousness alone. In the spiritual spheres, the roles played by the heart and the brain become much more vivid. The heart has more important role to play than the brain in the spiritual realm because of the heart's importance in creating a value system based on justice and fair play, which is what makes a man and a nation worthy of its name.

It must be noted here that Qur'an does not deny the existence and importance of the human brain. The brain is in fact the biggest data storage system in our body. All the materialistic scientific progress that we are seeing today is due to the miraculous powers of brain. But since that progress is made with the denial of the intellect of heart, hence, it is devoid of any spiritual or ethical values. Today, the separation of heart and brain is in reality the consequence of the separation of religious and secular matters in the Western educational system and society. Carl Jung, famous psychologist, once said:

"Science can denature plutonium but it can not denature evil in the heart of man."

To denature evil in the heart of man can only and successfully be done by religion. As Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, in his poetry master-piece, *Bal-I-Jibril*, says:

"The sovereignty of machines is a death to the *hearts*,

Feelings of compassion and love are crushed by the engines."

Christian Barnard, M.D., the U.S. surgeon who pioneered in heart transplant surgery, had rightfully said: "We must give up the idea of an artificial heart, since we have found the organ to be far more than just a pumping station." An artificial heart could be perfectly capable of pumping blood but it will not be able to engage in a two-way communication with the brain and it will not be able to influence every single organ of our body by its continuous rhythm. An artificial heart will never feel sad or happy – the two beautiful feelings that human beings have been given. An artificial heart can never be thankful to the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth.

The purpose of the research in this book is to emphasize the importance of the purification of heart by describing some of the scientific miracles of the heart. Importance and purification of the heart is a much forgotten aspect of Islamic teachings in the present age. The reason for neglecting the science of 'Tazkiyyah' and 'Ihsan' among the Muslims is due to too much emphasis on the brain and very little emphasis on the heart. In order to feel complete, we must recognize and accept the importance of heart's wisdom along with brain's intellect. Without consciousness of our heart's intelligence, we have but a limited view of the world. When our heart and brain waves act in synchrony, our thoughts become more focused and rational. We need to have our hearts and brains in order because that is the balance of *baatin* (inward) and *zaahir* (outward), something so much lacking in an age to Dajjal (anti-Christ) who is said to have one-eye according to a Prophetic tradition. We need to always remember what Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said in the tradition:

"Indeed there is in the body a piece of flesh which if it is sound then the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt then the whole body is corrupt. Indeed it is the heart."

(Reported by al-Bukhari & Muslim)