



Disease of the Heart: Envy (*hasad*)

«إياكم والحسد، فإن الحسد يأكل الحسنات كما تأكل النار الحطب»

“Avoid envy, for envy devours good deeds just as fire devours firewood.”

All perfect praise is due to Allah the Almighty. May prayers and peace of Allah be upon the noblest Prophet and Messenger Muhammad.

As we enter the month of Ramadan and Muslims worldwide prepare for the blessed month be it for the daily breaking of fasts, the payments of debts, *zakat* and *sadaqa* and others prepare spiritually for the month of fasting and prayer of *taraweeh* reaping in the endless amount of *Ajr* (reward). The believer begins to prepare their state of mind and heart and body for the blessed month of Ramadan. This preparedness needs contemplation of sorts...often delving into the heart to sort through the undesired traits and feelings that somehow drift and simmer in the heart starting with a black spot on the heart and slowly multiplying, Allah forbid it remains a permanent mark.

The process begins with deep questions and a willingness to view this process – to open one’s heart of many layers. The honorable Sahabah used to devote months prior to Ramadan in order to prepare themselves wholly in order to worship Allah (swt) in the best possible manner.

Thus if a Muslim had an unfulfilled right to others such as a debt or a delayed promise, it was fulfilled. However there are issues that do not involve giving others a right whereas it requires a deep self-inquiring of one’s self, more specifically one’s heart. Here the focus is what hinders the heart of a Muslim from truly having a purified heart in what comes in the form of a diseased heart. As part of a running series for the month of Ramadan and to serve as a reminder throughout the year, I will be exploring the diseases of the heart and how to possibly overcome them finding *Shifaa* and tranquility to be able to reach Heavens to smell its sweet fragrances and see its beauty and to reside in its abode for eternity.

Diseases of the heart are concealed within the body, many times those affected are in denial of the various ills but of course with every disease there are signs and symptoms whether the afflicted person acknowledges them or not. Their existence is known since they have a way of exposing themselves by creeping up through remarks and actions in times least expected. At worse, it explodes into a full blown animosity from a deep simmering brooding envy.

Part 1: *Hasad* (Envy)

The first topic to be explored is *Hasad* (envy).

What is *hasad* (envy)? Why is it detrimental? How can it be controlled or even better stopped and destroyed before it eats up the heart of the believer?

Hasad is the desire to see other people’s blessings and bounties (be they tangible or non-tangible) removed from them due to feelings of spite of the envier. It first appeared long before humans inhabited the Earth, when Allah Almighty commanded His creations to bow down to Adam (*alaihi assalam*) in the Heavens and Iblees refused because he thought his creation from fire was superior to Adam being created from clay. Iblees declared to Allah (swt),

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ أَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِينًا * قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ أُخِّرْتَنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَآخْتَنِكَ نُرِّيَنَّهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

“And [mention] when We said to the angles, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated, except for Iblees. He said, "Should I prostrate to one You created from

clay?" [Iblees] said, "Do You see this one whom You have honored above me? If You delay me until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely destroy his descendants, except for a few." [Al-Isra: 61-62]

We saw the heavy toll that envy took on the family of Prophet Yousef (*alaihi assalam*) forcing the envious brothers of Prophet Yousef to commit the unthinkable all due to their diseased hearts to remove the love and affection of their father towards their younger brother.

﴿إِذْ قَالُوا لْيُؤَسِّفْ وَأَخُوهُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِمَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ إِنَّ أَبَانَا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ * اقْتُلُوا يُؤَسِّفُ أَوْ اطْرَحُوهُ أَرْضًا يَخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ أَبِيكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا مِن بَعْدِهِ قَوْمًا صَالِحِينَ﴾

"When they said, "Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we, while we are a clan. Indeed, our father is in clear error. Kill Joseph or cast him out to [another] land; the countenance of your father will [then] be only for you, and you will be after that a righteous people." [Yousef: 8-9]

We saw the destruction of *hasad* appear with Bani Israel when the Last Messenger was an Arab named Muhammad (saw) from the tribe of Quraish, the Jewish tribes plotted to kill him as they expected the prophet to be from their lineage. They knew he came with the truth but because of their deep seeded envy, it would not allow them to follow the words of Truth from the Messenger Muhammad (saw), forcing them to come up with slander against the Sadiq al-Amin and finding ways to harm him.

Hasad will continue to exist in humans until the end of time, as some think it is a natural part of humans to feel jealous and envious. However in this article, *ghibta* will not be addressed which is the jealousy of good acts in other people that compel a person to emulate those good acts or traits.

Hasad is a self-destructive cycle that devours moments of happiness and accomplishments for oneself and others often resulting in feeling alone, and being left out due to other people sensing their *hasad* and lack of brotherly love for others surrounding them. Simply put, people do not want to associate with those who are afflicted with deep envy and resentment and lack of empathy, honesty, and sincerity due to the hypocritical nature which forces them to act one way yet feel a different way.

Alhamdulillah it can be overcome and one's heart can be purified of the sin which makes the heart black and hard in turn impacting one's actions sooner or later. One has to firmly implant in one's mind that seeking the treatment or remedy to cleanse the heart requires seeking the Pleasure of Allah by being a better Muslim being able to fully appreciate oneself's rizq (provision), blessings and shortcomings as well others' blessings with happiness and conviction that this too is that person's blessing from Allah Ar-Razzaq.

Constant bragging to fill the void of the heart because it is not the stomach that is empty but the eye which is forever lusting after other's possessions and status or bounties. What a terrible predicament for a Muslim to be in. It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

«لَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي النَّارِ مُسْلِمٌ قَتَلَ كَافِرًا ثُمَّ سَدَّدَ وَقَارِبَ وَلَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي جَوْفِ مُؤْمِنٍ عَبْدًا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَفِيحُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَا يَجْتَمِعَانِ فِي قَلْبِ عَبْدٍ الْإِيمَانَ وَالْحَسَدَ»

"Two will never be gathered together in the Fire: A Muslim who killed a disbeliever then tried his best and did not deviate. And two will never be gathered together in the lungs of a believer: Dust in the cause of Allah, and the odor of Hell. And two will never be gathered in the heart of a salve: Faith and envy."

Imam Al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, said in his book (*Al-Ihya'*), "Be aware that envy is one of the most dangerous diseases of the hearts, and there is no medicine for the diseases of the heart except with knowledge and deeds."

Al-Mubarrad, a famous Arab grammarian and scholar, recited the following lines:

“The eye of the envier always sees scandal,
bringing out faults and hiding the good.
He meets you cheerfully, with a smiling face,
while his heart conceals his true feelings.
The envier’s enmity comes without provocation,
yet he accepts no excuses while he attacks.”

The Messenger (saw) said,

«إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا أُذْنِبَ إِذَا أُذْنِبَ كَانَتْ نُكْتَةً سَوْدَاءٌ فِي قَلْبِهِ فَإِنْ تَابَ وَنَزَعَ وَاسْتَعْفَرَ صُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ فَإِنْ زَادَ زَادَتْ فَذَلِكَ الرَّأْيُ الَّذِي ذَكَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ ﴿كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾»

“When a believer sins a black spot or stain is marked on his heart, and if he repents and asks pardon his heart is polished; but if he does more sins the black spot increases till it gains ascendancy over his heart. That is the rust mentioned by Allah Most High, ‘Nay, but what they were committing has spread like rust over their hearts’ [Al-Quran 83:14].”

Indeed as the Almighty said in His Quran, *hasad* eats away at the heart until all that is left is rust, *ya Allah* what an image! *Hasad* is more than wanting the blessings of Allah to be removed from the person who is blessed be it with money, family, status or knowledge...it is actually a transgression against the Creator as the person is miserable and defiant to how Allah has granted His Bounties upon specific persons and to others to the exception of himself. It is a transgression against the Knowledge of Allah and the very Aqeedah which holds the five pillars of belief with the fifth pillar being faith in the *Qadaa wal Qadr* of Allah, its good and bad. That person hates how Allah Almighty has divided His wealth and blessings among His servants. It leads a person to have a deep hidden gratification when illness or misfortune strikes the envied ones. This feeling of jealousy that simmered into envy stands in bold defiance of the Islamic Aqeedah - one concept of Rizq (provision) is only from Allah and the other concept in which the Prophet (saw) taught the Muslims of loving for others what you love for yourself and that there is no harm against the Muslim.

For a person who has a whirlwind of negative emotions, it is imperative that the person sort through them and purify the heart from this evil trait. By deeply contemplating the concepts of *Rizq* and loving for your brother what you love for yourself, one is able to realize that the material gains are a blessing and bounty from Allah Alone and thus with this knowledge one is able to find the conviction that will replace the ills of the heart with peace and satisfaction. And the Muslim will be able to be happy for those who are blessed by Allah (swt) when surrendering oneself to this concept as part of his Aqeedah. Engaging in a higher purpose that will elevate and revive the mind and heart to raise their sights from the shallow levels to enlightened levels will only make for a better Islamic personality. “...and if he repents and asks pardon his heart is polished”; with the deep study of the Noble Quran, one also finds solace to live a better life, *bi'thinallah* erasing the dark spots on the heart. All the while making the tongue moist with *Istighfaar* with eyes seeing the best traits in their brother and sister.

We pray that the whispers of Shaytan are whisked away and that we have the *taqwa* to grasp onto the traits of a true Islamic personality traits with a genuine love for others earning a rank in the Heavens.

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