

That He may make what is thrown in by Satan a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and whose hearts are hardened.

[*Sūrah al-Hajj* (22) : 53]

لَئِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ  
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ  
بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٥٣﴾

If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who spread false news among the people of Madīnah cease not, We shall certainly let you overpower them, then they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbours but for a little while.

[*Sūrah al-Ahzāb* (33) : 60]

وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ  
وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا

...and that no doubts may be left for the People of the Book and the believers, and that those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers may say, 'What does Allāh intend by this parable?'

[*Sūrah al-Muddaththir* (74) : 31]

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ فَدَجَاءَ تَكُم مَوْعِظَةٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

...There has come to you good advice from your Lord, and a healing for that which is in the hearts, a guidance and a mercy for the believers.

[*Sūrah Yūnus* (10) : 57]

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ  
 وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾

And We send down from the Qur'ān that which is a healing and mercy to those who believe, and it increases the wrong-doers in nothing but loss.

[*Sūrah al-Isrā'* (17) : 82]

وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَيُذْهِبُ  
 غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

...and heal the breast of a believing people and removes the anger of their hearts...

[*Sūrah Tawbah* (9) : 14-15]

The disease of the body is the opposite of its being sound and in good health, it is a degeneration that occurs in it causing a failure of the natural senses of perception and movement. So with respect to its perception either it goes completely such as blindness or deafness, or it perceives objects incorrectly - such as its perceiving something sweet to be bitter or its hallucinating things that have no reality in the real world. With respect to the failure of its movements then examples of this would be the inability to digest food, or the body's aversion to nourishment that it is need of, or its desire of things that would weaken it, leading to illnesses as a result of these but not leading to death or physical ruin.

Instead these failures would lead to suffering of the actual body either as a result of consuming a wrong quantity of some-

thing or applying something to the body in the wrong way. As for the first, then it could be consuming too little a quantity of nourishment and therefore the body would require more, or it could be by consuming too much and therefore the body would require it to be removed. As for the second, then it could be like extremely high or low temperatures due to incorrect usage of medicine.

The same is true for the disease of the heart for it is a type of degeneration that occurs in it, causing failure in its perception and desires. So with respect to its perception then this is degenerated by its being presented with doubts upon doubts until it cannot see the truth or it perceives the truth incorrectly. Its desires are degenerated by its hating the truth which would be of benefit to it, and loving the falsehood that would cause it harm. So this is why 'diseases' has sometimes been explained to be doubt and suspicion, as was explained by Mujāhid and Qatādah in their commentaries to the verse,

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا

**In their hearts is a disease and Allāh has increased their disease.**

[*Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) : 10]

and at other times to be the desire to commit fornication as in the case of the verse,

فَيَطْمَعُ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٣﴾

**...Lest he in whose heart is a disease be moved with desire.**

[*Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* (33) : 32]

This is why al-Kharā'itī authored a book called, '*The book of the Weakness of the Hearts Meaning their Diseases,*' meaning by 'diseases' here - the diseases of desire.

The sick person is harmed by things that the healthy person is not, so slight heat, cold, exertion or other such things will harm him due to his inability to endure them in his weakened state. Sickness, in general, weakens the one afflicted by making his endurance weak and unable to sustain what he would have been able to sustain in a strong state. So a healthy state is preserved by remaining healthy and is removed by the opposite, and the sickness is made more severe by the presence of conditions similar to those that led to the sickness in the first place and removed by the opposite. Therefore, if a sick person is afflicted by something similar to that which led him to being sick in the first place, then he increases in illness and his endurance becomes weaker, until maybe he dies. But if he is affected by something that will increase his strength and weaken the illness then the opposite will occur.

The disease of the heart is a pain that occurs in the heart such as the anger felt towards an opponent who overcomes you, for this hurts the heart.

Allāh, the Exalted said,

وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَيُذْهِبِ  
غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

...and heal the breast of a believing people and  
removes the anger of their hearts...

[*Sūrah Tawbah* (9) : 14-15]

So the healing for them was by removing the suffering that had occurred in their hearts, and it is said: 'So and so has healed his anger.' In the case of retaliation it is said: 'The close relatives of the killed sought healing,' meaning healing of their grief, anger and sorrow - all of these being sufferings that occur in oneself. Likewise doubt and ignorance cause pain to the heart. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

Could they not have asked if they did not know?  
Indeed the cure for ignorance is to ask. <sup>1</sup>

And the one who has doubt in something he has taken on board, causes harm to his heart until he attains knowledge and certainty. Hence it is said to a scholar when he answers in a way that clarifies the truth: 'you have healed me with the answer.'

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<sup>1</sup>The full text of the *ḥadīth* is narrated by Jābir bin 'Abdullāh that he said, "We went on a journey and a man from amongst us was injured in the head by a stone. After this he had a wet dream. He asked his Companions, 'Do you find that I have a concession for performing *tayammum*?' They said, 'We do not find any concession, for you are capable of employing water (for purification).' So he bathed and as a result died. When we returned to the Prophet (ﷺ) he was informed of this upon which he said, 'They have killed him, may Allāh kill them! Could they not have asked if they did not know? Indeed the cure of ignorance is to ask! It was sufficient for him to perform *tayammum*, sprinkle some water on the wound or put a bandage on his wound and then wipe over it, and wash the remainder of his body.'"

Reported in Sunan Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans 1/89 no. 336] and ad-Dāruqutnī. The *ḥadīth* has a ḍa'if sanad but it has a support from the *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās reported *Sunan Ibn Mājah* [no.572] which raises the *ḥadīth* to the level of ḥasan, but the last part of the *ḥadīth* starting with 'sprinkle some water on the wound' remains ḍa'if. Refer to *Tamām al-Minnab* [pg. 131], *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd* [no. 364], *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Mājah* [no. 126], *Talkhīṣ al-Ḥabir* of Ibn Ḥajr [1/260 no. 201], and *'Aḥm al-Ma'būd* of al-Aḍḥimabādī (1/534+ along with the notes of Ibn al-Qayyim in the margin). [Translator's Note]

## [1.1 Between Sickness and Death]

Sickness is of a lesser level than death, so the heart dies due to total ignorance but becomes ill due to having fragments of ignorance, and in this case there can be either death, sickness or healing for the heart. Its life, death, sickness and the cure is greater and more vital than the life, death, sickness and cure of the body. This is why the heart becomes sick when presented with doubts and desires, or the sickness becomes more acute. If wisdom and goodly exhortation occur then these are routes to its correction and cure.

Allāh, the Most High, says,

لِيَجْعَلَ  
مَا يُلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَالْقَاسِيَةِ  
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾

**That He may make what is thrown in by Satan a trial for those hearts is a disease and whose hearts are hardened.**

[*Sūrah al-Hajj* (22) : 53]

Because this breeds doubts in them and their hearts harden due to their dryness, and are weakened by doubt and become distant from faith and therefore what is thrown in by Satan becomes a trial for them.

Allāh, the Most High, said,

لَئِن لَّرَبِّنَا لَمُنْفِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ  
 فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ  
 بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٠﴾

If the hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who spread false news among the people of Madinah cease not, We shall certainly let you overpower them, then they will not be able to stay in it as your neighbours but for a little while.

[Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33) : 60]

وَلَا يَرْتَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَلَيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ  
 وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا

...and that no doubts may be left for the People of the Book and the believers, and that those in whose hearts is a disease and the disbelievers may say, 'What does Allāh intend by this parable?'

[Sūrah al-Muddaththir (74) : 31]

These people's heart (which have hardened) have not died as in the case of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and neither are their hearts correct and pure like the pure hearts of the believers, rather they contains the sickness of doubt and desire. The same applies to (the ones referred to in) His saying:

فَيَطْمَعُ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَّرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾

...Lest he in whose heart is a disease be moved with desire...

[Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33) : 32]

Referring to the sickness of desire, for indeed if the correct heart is tempted by a woman it will not incline towards her, contrary to the heart diseased with desire, for it, due to its weakness, will incline towards what it is tempted with in accordance to the strength or the weakness of the sickness, and when it submits to the temptation, the sickness in the heart is satiated.

## [1.2 The Qur'ān is a cure for the hearts]

The Qur'ān is a cure for that which is within the heart, and for the one who has the sickness of doubt and desire in his heart, for it contains clear proofs that distinguish the truth from falsehood, and remove the sickness of false doubts to leave certain knowledge, correct perception and understanding such that the heart sees things in accordance to their reality. It contains wisdom, goodly exhortations both encouraging good and deterring from evil, and stories which contain lessons that necessarily lead to the correction of the heart by making the heart desire what is good for it and detest what is harmful to it. Hence the heart is left desiring that which will guide it, hating that which will deviate it after it used to desire that which would deviate it and hate that which would guide it.

The Qur'ān removes all the sicknesses that invoke false desires until the heart becomes pure and therefore its desires become pure and it returns to the natural state (*fiṭrah*) that it was created in, just as the body returns to the natural state upon being treated. The heart will be nurtured with faith and the Qur'ān such that it will become strong - for indeed the purification of the heart is like the growing of the body.



### [1.3 Righteous Actions are a Cure for the Heart]

*Zakāh* (purification) in the language means: growth and increase in correction, it is said, 'something has *zakāh*', when it has grown in correction. The heart is in need of being nurtured so that it may mature and increase until it becomes complete and correct just as the body is in need of nourishment that is good for it, but along with this there is a need to prevent anything from harming it. So the body will not grow until it gains that which will benefit it and is prevented from that which will harm it, likewise the heart will not become pure such that it may grow and become complete with respect to its correction, until it attains that which benefits it and represses that which harms it - just as the flower will not grow without these two factors.

*Sadaqah* (charity), due to its extinguishing the sins as water extinguishes fire, causes the heart to be purified. Its *zakāh* means something additional to it being merely free of sins.

Allāh the Exalted said,

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ

Take *tadaqah* from them in order to purify them and sanctify them with it.

[*Sūrah Taubah* (9) : 103]

## [1.4 Leaving Indecent Actions are a Cure for the Heart]

Similarly abstaining from indecent actions and sins leads to purification of the heart, for these are of the same level as leprosy of the body or thorns on a flower. So when the body is freed of this leprosy by releasing the additional blood for example, the natural strength of the body emerges and it can find relief and thereby grow. Likewise when one seeks repentance from sin, the heart is released from contamination - whereby it mixed the righteous actions with evils actions, so when one repents from sins the strength of the heart emerges as does its desire to perform righteous actions and it finds relief from these false and corrupt matters that it was submerged in.

So the *zakāh* of the heart means its growing and becoming complete. Allāh the Exalted said,

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ  
اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي

And had it not been for the Grace of Allāh and His Mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins...

[*Sūrah an-Nūr* (24) : 21]

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يَبُذَرَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ  
قِيلَ لَكُمْ آجِعُوا فَأَجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
عَلِيمٌ

...And if you are asked to go back, then go back, for it is purer for you...

[*Sūrah an-Nūr* (24) : 28]