

The
Intelligent Heart,
The ***Pure Heart***

*An insight into the Heart based on
the Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science*



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 **TA·HA**
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Preface

TODAY WE ARE living in an age of materialism; an age of anti-spiritualism, or the age most suitable for the coming of the anti-Christ. Modern science is a result of the revolt of scientists and the masses against the Church in the West. At the very foundation of modern scientific thought lie the materialist philosophies of Comte, Hegel, Durkheim, Nietzsche, Freud, Marx and Darwin. As a consequence of that, the spiritual aspect of the human personality is deliberately ignored in modern science. Hence, we see the body/soul split in this age of materialism. It is because of the body/soul split we find in modern biomedicine and the social sciences that most of the research has been conducted on the human brain whereas the human heart has been regarded as merely a pumping organ. Today, the separation of the heart and brain is a consequence of the separation of religious and secular matters in the Western educational system and society in general.

Nevertheless, in the last twenty years, some interesting research has been conducted on the human heart in the fields of biomedicine, psychology and social science, showing that the heart possesses its own kind of intelligence and it affects the brain in various ways.

This research is still in its incipient stages. It will take some time for the secular mainstream scientific community to accept these research findings. It is evident from the history of science that many scientific discoveries faced opposition in the beginning but later they were accepted as universal facts. A few decades ago, Rudolf Steiner, a German philosopher and education expert, noted that:

“The greatest discovery of twentieth century science would be that the heart is not a pump but vastly more, and that the great challenge of the coming ages of humanity would be, in effect, to allow the heart to teach us to think in a new way.”¹

It seems that now the time has come for us to realise that the human heart is not just a pumping organ but much more than that. The days of Newtonian mechanics, in which the human heart was regarded as a mere pumping organ, will soon become a concept of the past.

It may be of interest to readers to mention the reason that acted as an impetus in my writing this book. The subject of the intelligence of the human heart as it is mentioned in religious scriptures has always fascinated me. During my high school years in the 1980's, I was once watching a lecture about the function of the human heart by a surgeon on television. During the course of his lecture, the surgeon mentioned that there is no intelligence or emotion in the human heart. At that time I did not have any scientific proof

1. Pearce, Joseph Chilton (1998), *Waking Up to the Holographic Heart: Starting over with Education*. Wild Duck Review IV (2)

to refute his claim. However, that incident further triggered my interest in this subject and I started to research the subject of the intelligence of the human heart.

Qur'anic statements are all true and it is only time and knowledge that precludes our immediate understanding of them. It will take modern science many years to fully understand the wisdom behind the verses (*ayat*) of the Qur'an. The human heart is regarded as an organ of intellect in various places throughout the Qur'an. Sooner or later, modern science will also reach this conclusion. It was this miraculous aspect (*ijaaẓ*) of the Qur'an, which was mentioned by Abdullah bin Abbas (the great commentator of the Qur'an and cousin of the Prophet ﷺ) when he said:

(In this book of Allah) there are signs (*ayat*), which will only be explained with the passing of time.

Another factor which incited me and excited me to write this book is the fact that recently my book entitled *Growing a Beard: In Light of the Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science*² has been published. In that book, I had accentuated the importance of an outward aspect (*zahir*) of Islam. I felt a need to also emphasise the inward aspect (*batin*) of Islam by writing on the subject of the human heart since Islam is a balance between the outward and the inward (*zahir and batin*). We need to purify ourselves both inwardly and outwardly to reach the final stage of '*nafs ul-mutma'innah*' (the peaceful self), a state of inner peace and contentment.

2. Mushtaq, Gohar (2003), *Growing a Beard: In Light of the Qur'an, Sunnah and Modern Science*. London, Ta-Ha Publishers.

The first part of this book puts into context the human heart according to the Qur'an and hadith (the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), comments of Islamic theologians and contemporary scientific research. The second chapter of this book delves deeper into the concept of intelligence of the heart and the relationship between the heart and the brain. The third chapter highlights the role of the heart within Islam and how our everyday lives as Muslims affect the heart, something which is becoming clearer only now with the passage of time. The fourth and final chapter of this book, which I think can be considered as the most important, discusses the various diseases of the heart, physical and spiritual, and outlines their cures according to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

I have made every attempt to make the scientific language in the book as simple as possible for non-science readers. I would like to mention this point very clearly right at the beginning of this book that the purpose of presenting scientific research regarding the heart as an organ of intelligence is not to prove that the Qur'an is the word of Allah because we already know as part of our faith that Qur'an is indeed the word of Allah. The purpose of presenting this research is to discover some of the details of the Qur'anic and Prophetic wisdoms as they have become available through modern scientific research, so that these research findings can be presented as such in this context to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The Qur'an encourages us to reflect upon the creations of Allah at various places and emphasises the importance of knowledge by telling us:

Say: 'Are those who know equal to those who know not?'

(Surah Az-Zumar: 9)

It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah.

(Surah Fatir: 28)

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The Intelligence of the Heart and the Intelligence of the Brain

The human brain works in a linear, logical manner. Its basic functions are to analyse, memorise, compartmentalise, compare and sort through the information obtained from our senses. Based on past information, experiences and memories, the brain sorts the incoming messages from our senses and transforms that data into perceptions, thoughts and emotions. This linear approach of the brain is necessary for our survival, but there are disadvantages to this ability. The brain can easily get stuck in a fixed pattern. This means that since there is already information in the head (it does not matter whether that information is based on reality or not), the brain always compares the new information to the old model it has and sees unconsciously if the new information matches with the old ideas and perceptions it has. This is the reason why it is so hard for us to change our old habits and perceptions.²²

The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) argued that intellect alone is totally inadequate for the comprehension of God's Essence.²³ That is true because the Qur'an says about Allah:

There is nothing like unto Him. (Surah Ash-Shu'ara: 11)

The brain works by comparing new information with information that it already possesses. In the case of the Essence of Allah, the brain does not have anything to compare it with because there is

22. Childre, Doc & Martin, Howard (1999). *The HeartMath Solution*. New York, Harper San Francisco.

23. Kant, Immanuel, (1990). *The Critique of Pure Reason*. New York, Prometheus Books.

nothing like Allah. Therefore, the brain alone becomes helpless in discerning Allah directly. The only way it can understand Allah is by indirect knowledge – by contemplating upon the creations of Allah. That is why, Abu Bakr Siddique رضي الله عنه said about the recognition of Allah:

Glory to God who has not given to his creatures any other way to attain the knowledge of Him except by means of their helplessness and their hopelessness of ever reaching such attainment.²⁴

The heart, however, cuts through any needless complexity or confusion, very similar to a flashlight beam that illuminates the darkness and allows one to see what is actually important. The intelligence of the heart processes incoming information in a different way that is less linear, more intuitive and more direct. In fact, there are many things in life, which we cannot explain logically. For example, belief in the Unseen and fear of Allah coupled with a desire to please Him all defy logic. But the heart can understand these concepts because of the way that it processes information.

Imam Malik, the great jurist, referred to the superiority of the heart's intelligence over that of the brain when he described true knowledge:

Knowledge does not refer to plenty of information; rather, knowledge is a light that Allah puts into the heart of a true believer.²⁵

24. Ghazali, Imam Abu Hamid (1978). *Ihya Ulum ad Din*. Karachi, Darul Isha'at Publishers

25. Abu Zahra, Muhammad (1990). *Life of Imam Malik* (Urdu) Lahore, Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons.

Envy (*Hasad*)

Envy (*hasad*) or jealousy is a disease of the heart in which a person resents what another person has and desires it for himself. It is without doubt one of the most corrosive of all human emotions. Helmut Schoeck, a German sociologist, in his book entitled ‘Envy: A Theory of Social Evolution’, believes that a society’s “civilizing power of achievement” depends on how well it controls envy.⁸⁹ While modern materialistic society does nothing to curb this emotion, religion provides the solution to control its destructive effects. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ advised:

Abstain from envy (jealousy). Indeed, envy finishes all the good acts and their rewards as the fire does away with firewood.
(*Abu Dawud*)

The destructive nature of envy is mentioned in the Qur’an:

Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Day-break. From the evil of what He has created. And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness. And from the evil of the witchcrafts when they blow in the knots. And from the evil of the envier when he envies.
(Surah Al-Falaq: 1-5)

History is rich with examples of envy that have led to major crimes. The first murder in human history occurred because of envy. Qabil, the son of Adam ﷺ, was jealous that Allah had accepted the sacrifice of his brother Habil. As a result, Qabil murdered Habil. Similarly, the stepbrothers of Prophet Yusuf

89. Schoeck, Helmut (1969). *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*. Indianapolis, Liberty Press.

﴿ were jealous of their father's love for him. Blinded by their feelings of envy, the stepbrothers of Yusuf ﴿ conspired to kill him by throwing him into a well and abandoning him and then lying to their father about the incident.

When we look at the blessings given to other people by Allah, our own self (*nafs*) becomes dissatisfied with our present condition. Instead of being grateful to Allah for what He has blessed us with, we resent and begrudge what other people have. This in turn leads us to commit other crimes to satisfy our own sense of justice. However, we should try to avoid feelings of envy within ourselves and one of the ways to do this, as mentioned before, is to look at people that are less fortunate than we are. This will soon extinguish any feelings of envy we may harbour towards our brothers and sisters in Islam.

Do not be envious of one another; do not artificially inflate prices against one another; do not hate one another; do not shun one another; and do not undercut one another in business transactions; and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. Piety is here – and he pointed to his chest three times. It is evil enough for a Muslim to hold his brother Muslim in contempt. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for another Muslim: his blood, his property and his honour. (*Muslim*)

In Islam, the only time we should compete with each other is in gaining the pleasure of Allah. In one hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: