

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



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The Heart

Vices of the Heart

- There are many blameworthy qualities of the heart and the path to purifying them are equally lengthy.
- Imam Al-Ghazali explained further detail in his works, 'Revival of the Religious Sciences' (Ihya Ulum Ad-Din), 'The Ways to Perdition' (Rub' al-Muhlikat) and 'The Ways to Salvation' (Rub' al-Munjiyat).
- He identifies the three primary destructive vices of the heart that cause the most significant spiritual corruption today.
- These vices act as the "mothers" of all spiritual diseases, which corrupt the self and lead to the ruin of the soul.
- Our hearts should be protected from three major things:
 - 1. Hasad: Envy/Jealousy
 - 2. Riya': Ostentation/Showing off
 - 3. Ujub: Arrogance/Pride/Self-Admiration

1. Hasad

- According to many scholars, the first sin committed in the heavens and on Earth was envy/jealousy, while others hold the opinion that it was arrogance.
 - Heavens: Iblis (Satan) envying Adam (AS)

- Before his fall, Iblis was a devoted worshipper of Allah who lived among the angels, despite being a jinn. When ordered to show respect to the newly created Adam (AS) through prostration, he refused, fueled by envy of the honor bestowed upon Adam (AS).
 - Earth: Qabil (Cain) envying Habil (Abel)
 - Qabil and Habil were sons of Adam (AS). Qabil killed his brother Habil, marking the first murder on Earth, out of jealousy over the woman Habil was to marry.
- Imam Al-Ghazali states that envy is a greater form of miserliness/stinginess. He clarifies the difference between a stingy and envious person:
 - A stingy person simply withholds their own possessions from others.
 - An envious person behaves as if they are stingy with Allah's own grace, resenting His favors upon His other servants.
- Definition of Envy:
 - It is defined as displeasure over the blessings Allah has given to someone else and a desire for that blessing to be removed from them.
 - It is essentially wrongly claiming ownership over Allah's blessings, resentfully acting as if He should not have favored someone else.
 - Hasad comes (ح-س-د), same root as hasdal, which means a tick or a flea. Just as a person compulsively scratches a tick bite, envy induces a harmful itch, causing us to destroy our own hearts.
- Envy is self-destructive — it brings no reward, only pain and spiritual ruin:
 - An envious person will suffer from the punishment of Allah and attains no mercy from Him.
 - Narrated Abu Hurairah: The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْحَسَدَ فَإِنَّ الْحَسَدَ يَأْكُلُ الْحَسَنَاتِ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ الْحَطَبَ أَوْ قَالَ الْعُشْبَ
"Beware of envy, for it devours good deeds just as fire devours wood or grass."
 (Sunan Abi Dawud)

- An envious person experiences pain when Allah grants His favors to others. Even though they did not create or own the blessing, they act with unjust entitlement, wishing to take it away.
- Instead of wishing others' blessings for ourselves and having it removed from them, we are encouraged to love for others whatever goodness we desire for ourselves.

- Anas ibn Malik reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ أَوْ قَالَ لِجَارِهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

"None of you will have faith until he loves for his brother or his neighbor what he loves for himself." (Sahih Muslim)

- Not all forms of envy are blameworthy, it is allowed in two specific circumstances:
 - Being Envious of A Person Given Wealth and Generosity:
 - A person whom Allah has given wealth and empowered to spend it rightfully and generously in the cause of truth, charity, and good deeds throughout the night and day.
 - Being Envious of A Person Given Knowledge and Wisdom:
 - A person whom Allah has blessed with deep connection with the Qur'an (or religious knowledge/wisdom) and who acts upon it, judges by it, and teaches it to others.
 - Ibn Mas'ud reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

لا حسد إلا في اثنتين: رجل آتاه الله مالاً، فسلطه على هلكته في الحق، ورجل آتاه الله حكمة، فهو يقضي بها ويعلمها"

"Envy is permitted only in two cases: A man whom Allah gives wealth, and he disposes of it rightfully, and a man to whom Allah gives knowledge which he applies and teaches it." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

- This teaches us that aspiring to attain the same level of iman and righteousness of others is permissible, but wishing for their deprivation of those blessings or to lose their abilities, is blameworthy envy.

- Purifying Oneself From Envy:
 - If you feel envy, take these two active steps to purify your heart:
 - Pray for them:
 - Extensively make du'a for the person you envy, asking Allah to bless them further.
 - Do this not just once, but consistently until the ill feeling vanishes.
 - Give them a gift:
 - Act against your jealousy by giving a gift to the person. This act of kindness breaks down barriers and fosters love.
 - Abu Hurairah reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

تَهَادُوا تَحَابُّوا

"Give each other gifts and you will love each other." Al-Adab al-Mufrad

- Reminders:
 - Stop measuring our worth by someone else's gain. There is no gain in envying others. What Allah has destined for them in this dunya, does not take away from what He has written for us.
 - Stop envying others, especially fellow Muslims. Wishing for the removal of a blessing Allah has bestowed upon another part of the Ummah only weakens us as a whole. Remember, we are like a single body.
 - Narrated An-Nu`man bin Bashir: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said,

" تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَوَادِّهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى عُضْوًا تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ جَسَدِهِ بِالسَّهْرِ وَالْحُمَّى . "

"You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it."(Sahih al-Bukhari)

2. Riya'

- Imam Al-Ghazali classified riya' as a form of shirk. It is defined as seeking a position in the hearts of others to attain fame and veneration, a disease that destroys a person through their own inclinations.
- Example of Riya': Showing Off Friendships
 - Flaunting friendships, publicly showcasing tight-knit groups, creating exclusive circles that make others feel isolated and undervalued, is riya'.
 - In social settings, it is crucial to be cognizant of our surroundings, ensuring everyone feels welcomed and included. For instance, speaking in a language that leaves others out of the conversation goes against the etiquettes of a gathering.
 - We ought to build positive environments, find supportive circles and treat everyone with kindness. Consider how Allah instructed Musa (AS) and Harun (AS) to speak gently to Firawn — the ultimate tyrant — showing that even with enemies, gentle speech is preferred.

- He said:

"فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ"

Speak to him gently, so perhaps he may be mindful 'of Me' or fearful 'of My punishment'." (20:44)

- The Prophet (ﷺ) demonstrated profound empathy towards others. He was always aware of the feelings of others and acted with caution to avoid causing unnecessary heartache.
 - Once, when the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting in the Masjid with his companions, a man entered looking for his missing son. He was told his son was playing nearby. Before the man took his son, the Prophet (ﷺ) advised him to call his son by name rather than "my son" and avoid showing excessive affection, by hugging him in front of the other children — who were orphans. He intended to prevent the orphans present from feeling sadness or pain over the loss of their own fathers.

- Purifying Oneself From Riya':
 - Consciously shift from seeking human admiration to seeking only the pleasure of Allah.
 - We cannot please everyone, so we should stop exhausting ourselves. Instead, prioritize seeking Allah's pleasure over human approval; it is far more rewarding.
 - It is better to have Allah's pleasure and the world's disapproval than the other way around.