

CLASS 8

‘WEAKNESS OF FAITH’

SYMPTOMS & CAUSES

Praise be to Allaah, we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allaah from the evil of our own souls and from our evil deeds. Whomever Allaah guides, none can lead astray, and whomever Allaah leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allaah alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad, sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, is His slave and Messenger.

Allaah The Almighty Says:

- *{O you who believe! Fear Allaah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islaam [as Muslims, with complete submission to Allaah.]} [Qur'aan 3:102]*
- *{O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person [Adam] and from him He created his wife [Hawwaa'], and from them both he created many men and women, and fear Allaah through Whom you demand your mutual [rights], and [do not cut the relations of] the wombs [kinship]. Surely, Allaah is Ever an All-Watcher over you.} [Qur'aan 4:1]*
- *{O you who believe! Keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him, and speak [always] the truth. He will direct you to do righteous good deeds and will forgive you your sins. And whosoever obeys Allaah and His Messenger, he has indeed achieved a great achievement [i.e., he will be saved from the Hell-fire and made to enter Paradise].} [Qur'aan 33:70-71]*

The phenomenon of weak faith has become very widespread among the Muslims, and many people complain about the hardness of their hearts.

So often we hear the words:

- “I feel hardness in my heart”
- “I do not find any joy in worship”
- “I feel that my faith has hit rock bottom”
- “Reading the Qur’aan does not move me”
- “I fall into sin so easily”

The effects of this affliction can be seen in many people, and this problem is the cause of every disaster and adversity.

The issue of people’s hearts is an important and sensitive issue. The heart is called Qalb in Arabic because it changes so quickly and frequently (Taqallub – alteration, variation, ups and downs). The Prophet of Allaah ﷺ said: *“The heart [Qalb] takes its name from its constant changes [Taqallub]. The likeness of the heart is that of a feather at the root of a tree, being turned over and over by the wind.”* (Reported by Ahmad, 4/408; Saheeh al-Jaami’, 2364)

Allaah is the One Who turns hearts around and controls them. ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Aas, may Allaah be pleased with them both, reported that he heard the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ say: *“The hearts of the children of Aadam are as one between the fingers of the Most Merciful, and He turns them in whatever way He wills.”* Then he ﷺ said: *“O Allaah, Controller of the hearts, direct our hearts to obey You.”* (Reported by Muslim, no. 2654)

Some people are doomed, and Allaah defined in his Saying (which means): *{those whose hearts are hardened.}* [Qur'aan 22:53] and the promise of Paradise is for a certain class of people whom He defined Saying (what means): *{who feared the Most Beneficent [Allaah] in the Unseen, [i.e., in the worldly life, before seeing and meeting Him], and brought a heart turned in repentance [to Him].}* [Qur'aan 50:33]

So the believer must check his heart, find out the nature and cause of the problem, and start treating it straight away, before it overwhelms him and destroys him. The matter is of the utmost seriousness, for Allaah The Almighty has warned us against the heart that is hardened, closed, sick, blind and sealed.

Symptoms of weak faith

There are a number of symptoms of the sickness of weak faith, including the following:

Feeling that one's heart is hard and rough: a man may feel that his heart has turned to stone which nothing can penetrate or reach. The person whose heart is hard will not be moved by reminders of death or by seeing deceased persons or funerals. He may even carry a dead person to his grave and fill earth in the grave, but when he walks between the graves it is as if he is merely walking between rocks.

Not doing acts of worship properly: his mind wanders and he fails to concentrate properly when praying, reading the Qur'aan, making Du'aa', etc. He does not think about what he is saying, and he recites the words as a matter of boring habit, if he does these regularly at all. If he has the habit of praying a certain Du'aa' at certain times, according to the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition), he does not think about the meaning of what he is saying, and the Prophet ﷺ, informed us that Allaah: *“Does not accept the Du'aa' of one whose heart is heedless of Him.”* (Reported by At-Tirmithi, no. 3479; as-Silsilah as-Saheehah, 594)

Laziness and carelessness in performing acts of worship: if he does them at all, they are just empty movements, devoid of any real feeling. Allaah The Almighty has described the hypocrites thus Saying (what means): *{... and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up with laziness...}* [Qur'aan 4:142] This also includes neglecting to make the most of special occasions and times for worship. This indicates that a person has no interest in earning reward, so he may delay going for Hajj although he is able to do so or fail to attend prayers in congregation.

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: *“People will keep holding back from being in the first row [of congregational prayers], until Allaah throws them into the Fire.”* (Abu Daawood) This kind of person does not feel any remorse or guilt if he sleeps and misses one of the obligatory prayers, or a Sunnah prayer that is strongly encouraged, or a Wird (regular Du'aa' and Thikr i.e. remembrance of Allaah). He does not want to make it up later, and he deliberately omits doing anything that is Sunnah or Fardh Kifaayah (a duty which, if carried out by some of the people, is no longer obligatory on all, but if no-one does it, all are held accountable)

Tightness in the chest, mood swings and depression, which weigh a man down and make him quick to complain about the slightest thing: he easily gets upset with the people around him, and no longer has any tolerance. The Prophet ﷺ described faith when he said: *“Eemaan is patience and tolerance”* (As-Silsilah as-Saheehah, no. 554, 2/86), and he ﷺ described the believer as being *“one who makes friends and with whom others feel comfortable. There is no goodness in one who does not make friends and with whom others do not feel comfortable.”* (As-Silsilah as-Saheehah, no. 427)

Love of fame and prominence, which may take many forms, including the following

- Desire for leadership without understanding the serious responsibility involved
- Loving to sit at the head of gatherings, to monopolize the discussion, to make others listen to one’s words, and to have power
- Loving to have people stand up when one comes into the room, because this makes the one whose heart is diseased feel great. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“Whoever feels happy to have the slaves of Allaah stand up for him, let him occupy his house in Hellfire.”* (Reported by Al-Bukhaari in al-Adab al-Mufrad, 977; see also Silsilah alSaheeh, 357)

Stinginess and miserliness: The Prophet ﷺ said,

- *“Stinginess and faith never exist together in the heart of the believer.”* (An-Nasaa’i; Saheeh al-Jaami’, 2678)
- *“Beware of stinginess, for those who came before you were destroyed because of stinginess. It commanded them to be miserly, so they were miserly; it commanded them to cut family ties, so they cut them; and it commanded them to be immoral, so they were immoral.”* (Abu Daawood, Saheeh al-Jaami, no. 2678)

When it comes to miserliness, the person whose faith is weak can hardly give anything for the sake of Allaah

Not practicing what one preaches: Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): *{O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful is it with Allaah that you say that which you do not do.}* [Qur'aan 61:2-3] No doubt this is a kind of hypocrisy, and the person whose deeds do not match his words is blameworthy before Allaah and despicable in the eyes of his fellow man.

Lack of concern about the Muslims’ affairs and lack of any involvement whether it be by making Du’aa’, giving charity or helping them. Such a person has a cool attitude towards the oppression, suppression and disasters suffered by his Muslim brothers in other parts of the world, and is content merely with his own safety. This is the result of weak faith, because the believer is the opposite of that. The Prophet ﷺ said: *“The believer’s position in relation to his fellow believers is like that of the head to the body; the believer feels the pain of his fellow believers as the body reacts to the pain suffered by the head.”* (Musnad Ahmad, 5/340; as-Silsilah asSaheehah, 1137)

Fear and panic when disaster strikes or problems arise: you will see such a person shaking and losing his equilibrium, with no focus, staring wild-eyed and having no idea what to do when faced with calamity. He is ruled by his fears and can see no way out; he cannot face reality with a strong and steady heart. All of this is the result of weak faith, for if his faith was strong he would be steadfast and he would face the worst disasters with calmness and strength.

Excessive arguing and disputing: the Prophet ﷺ said:

- *“No people will go astray after having being guided except that they become argumentative.”* (Ahmad in al-Musnad; Saheeh al-Jaami’)
- *“I guarantee a house in the outskirts of Paradise to the one who forsakes argument even when he is in the right.”* (Abu Daawood; Saheeh)

Attachment to this world and rejoicing in it: a person may be so attached to this world that he feels pain if he misses out on some share of it, such as money, power, authority, or housing. He feels that he is unfairly treated because he has not got what others have. He feels more stress when he sees a brother in Islaam who has something of this world that he does not have, so he feels Hasad (envy) towards him and wishes that he will lose that blessing. This goes against Eemaan (faith), as the Prophet ﷺ said: *“Eemaan and Hasad do not exist together in the heart of the true slave.”* (Abu Daawood; Saheeh)

Luxury and Going to extremes in the way one cares for oneself, in food, drink, clothing, housing and means of transportation. So you see these people showing excessive interest in luxuries, trying to be sophisticated, buying only the finest clothes, spending extravagant amounts on their choice of housing and spending too much time and money on such unnecessary adornments whilst their Muslim brothers are in the greatest need of that money. This carries on until they sink into the soft life of luxury which is forbidden, as is reported in the Hadeeth of Mu’aath ibn Jabal, may Allaah be pleased with him: when the Prophet ﷺ sent him to Yemen, he advised him: *“Beware of luxury, for the slaves of Allaah do not live a life of luxury.”*

Causes of Weak Faith

There are many causes of weak faith, some of which are the same as the symptoms, such as committing sin or being preoccupied with this world. There follows a list of some additional causes:

Keeping away from a faith-filled environment for too long: this causes weak faith in a person. Allaah The Almighty Says (what means): *{Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe to be affected by Allaah’s Reminder [this Qur’aan], and that which has been revealed of the truth, lest they become as those who received the Scripture before [i.e., Jews and Christians], and the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened? And many of them were Faasiqoon [rebellious, disobedient to Allaah].}* [Qur’aan 57:16] This Aayah (verse) indicates that spending too much time away from a faith-filled environment leads to weakness of faith in the heart. For example, a person who stays away from his brothers in Islaam for a long period, because of travel or work, etc., is going to miss the atmosphere

of faith in which he was living and from which his heart gained its strength. The believer is weak on his own but strong with his brothers.

Failing to seek knowledge and to be acquainted with the books/lectures of the Salaf and religious books which will uplift and revive the heart: there are many kinds of books/lectures which stir up faith in the reader's/listener's heart and motivate him to fulfill his spiritual potential.

Living in an environment that is filled with sin, so you see one boasting about his latest misdemeanor, another humming popular songs to himself, a third smoking, a fourth perusing a pornographic magazine, a fifth cursing and swearing, and so on. As for talk about who said what to whom, gossip, backbiting and discussion about the latest football match, there is no end to it.

Some environments remind one only of this world, as is the case in most gatherings and work-places nowadays. Discussions about business, work, money, investments, work-related problems, raises, promotions, assignments and so on take precedence in the minds and speech of most people nowadays.

As for what goes on in the home – there is a lot we can say about the disasters and evil deeds that cause the Muslim shame and hurt him deeply. Muslim homes are filled with shameless songs, vile movies, forbidden inter-mixing between the two sexes and so on. No doubt in such an environment hearts are stricken with the disease of hardness.

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Preoccupation with this world, so that the heart is enslaved by it: the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ said: “He is doomed, the slave of the Dinaar and the slave of the Dirham.” (Al-Bukhaari).

This phenomenon – preoccupation with this world – is very apparent in our own times, when material greed and the desire to acquire more worthless worldly goods have become widespread, and people are now running after trade, manufacturing and shares.

Eating, Sleeping too much or staying u too late. Eating too much makes the brain slow and the body heavy, which prevents a person from worshipping Allaah The Almighty and makes it easy for the Shaytaan to tempt him. Talking too much hardens the heart, and mixing too much with people stops a person from having time to be alone and reflect on his own state. Laughing too much drains life from the heart. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Do not laugh too much, for excessive laughter deadens the heart.” (Ibn Maajah, Saheeh). Time that is not filled with worship of Allaah The Almighty also leads to hard-heartedness, as a person pays heed to neither the admonishments of the Qur’aan nor the advice of faith.

Shaytaan

He is held to be a strong external reason, which causes eemaan to decrease. Shaytaan is a vehement enemy to the believers. He awaits calamities to afflict them. He has no desire or goal other than to jolt the eemaan in the hearts of the believers and to weaken and corrupt it. Whoever submits to the whisperings of Shaytaan, complies with his notions and does not retreat to Allaah for refuge from him, his eemaan weakens and decreases. Indeed, it may disappear in its entirety depending on the Muslim's response to such whisperings and notions.

It is for this reason that Allaah has warned us of Shaytaan in the sternest sense and He has clarified his dangers, the detrimental consequences of following him as well as the fact that he is an enemy to the believers. Allaah ordered the believers to take him as an enemy and therefore deliver themselves from him and his whisperings.

Allaah says:

- *“O you who believe! Do not follow the footsteps of Shaytaan, and whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaytaan, then, verily he (i.e., Shaytaan) commands Fahshaa’ (i.e., to commit indecency and lewdness, etc.) and al-Munkar (i.e., disbelief, shirk, to do evil and wicked deeds, to speak or to do what is forbidden in Islaam, etc.)...”* [Soorah an-Noor (24):21]
- *“Surely, Shaytaan is an enemy to you, so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his hizb (followers) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire.”* [Soorah Faatir (35):6]
- *“Verily! Shaytaan is to man an open enemy!”* [Soorah Yoosuf (12):5]
- *“Shaytaan has taken hold of them. So he has made them forget the remembrance of Allaah. They are the party of Shaytaan. Verily, it is the party of Shaytaan that will be the losers!”* [Soorah al-Mujaadilah (58): 19]

Ibn al-Jawzee says:

“Hence it is an obligation upon the sane person to be on his guard against this enemy, who has manifested his enmity since the time of Aadam. He has sacrificed his life and self in corrupting the circumstances of the children of Aadam and Allaah has ordered one to be cautious of him...” He then mentioned a number of such texts and then said: *“The like of this in the Qur’aan is abundant.”*

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allaah have mercy upon him, says:

“Beware of enabling Shaytaan to establish himself in the very home of your thoughts and intentions, as he will corrupt them in such a manner that will make difficult its correction thereafter. He will cast all sort of whisperings and harmful thoughts at you and he will prevent you from thinking about what may benefit you and it is you who have aided him against yourself by empowering him over your heart and thoughts and he then placed you in the possession of such thoughts.” [Al-Fawaa'id, pg. 309]

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Note this is not part of the course, it is an independent course that can be done at your own pace and at your own convenience.

The causes of weak faith are many indeed, and it is impossible to list them all, but what we have listed above will give the reader an impression of others which we have not mentioned here. The wise person understands this innately. We ask Allaah The Almighty to purify our hearts and protect us from the evil of our own selves.

In next class we will InShaAllah learn the "*Factors that nullify Emaan*"

TIPS OF TEST

1. Do not have to memorise the ayahs or hadeeths word for word and their references, but remember their meanings and the msg being given.
2. Remember the symptoms & causes.