

TAKABBUR

a tarnishing ailment

In a beautiful Hadith , Nabi ﷺ has said :

أَلَا وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ. أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ

“Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart.”

As human beings, there are many sicknesses, afflictions and many negative things that people go through in terms of health matters.

When our body is inflicted with a physical sickness, we can no longer function as we normally would and a person’s routine would completely be haywire.

Each part of our body plays an important role in our existence as human beings. When contemplating which bodily organ is the most important, many of us would state it to be the heart because it is the most vital; as the death of the heart automatically leads to the death of the body. Not only can the heart be affected physically, but also spiritually.

Imam Ghazali RAH in his book Ihyaa says that every organ of our body has a function; when it fails to do its function, it means it is not well. The function of the soul or the spiritual heart is to know its Creator, to love Him, and to seek closeness to Him. If the heart fails in this function, then we must know that it is sick.

SO, WHAT ARE SPIRITUAL DISEASES?

Spiritual diseases can be defined as those sins which are committed by the heart but cannot be seen. They have an impact on our outer actions because they are often the cause of other sins. Many diseases can potentially afflict the heart in spiritual terms. However, among them are a few which we ought to be wary of due to the damage they do to the heart. One of these diseases is Takabbur.

Takabbur is derived from the root word of Kabeer which signifies growth or grandeur. The person who shows takkabur thinks that he/she is greater than they really are. In the English language, this is usually termed as arrogance. Arrogant people imagine that every trait they possess stems from themselves and as a result of overestimating this trait, they look down and belittle those around them.

Takkabur is one of the worst heart diseases because not only does it lead to many other diseases, but it also causes a person to transgress the limits of Allah ﷻ. Ulama explain that there are different degrees and types of takabbur and that many diseases are actually offshoots or close relatives of takabbur such as conceit and jealousy.

Arrogance could be against Allah SWT or against Nabi ﷺ and Ulama or against people. A person may believe himself to be better than others because of a Ni'mah that Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon him. This Ni'mah could be in terms of knowledge, wealth, beauty, goodness, physical power or nobility.

Arrogant people live in a constant state of discomfort as a result of which they never find peace in life. When pride finds its way into the hearts of Muslims, it quickly affects the way one talks, acts and treats others.

The best example that can be given is that of Iblees, where Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ
أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.

When Allah ﷻ created Adam AS and gave to command to the Malaaikeh and Jinns to prostrate before him, Iblees refused. What was his reason? He refused simply because he deemed himself to be greater than Adam AS, stating that he was created from fire whilst Adam AS was created from clay. Iblees was the first person to show arrogance and as a result of which, he was exiled and will be punished severely in the hereafter.

Nabi ﷺ has warned us against arrogance saying

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ

“A person who has an atom’s weight of arrogance in his heart will not enter Jannah.”

HOW CAN WE CURE TAKABBUR?

The practical remedy for the ailment of Takabbur is that man should contemplate upon his original creation. He should instead adopt humility. Humility is a condition of the mind wherein one fully realises one's own insignificance and the fact that one is utterly lowly and worthless.

In the sight of Allah ﷻ, we are all faqir. We are born into this world without clothes and without the ability to feed ourselves, i.e. completely helpless and without any control over any aspect of our own being and existence. It is our parents who nurture us and show us love and attention, and that too ONLY by the Mercy of Allah ﷻ. As we grow, it is Allah ﷻ who provides us with the faculties such as sight, hearing, and the ability to understand concepts for us to learn and be productive when we reach maturity. Why? So that we can be thankful to Allah ﷻ; so that we can understand that without His Mercy, we would have and be absolutely nothing.

Likewise, we should understand that Rizq is from Allah ﷻ and if one has been blessed with a certain Ni'mah, then he should utilise it in the correct way such that it will serve as a benefit to him both in this world and in the Hereafter. This Ni'mah should serve as a medium for being grateful to Allah ﷻ.

Moreover, one should engage in Dhikr as dhikr is the cure for the rust of our hearts. It is something that gives life to the soul. Dhikr allows one to gain the proximity of Allah ﷻ and by being consistent in it, one is able to be mindful of Allah ﷻ thereby finding more importance in the Hereafter and truly reflecting that his abode in this Dunya is temporary.

May Allah ﷻ protect us all from the disease of Takabbur and all other spiritual diseases of the heart.

Aameen.

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