

Chapter 7: Prospering The Ruined Heart

From this phrase, Imam Sajjad starts his requests from Allah. Imam starts with requesting help for prospering his heart by obeying God. Renovation of anything causes prosperity and makes it flourish. For example when a market is prosperous, it means that it has many beneficial deals. A mosque will prosper when many people come for prayer and its neighbors have an active presence in the programs. Flourished garden is a garden with many vivacious trees and the garden has many fruits.

The prosperity of a heart is through obeying God and the heart will flourish when we submit to Allah. Quran tell us that for solace of our heart we must direct ourselves to remembrance of Allah. “The ones who believe and whose hearts feel tranquil through remembering God, Surely hearts feel tranquil whenever God is mentioned!”¹. On the other side, a heart when it is inclined to strong will, will gain and will have a strong motive; but if it is not moving towards Allah’s will, it is ruined. Commander of Faithfull, Ali Ibn Abu Talib says,

بالطاعة يكون الفوز

“Salvation is in obedience of Allah”. He also said,

طاعة الله مفتاح كل سداد وصلاح كل فساد

“Obeying God is the key to all the good and the way to correct all the depraved” and advised us,

اكرم نفسك ما اعانتك على طاعة الله

“Appreciate yourself by obeying God, as much as you can” and informed us that,

اجدر الناس برحمة الله اقومهم بالطاعة

“Those who obeyed God the most, deserve most of God’s mercy”²

The Corruptions Of Heart

Heart in the Islamic thought has a great position. According to some Ahadith of the Prophet, it is the place in which God has inspired the understanding of good and evil. If we only wish to gather the Hadith about prospering and corruption of heart in a book, it would require several volumes. However, if we cannot catch all the good we must not live without its benefits. We will have a quick look on some of the corruptions of the heart.

Sealed Heart

Quran sometime mentions of a heart being sealed because of which it cannot accept the truth anymore.

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ كَبْرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ 62

“Those who argue about God's signs without any authority to do so having been brought them, incur the greatest disgust so far as God is concerned and so far as those who believe are concerned. Thus, God seals off every overbearing oppressor's heart.”

Or sometimes like in the Surah of Al-Hajj, Quran identifies a group of people to have a blinded heart:

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونُ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ 63

“Have they not travelled around the Earth so they may acquire hearts to reason with or ears to listen with? It is not their eyesight which is blind, but their hearts in their breasts which are blind.”

Thereby they become worse than beasts

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ 64

“We have bred many spirits and humans for Hell: they have hearts they do not understand with, and eyes they do not see with, and ears they do not hear with. Those persons are like livestock; in fact, they are even further off the track, they are so heedless!”

Relentless Heart

Another kind of corruption of heart is being stringent. A heart that does not admit to any positive events and signs will not benefit from God's signs.

فَلَوْ لَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ 65

“Why then did they not act submissive when Our violence came to them, but instead their hearts were hardened and Satan made whatever they were doing seem attractive to them”

Obsessive Doubt

Doubt is a disease of the heart. The inactive heart cannot make a decision in the sensitive, profound and history making moment. We can find many people who because of this infection changed the destiny of a nation.

In the war of Tabook some Muslims did assist in the battlefield. Unfortunately, the rest of the forces were in doubt. They came to Prophet and asked for permission to go back to Medina. Quran describes them as:

لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ (44) إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ
الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ (45) 66

“Those who believe in God and the Last Day do not ask you to excuse them from striving with their property and persons. God is Aware as to who are heedful. (44)Only those who do not believe in God and the Last Day ask you to excuse them. Their hearts are in such doubt that they even waver in their doubt!45”

In another scene of history, Abu Musa Ashary was the governor of Basreh in the time of Ali Ibn Abu Talib. When the war of Seffein occurred, instead of encouraging people to come and help the rightful Caliph, he was in doubt and did not assist in the war. His excuse was that he did not know if they could fight against the Muslims? Or in the same event, Rebie Ibn Kheitham tells Imam Ali, “I have doubt about fighting with Muslims so send me to the border where I can fight against the pagans”

Playful Heart

Another corruption of the heart is the disease of playfulness. This kind of person takes everything as a joke and cannot distinguish vital moments for acting seriously. The only different between them and kids is their age. They only think about the momentary enjoyments. Their picture is in the Surah of Anbiya as,

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

(اقترب للناس حسابهم و هم في غفلة معرضون 1)

ما يأتيهم من ذكر من ربهم محدث إلا استمعوه و هم يلعبون 2 لاهية قلوبهم و أسروا النجوى الذين ظلموا هل هذا إلا
(بشر مثلكم أ فتاتون السحر و أنتم تبصرون 3) انبيا 3406

“In the name of God, the Mercy-giving, the Merciful! (1)Men turn aside through indifference even though their reckoning approaches. (1)No fresh reminder ever comes to them from their Lord except they listen to it as they play away, (2)their hearts distracted. Those who do wrong consult together privately; "Isn't not this [man] just a human being like yourselves? Will you succumb to magic while you can see it happening?”

Honor And Dishonor

Everyone looks for honor in their life and avoids dishonor, but they all look for it in different things. Some may look for honor in the wealth and some think that they can find it in political power. Nevertheless, Quran denies all of them and threatens those who ask honor from such approaches in Surah of Humazah.3

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

(وَيَلِّ لِكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ (1) الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَ عَدَدَهُ (2) يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ (3) كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ (4)

وَ مَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ (5) نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ (6) الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْأَفْئِدَةِ (7) إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَصَّدَةٌ (8) فِي عَمَدٍ مُمَدَّدَةٍ (9))

“In the name of God, the Mercy-giving, the Merciful! How awful [will it be] for every backbiting slanderer (1) Who hoards wealth and keeps on adding to it! (2) He reckons that his money will make him immortal. (3) Nevertheless he will be flung into the Bonecrusher! (4)What will make you realize what the Bonecrusher is? (5)[It is] God's kindled fire which leaps up (6) To clutch at one's vitals. (7) It will be vaulted over them (8) In outstretched columns. (9)”

Likewise, as an example Quran introduces us to Qaroon and expresses his story in the Surah of Qassas (stories):

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ (79) وَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيُكْمُ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً وَ لَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ (80) فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَ بَدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَ مَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنتَصِرِينَ (81) وَ أَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيُكَانُّ اللَّهُ بِنِسْطِ الرَّزْقِ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَ يَقْدِرُ لَوْ لَا أَنْ مَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا وَيُكَانَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ (82)

“He went forth to his folk [dressed] in his finery. Those who wanted worldly life said: “If we only had the same as Qarun has been given! He has been extremely lucky!” (79) However those who had been given knowledge said: “It will be too bad for you! God’s recompense is better for anyone who believes and acts honorably. Yet only the patient will encounter it.” (80) Then We let the Earth swallow up him and his home. He did not have any party to support him against God; he was not supported. (81) Those who longed to be in his place the day before, said the next morning: “Since it is God Who extends sustenance to anyone He wishes from among His servants and measures it out, it would have swallowed us up too if God had not cared for us. It seems that disbelievers do not prosper. (82)”.⁴

In these phrases of Dua with the intention that the honor is in the obedience of Allah, we request Allah to not dishonor us with the disobedience. Imam Ali also said,

كل عز لا يويده الدين مذه

ميزان الحكمة ج 3 ص 443

“Any honor that the religion does not approve of is a dishonor”⁵ or in another valuable Hadith it is said,

من اعتر بغير الله اهلكه العزة 70

“Whoever asks honor with something besides Allah, that honor will perish him”⁶.

In these phrases our beloved Imam says, “May Allah send your peace and passage to Muhammad and his household and prosper my heart by your obedience and do not humiliate me by disobedience”

1. (الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ تَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ (28)، الرعد)

2. ميزان الحكمة ج 5 ص 565

3. سورة همزة 1-9

4. سورة قصص 79-82

5. ميزان الحكمة ج 3 ص 443

6. ميزان الحكمة ج 3 ص 443

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