

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Tafseer Surah Al-Imraan (verses 29-31)

قال الله تعالى: {قُلْ إِنْ تُخْفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ}

Say (Oh Muhammad): "Whether you hide what is in your breasts or reveal it, Allah knows it, and He knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. And Allah is Able to do all things. (Verse 29)

- (إِنْ تُخْفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ)

Whether you hide what is in your breasts or reveal it, Allah knows it

Allah knows the feelings, emotions and intentions of our hearts. Why is the heart mentioned in this verse and not the brain? The heart is the place of iman (faith) and the part of our body that makes the decisions (such as whether to believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey, etc.). The brain hears the commands of Allah, witnesses His signs, receives and gathers information and transmits them to the heart. The heart then understands and comprehends the information and orders the brain, which in turn instructs the limbs.

So who is the king of the body, the decision-maker? It is the heart. That is why Allah directed our attention towards His Knowledge of what is in our hearts. We must constantly monitor our intentions, faith and feelings towards others. We must ask ourselves questions such as: Am I sincere to Allah? Do I love Allah? Who am I relying upon? Do I intend evil for others? Do I consider myself superior? Do I feel envious of others? Am I selfish? All of this is in our hearts and none knows our true intentions and feelings except Allah alone.

So the most important thing to take care of, to nurture and purify is our heart and without this, we will never be able to get close to Allah. If there is even an ounce of wickedness and evil in a person's heart it will become a barrier between him and Allah. That is why a person must not just prostrate, give zakah, and memorise the Quran while leaving his heart evil and sick. No!

Rather, we need to realise that Allah will look at our hearts and not our appearances.

How can we know what Allah would be pleased with to see in our hearts? No doubt, through the Quran and Sunnah. We must learn about what pleases Allah and then put it into practice. For example, Allah would be pleased to see our hearts loving and glorifying Him and His commands, loving and respecting His Prophet, peace be upon him, and the Companions, desiring good for our fellow Muslims, and having humility, etc.

We all regularly face subtle situations that show us the reality of our hearts. For example, a young woman who eagerly desires marriage, hears that her friend is getting married. Now, in this situation, she must pay attention to her heart. Is she envious of her friend, or is she genuinely happy for her while asking Allah for the same? There is a great difference between both!

Similarly, when we encounter a hardship or calamity, we must be vigilant regarding how we react. Do we say "All praise is due to Allah Alone (alhamdu lillah), to Allah we belong, and to Him we return", or do we say; "What did I do to deserve this, Allah?!" Are we patient and content with the Decree of Allah? Thus, due to what Allah sees in us, He will either love us or hate us, and we ask Allah to enable us to purify our hearts for Him, and only for Him, ameen.

The Scholars say:

"Dealing with your heart by rectifying it and nurturing it upon good is something very special because there is no fear of showing off and seeking praise from the people (riyaa) in it. No one knows what is going on in your heart, and your struggle to get rid of envy, hatred or arrogance. This is a very discrete battle that exists only between you and Allah. As for outward actions, such as praying or teaching, you might question your sincerity, and in addition to this, the Shaytan may throw in doubts about your sincerity. However, when you are dealing with correcting your heart, there is no scope for insincerity because no one can see this except Allah!"

- (وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ)

He knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth.

Allah's knowledge, hearing, and sight encompasses everything. There is nothing in the universe except that Allah is knowledgeable about it. Each grain of sand, each leaf that falls from a tree, each feather of a bird, Allah knows about it, Glorified and Exalted is Allah! Even if you tried to gather every piece of knowledge about one, single creature, you would not be able to do so, but Allah is the Creator and The All-Knower of everything.

When you say that Allah is The All-Knower, then this statement must have an effect on you. You must fear Allah wherever you are and in whatever you do. You do not whisper or conceive an evil thought, but Allah knows it. Never try to hide from Allah because there is no place to hide from Him.

- **And Allah is Able to do all things. (وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)**

Sheikh ibn Al-Uthaymin said, “If you supplicate to Allah knowing this and having firm faith in it, it will make a difference. Many times, we ask Allah for what seems almost impossible to us, but we must know and truly believe in our hearts that Allah can do whatever He wants. Take, for example, a man about whom the doctor has guaranteed death due to complete organ failure. We could wonder how Allah would cure him when the doctor has given his word? In truth, though, Allah has power over all things. The One Who created Him from nothing, can make him breathe, walk and talk again, in an instant!

Since there is nothing that is difficult for Allah, The Mighty and Majestic, we must make dua and seek cure whilst having firm certainty in His might, power and capability, even if we were asking for something that seems impossible to our limited imagination. The doctor is only a created being whose ability and reasoning are restricted and deficient like him whilst Allah is able to do anything and everything. This is the creed and belief we need to establish in our hearts.

So, Allah knows what occurs in our hearts. He knows our intentions and thoughts and He sees our behaviour and actions. His Sight and Knowledge grasps everything on the earth and in the heavens. And on the Resurrection Day, each one of us will be confronted with all the good that we have done, and all the evil that we have done.

قال الله تعالى: {يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحَضَّرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا} وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ {

On the Day when every person will be confronted with all the good he has done, and all the evil he has done, he will wish that there were a great distance between him and his evil. And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment) and Allah is full of kindness to (His) slaves. (Verse 30)

On the Day of Resurrection, we will find our deeds before us. In what form will these deeds be? They may be in the form of something specific, like what has been narrated about the good deeds presenting themselves to the doer in the grave in the form of a beautiful, good man whose face is bright and the evil deeds in the form of an ugly man, or in another form. Allah knows best.

Everything we do in this world will surely be brought forth on the Day of Resurrection. No matter how we live our lives or what we do, at the end of this path is Allah Who will hold us all to account for every single thing that we have done.

Let us hold ourselves to account before we are held to account. When situations arise and we have to make choices, we must choose the one that we will be happy to see with us on the Day of Resurrection, the one for which we can say, “All praise is due to Allah Alone (alhamdu lillah), I did this.”

The true believers, on the Day of Accountability, will be sheltered and screened by Allah, The Mighty and Majestic.

Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reported:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah, may Allah exalt his mention, saying: 'Allah, The Almighty will bring a believer close to him on the Day of Resurrection, enveloping him in His Mercy and shielding him from the people. Allah will make him confess his sins by saying: `Do you remember (doing) this sin and this sin on such and such a day?' He will reply: `My Lord, I remember.` The slave will think that he is destroyed, but then Allah will say: `I covered it up for you in the worldly life, and I forgive it for you today.` Then the record of his good deeds will be handed to him.” (1)

Regardless of whether Allah saves us by His Mercy and Forgiveness, from the consequences of our sins on that Day, we will still be questioned, and so must prepare for it. Therefore, if you do not fear Allah in your choices, and do not give priority to follow what pleases Allah but to the pleasures of the people, you will be drowned in deep feelings of regret, humiliation and shamefulness on the Day whereupon there will be no compensation.

What are we going to take with us from the worldly life (Dunya)? We will leave our jobs, our degrees, our families and children behind for a dark, lonely hole, with nothing but our deeds, speech, actions, and thoughts to accompany us. Ask yourself if you would like this action of yours to accompany you to the point of no return. Do we want light there and a door opened to Paradise, or constriction, darkness, and a door opened to the fire of Hell?

Remember - this is not a fairy tale. The Promise of Allah will undoubtedly come. So when we read the Quran and come across the verses where Allah talks about the Paradise, Hellfire, trials of the grave and Day of Resurrection, then we must truly believe in them with our hearts. Until we do establish firm belief in them, our purpose and perspective in life will be clouded.

- (وَيَحْذَرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ)

And Allah warns you against Himself (His punishment)

Allah warns us and informs us concerning Himself i.e. His Punishment and Anger upon those who disobey Him.

¹ [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

- **And Allah is full of kindness to (His) slaves. (وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ)**

Ar-ra'fa is a high degree of mercy, kindness, compassion, and tenderness. So why does Allah follow His threat of being severe in punishment with the mention of His abundant kindness? This, in itself, is a manifestation of Allah's mercy, compassion and love, that He clearly warns us against that which will be a cause of punishment for us.

An example of this can be derived from our own lives. If we have a young child who keeps inserting his finger into the electricity socket, we will be firm with him, scold him and warn him of its harm. We might even take his favorite toys away from him so as to deter him. So why do we treat him in this way? Indeed, it is the result of our strong love, mercy and concern for him. We want to protect him from harm. Likewise, Allah's warnings and punishments are a result of His mercy, love and care for us, by which He rectifies us and sets us aright.

Allah, The Most High, also punishes because He hates sins and disobedience. When some of the companions, such as Kaab bin Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him), stayed behind in the battle of Tabuk without an excuse, the Prophet, peace be upon him, was commanded by Allah to punish them by refraining from talking to them and commanding the people to not speak to them until Allah gave His judgement concerning them. This punishment and the subsequent joy of his repentance being accepted, caused Kaab ibn Maalik to swear that he would never lie as long as he lives. Therefore, Allah will sometimes punish us to rectify us. Each and every one of us now has the opportunity to repent for the past and return to the love and mercy of Allah.

Allah did not enforce upon us commands that we cannot carry out, nor is there anything that we cannot do with the help of Allah. Therefore, when we seek Allah's forgiveness, we need to be sincere. Regret is not to say, "I ask Your forgiveness but I am not sure if I can stop committing such and such sin or not," rather, it is to make the firm resolve: "I will do my best to never fall into this sin again. Forgive me O Allah for what happened in the past and aid me in obeying You."

قال الله تعالى: {إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ}

Say (O Muhammad, peace be upon him, to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah, then follow me (i.e. accept Islâmic Monotheism, follow the Quran and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins.

And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Verse 31)

This tremendous verse is known amongst the Scholars as the verse of the test. Al-Hasan Al-Basri and several Scholars among the Salaf said, "Some people claimed that they love Allah. So Allah tested them with this verse." Many are those who claim to love Allah, even those who commit shirk and those who innovate in the religion, but, are they really truthful in their claim? The Scholars say that if you claim to love Allah, then your truthfulness will surely be tested.

- If you (truly) love Allah, then follow me (إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي)

There are those who claim to love Allah, and they kill innocent people, claiming it to be for the sake of Allah! Yet others who claim the same, misinterpret and distort the meanings of the Quran thinking they are pleasing Allah. Some innovate in the religion and others deny some of its rulings, seeking to please Allah through it! Yet Allah does not approve of any of these actions! So anyone who tries to draw close to Allah by innovating in the religion, lying about Him, abandoning following the Prophet, peace be upon him, then he will not achieve anything except pain, loss and regret.

So know that there is only one yardstick for measuring the truthfulness and extent of your love for Allah - and that is following the Prophet, peace be upon him. Anyone who does not fulfill this condition is a liar and doesn't truly love Allah, and whom Allah does not love.

We must follow the Prophet, peace be upon him, in every way. We follow his aqeedah (correct system of belief) and we affirm all that he came with regarding Allah's Names and Attributes. We affirm and follow that which he made permissible and impermissible. Our wudhu, our charity, our prayers, and our way to call people to Allah's religion must all be according to the way of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Further to this, when Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, the beloved wife of the Messenger, peace be upon him,

described him, she said: "His character was the Quran." Thus the Prophet, peace be upon him, was the best example of how the Quran is to be practically implemented in our lives. His methodology of calling to Islam, the way he dealt with his enemies, friends, wives, children, neighbours, and non-Muslims, his truthfulness, trustworthiness and mercy was the Quran, and so ask yourselves- how can we love and follow the Messenger, peace be upon him, if we do not know anything about him?

- **Allah will love you (يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ)**

So what will happen if you follow the Prophet, peace be upon him, due to your love for Allah? Allah will love you, and this is far greater than you loving Him, The Most High.

We must affirm the attribute of love for Allah. Allah loves His true believers, He loves His obedient slaves. We must not say that Allah does not love because it is clearly established with the proofs that He does so, in a manner that befits His Majesty.

It is difficult to explain the reality of love. We feel it, but it is difficult to describe in words. If we worship Allah whilst concentrating, freeing our hearts from any attachment other than Him, we will surely experience that which we previously had been unable to conceive; We will be overwhelmed with a feeling that defies description, but can only be experienced and felt.

These feelings stimulate us, give us the energy to continue upon the path of Allah, enduring any harm or difficulties that come our way.

Furthermore, the people of knowledge said:

"The issue is not that you love Allah, because He deserves to be loved anyway, rather the true matter (of importance) is that Allah loves you. The greatest pain that one can ever feel is to not be loved back by the one he loves. On the Day of Resurrection, if you find yourself deprived of seeing Allah and receiving His pleasure, while the believers around you are receiving these (bounties), and if you find that neither does Allah look at you, nor speak to you, then this will, no doubt, be extremely painful for you."

Therefore, what is important is not that we love Allah, for He, The Almighty, is most deserving of love even without His creation, provisions and mercy. Rather, the issue here is: Does Allah love us?

If we find within ourselves eagerness and desire to know the precise details of the Prophet's life, peace be upon him, and to follow him in his belief and creed, his acts of worship, his sayings and acts, then this is a glad-tiding that Allah loves us. On the other hand, if we find ourselves indifferent and unmindful about the Sunnah, then beware, there is a serious problem we need to rectify! How can we attain Allah's love if we do not know about His Prophet, peace be upon him? And how can we attain Paradise if Allah does not love us? Those whom Allah loves, are successful, and those whom He does not, are miserable.

- (وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ)

And He will forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful

If Allah loves us, He will facilitate for us the means to earn His forgiveness and mercy. He will forgive us for the past and have mercy on us by guiding us to good deeds in the future. Allah's forgiveness is followed by mercy, in the fact that He thereafter guides His slaves to actions which are upright and righteous. That is why the Names of Allah Al-Ghafoor (The Oft-Forgiving) and Ar-Raheem (The Most Merciful) are generally coupled together.

Thus, these are the great and most beautiful outcomes of following the way of the Prophet, peace be upon him, to attain Allah's love and to deserve His forgiveness and mercy.

Above is a transcription of a class given by teacher Zaynab El-Kateb and it is based on the Tafseer of Surah Ali-Imraan by Shaikh Ibn Al-Uthaymin, may Allah have mercy on him.