



[The Relationship between Intentions, Words, and Health](#)

Taking Responsibility for the Diseases of One's Heart

Allah Swt in Surah al-Fātir says:

Whoever it is that wants power and glory should know that all might and power belong to Allah. Good words rise up to him, and he raises virtuous actions to himself. But whoever plots evil deeds, terrible punishment awaits, and the plotting of such people shall come to nothing.

This *surah* is also called Surah al-Malik, and is known as the Angels. It's an interesting *surah* for us to read and learn the lessons I was trying to talk about last night. I meant to leave the discourse last night by asking you all to open the Qur'an to some *surah* and try to do what I was doing last night, to find an instruction—just one instruction there—[and see it] with different eyes. This *khutbah* is inspired by the Holy Qur'an and this *surah*. It's a very simple message about good words and goodness. It's very hard to have good words if you are miserable, if you are in a negative state, if you have worries, and also if you are being dominated by your *nafs ammāra*. It's very hard to have good words if we are unhappy or sad. It's very difficult to have good words if we don't have good thoughts. It's even harder to have good thoughts if we don't have good intentions.

Most of us, many of us, don't spend much time analyzing our attitudes, our moods, our words, or even our conditions, or even our health, for that matter. We wait until something happens that forces us to reflect for a short amount of time as we possibly can on that issue, whatever it may be. We don't see a causal relationship between good health and illness, sometimes, or between health, illness, and our

thoughts. We don't see relationships between our intentions, our words, and our health, and our illnesses. Just as we don't see a causal relationship between our grief, and our misery, and how we view circumstances. So we walk through this world or this life, through our days coughing, and sneezing, and bellyaching, and complaining, happy one moment and sad the next, feeling good one moment and bad the next, as if we were leaves being buffeted by the breeze, the twigs bent and sent along the current of a stream with no consciousness, and no ability to change our circumstances, and no attitude of responsibility.

There is no sense that we have the ability to respond to the circumstances around us, other than an unconscious or immediate, uncontrollable emotional response, or a quick judgmental intellectual response. A determination may cause us to take a course that may last weeks, months, years, and put us off course, because of desires, or impatience, usually, lack of trust in Allah. Somehow these things are more to support the illnesses, miseries, sorrow, and problems, than the goodness, the happiness, the health, and the good changes that could come about if we had the right attitude. Allah Swt tells us that good words ascend to Allah. Good words are good intentions. Misery and sorrow, unhappiness and difficulties don't really attack the *nafs*. They really don't even often affect the most simple people whose minds are not complex.

I'm not saying that in a derogatory sense at all. We have among us people whose minds are not so complex, who respond to living life in a simple way: joking and happy most of the time. You don't find these people often in misery or sorrow. Those of us who are so complex intellectually, so educated, so analytical, so incredibly obsessed with our perfectionism, so arrogant in the way we live our life, and so absent from our responsibilities, we are often found in misery or sorrow, confusion, or doubt, or conflicts. We don't find the children often in misery or

sorrow, or grief-stricken and complaining about life (at least our children). That's what makes it so hard when we look at what's happening in Egypt or Syria, and other places in the world, and see the pain on the faces of the children. It's so unnatural for us to see that; so unnatural for them to have to be in those circumstances. They may complain or resist some things, but how long does it last?—a minute, perhaps two. How many of us have seen children bear grudges for even half a day, or a few hours? It doesn't happen.

Sometimes children get repetitive illnesses, and I concern myself with that. Sometimes they go out without their coats on, and I'll say, "Why don't you have a jacket on today," anticipating an illness. I worry they are going to catch some adult disease, much more than the colds. The adult diseases are worries, or hearing too much complaining, or not seeing enough happiness, or not hearing enough good words, or seeing too many faces that look sad and confused. They will develop a disease called being victims, and the disease of complaining, and the disease of illnesses that lead to illnesses. A Muslim should be happy and healthy. A Sufi should be strong and insightful, not sick, not consuming medicines like they are breakfast, lunch, and dinner, whether natural remedies or chemical, like they are candies.

Health, wealth, and prosperity are the promises that Allah gives to all of us. All we have to do is go toward it with an open hand, an open mind, instead of complaining. You can have a broken foot, and not complain. You don't deny the foot is broken. You can have a heart condition and be happy, even if it is congenital. You can be poisoned by some waste that has been thrown into the stream through no fault of your own (unless you don't vote properly at the ballot box), and you can have a view of the life of the world that would make you an advocate of health and well-being for others, like what we try to do. That's what a good Muslim does; that's what a Sufi does. That's what a good human being does, or should do. Instead, many of us look

around for blame. We blame ourselves, and when we get tired of blaming ourselves, we blame circumstances. We blame others. "I'm a victim. I have to change my location in order to change my inner self..."??? That's not what usually happens. When we get tired of blaming ourselves, aybe if we are lucky, we get tired of blaming at all.

The Prophetic tradition of the Prophet Mohammed (sal) tells us very clearly that there is in the human being a special organ which has a tremendous capacity to fight disease, to heal, to cure disease both physical and mental, to stimulate the immune system. It is a special organ placed there that will heal us. It will ward off disease, and fight the attacks of grief, and misery, and sorrow, and complaining, fears, doubts, anger, and sadness. It's the heart. If that organ is healthy, the body is healthy; and if it is diseased, the whole body is diseased, we are told. The illnesses of the heart are usually characterized by certain symptoms: ignorance, doubt, selfishness, lack of certainty about oneself, weakness of character, lack of identity, overriding desires for the material world, a disturbed mind, lack of clarity, forgetfulness of the blessings that one has, forgetfulness to have gratitude, lack of direction, excuse-making, victimization. These are the signs of heart disease. With those, the physical heart becomes ill.

Our heart condition comes about to whatever degree we have irregularity of the heart. That depends on what the mixture of iman is, and how much we deny what is true *iman, islam, ihsan*. When the heart is in such an upset state, what comes from us are words, intentions, and acts that are the result of words, actions, and intentions which contradict health. The result of this is our hearts become weaker. We become less sure. Our certainty goes, and we become more insecure. We become disconnected from reality; we become confused. We suffer; we become ill. Or we become arrogant and sure of ourselves. If you know you have a contagious

disease, what kind of a person goes out in public? Why would you give it to others? If any of you have measles, and you found out that so and so didn't have measles, would you go and touch that person and give them a big hug and a kiss? If someone came down the road with HIV AIDS, would you ask them for a blood transfusion for yourself or a loved one? No.

To the self-indulgent part of the population that says, "Yes, what you say is true. I'm contagious, and I'll remove myself!" I say, "No, not just remove yourself, but remove your illness." Your self can't be totally removed. It is who you are. How can you remove your self – your body, maybe – but how do you remove your soul? You can change your intentions. You can change your action. You can change your diet. You can change so many things. You only have one choice: you have to work on that disease. You have to strengthen your immune system. Does it mean you have to be immune to jealousy, doubt, fear, and accusations? If you are not immune to these, it means your immune system is going to be weaker. The strength of immunity comes from your heart, and your heart has to depend on your love for life and for humanity, and for Allah Swt, and not just protecting yourself.

You have loyalties, and they must be strong. You have responsibilities, and they must be kept. Even simple ones, like I was speaking last night: the *wudu* and *salat*, or arriving here on time, out of respect for what is happening. So, 1:00 is the *khutbah*. You should not wait until 12:59 to leave the house. Why? Why couldn't it be 12:57? Is two minutes going to make that much difference to any of us, really? It's a form of control, arrogance. "Nobody tells me what to do. I choose to submit." Do we, really? What should someone see when they come to the countryside here? Should they come to the forest and see the trees with no leaves, water that is red, and hear no bird sounds? When we first moved here, one of the things that stood out to me is there were no bird sounds. For 3-4 years, we didn't hear birds. I don't

know why... maybe because pollution or the trees had been cut recently? I still don't know. I assume it was because there was no love for the birds here. The birds didn't feel welcome. It's an easy answer. Should they see no animal tracks, just cockroaches, rats, and stinking garbage? Should the air smell bad? Is that what they should see when they come to the countryside? This is our world.

What should a person see when they come down the road into this *khanaqah*? What should they feel when they enter the mosque? What should they see and feel when they come up to you? What should they hear, when they hear you speak? What should they feel, when they come up to you and touch you and speak to you, and ask you your knowledge and views? What should they hear, when they walk past your doorway or my doorway? What should they hear, when they come past the doors of the school, or they drop in during a lesson? And when they receive a note from you, what should it say, even if it tells something that is on your mind that bothers you? How about even just saying, "*Asalaamu aleykum*" to one another every time you see each other. There are some people here who do it, and some people here who don't do it. "Well, I just saw that person; why should I say "*asalaamu aleykum*" to them? I just walked out of their office." Should it be polluted like a stream, barren trees, lifeless earth, with just vermin around? Of course not.

The condition of the heart is the result of our faith. The condition of our place where we live is a result of our heart and our faith. The condition of the place where we live is the result of our intention. It is the result of our gratitude, our submission, our trust in Allah. No matter what the future holds, it's in Allah's hands. Whenever you try to take it out of Allah's hands, you may get exactly what you think you want, but it will not be, either the fullness of what you deserve, or what you want eventually.

When our tongue says one thing, and our heart is not in that state, then we are on the path of being *munafiq*. We all say something and then do something else, but generally, not intentionally. What is it that we really want? How selfish are we really? How grateful are we for what we have? How much trust do we really have? It's so easy to say, "Well, I guess I don't trust enough." Okay, dismiss that. "Now I can go off in my life and not have trust. See? It's that easy. I must not trust enough. See? I'm taking it on myself. I must not have that faith. See me? I'm admitting that I don't have that much faith. See? I'm honest." What a cop-out – not to make a list of the things you are grateful for. On the right hand side, make that list. What are the things you are grateful for: the prayer you ask for, for your brother, sister, mother, uncle, aunt, etc. and it came through; the hospitality that was offered to your family, or the help to a dying parent, or assistance that you needed in your home, or a little extra money in the paycheck, or someone gave up something for you, or babysitting, or whatever it is.

[On the left hand side make another list]: What is it you don't have that you really want? Then weigh the two of them. Don't weigh them on your emotions, or your fears, or your desires. Weigh them upon their value. What is the value of having love, and friendship, and kindness, and trust, and the environment, and the birds singing in the trees, and the air relatively clear, and water nice, and good company, and sacrificing people, and work that enables you freedom, and time to take lunch, and [time to] sit with your mother, your child, your brother, sister, or friend. Nobody's saying, "Oh! It's 12:43, better get back to work!" Just to get what... when Allah has given so much, and we are dissatisfied. We want more, other, different, different, different. There is no certainty because there is no trust. There is no trust because there is little faith. There is little faith because you have the wrong thing in your heart, going through your mind, and you have a heart disease. What is it you *do* have? Weigh it.

The condition of the heart is the result of our faith. When the tongue says one thing and the heart is not, I said, that's the *munafiq*. We all do that at times – generally not intentionally; therefore, it is not hypocrisy. It's when you do it for your own self-aggrandizement, your own selfish purposes, your own arrogance. Don't tell me what time to be at the *masjid*! I'm a free individual! How petty is that? How disrespectful is that? Yet, how hard is it to change our habits once they are established? That's the hypocrisy. It's when you, or I, the ego, is the object of our existence. And no matter what anybody says to you, *ba'iat* or no *ba'iat*, respect or no respect, someone says to you, the Shaykh says to you, a good friend says to you, a parent or brother or sister or loved one says to you something; you hear it but you don't listen. You don't give weight to it, because after all, "I know what's best for me." This is 90% motivated by impetuous, distrust, and lack of patience and faith; whereas, if you have the faith, and you make just the one right decision, something happens.

I'll give a general example. You want something; you change your life totally to have that something. You get what you want, but what you change your life from has gotten three times better the next week. In the next week or two weeks, what you were looking for and made the big change about was right there for you. Had you waited, it might have been two or three months. But because you didn't wait, it's the next week, or two weeks. That's how it works. Go back to the beginning of this *khutbah*; listen to the premise. Allah tells us the cure to the diseases of the heart. The diseases manifest through not just these seemingly ethical problems of personality disabilities – and nobody wants to admit that they are disabled, unless of course the government will pay for their disability – but also through the excessive coughing; the excessive gallbladder problems, the food allergies, the constant weight problems.

Allah says, “...**to ascend the good words, and to Him ascend the good deeds.**” And when you act with goodness, act with goodness where... in your heart. Then your heart disease will be cured. When you speak, speak with goodness in your heart. Then it will come onto your tongue. Go find me a religion or any way of life that this doesn't apply to. Be good Muslims, be good Jews, be good Christians, good Buddhists, good Hindus. You have to be conscious for there to be goodness. But for us, as Muslims, we get the aggregate of all of those teachings. The Prophet (sal) said, “**The good deed wipes out the wrong deed**”—with Allah, not with people. It should be with people also. We say, “Well.... I got burned once. I can get burned twice.” It's true. But the good deed wipes out the bad deed—not just the good word.

What's the treatment for our disease? It is to move on from where we are to a better way of saying, to become more noble in our actions; more trusting, more submitted, more noble in our deeds, leaving behind our selfishness, as hard as that may be. It's all so logical and reasonable, “This is what I want, and what I need; this is how I need it, and this is when I need it.” Leave behind the fears that are really behind that process. If someone is sick at heart and wants to be cured, if you have heart failure, if your heart is congested, if your heart is weak and the illnesses are reflecting that, if your heart is afib –or fibbing to you, if what is coming out of your heart is a-fib (a lie) – then you have to repent and turn to Reality. Get in the rhythm. You have to regret, and then trust in Allah.

Then you can come to understand that you can change, and then you can experience what is really healthy, and really true, and really better, because you really don't know that under other circumstances, under the selfish circumstances, if you are really making good decisions. You really don't know. It needs to be verified by those

who care and love you, or the Shaykh, or whoever it is that really, really see clearly. Many people don't want anyone to see clearly. You have to constantly, continuously attend to the improvements of your intentions and your words, and backup those intentions and words with better actions; otherwise, it will be Allah. Allah says in Qur'an, **"Do they not see that they are tried once or twice every year, yet they do not turn Reality to Reality, nor do they take heed."** Patience sounds like forever, but it isn't. Perseverance sounds like pain, but it isn't. It builds character and trust, and it makes you a worthwhile person, a worthwhile friend, a worthwhile mate, a worthwhile parent, a worthwhile employer, a worthwhile employee, a worthwhile child and citizen. That's what it does. It builds your nobility.

"Who cares! I just want what I want, when I want it! I'll worry about that stuff later. I've given this much time, this much effort. It's now time for me, for me, for me, for myself!" Really? That's what you signed up for? That's what you put your hand in my hand and the Prophet's hand about? That's what you really believe? I pity you, if that's what you or anyone believes. But who cares what the Shaykh thinks.

Turning toward reality is to remember that right actions are backed by pure *niyyat* / intention. Some people feel that if you impose your desires, the heart will cure itself because the illnesses that come about when you resist your own desires will go away. And in this case, it is resisting your weaknesses. When you really strongly resist your tendencies, the negative ones, the selfish ones, the fearful ones, the doubting ones, the desire-filled ones, the illnesses that results from that resistance will cure your heart disease. Another approach is to fast in the body and continue fasting until the heart softens, or to make *khilwa* until your heart is softened. Another way is to increase your prayers, your *dhikr*, your *namaz*, to study Qur'an as *ta'wil*.

If the illness state is still there after that, then one should be very careful not to perform any acts that are forbidden or disagreeable. If it still remains, then you should become an absolute servant to those around you, to your relations, family, friends, and even strangers. If it still remains, then you have to extend that service to the orphans, the poor, the needy, the neglected in the community. Constantly extend oneself, until every barrier, every wall of selfishness becomes surrounded by your heart's love. That's when love comes out of you with no expectations of anything in return, and your heart is cured. And what Allah has provided for you in the *Lawhim Mahfūdh* will come to you sooner than later, if at all.

These prescriptions all have to do with your heart, to heal yourself. To heal ourselves, we have to take the higher road. We must look at our illnesses as indications of weaknesses of our intentions in our hearts, and pray to Allah to give us strength, and to accept that we have heart disease; to inspire us, to put us in the company of those who can inspire us; and to take us to the right places, and show us through the eyes of those who know the things that will only excite our hearts to beat stronger and faster, and to purify us of all this disease. When I say 'take,' it doesn't mean geographical. It means 'take' us internally. To purify us of this disease takes a strong immunity to the acts and attacks of the *nafs* and its accompanying viruses and bacteria. This is not just for physical disease, but mental disease, emotional disease, fears, doubts, impatience, *inshā'a-Llāh*. *Asalaamu aleikum*.

Today is a very, very, very bad day in Egypt. So bad it totally eclipsed what is happening in Syria. The Syrian tyrants must be very glad about what is happening in Egypt and Lebanon. And our brothers and sisters and friends are there, people we know very closely are there. We don't care now about ourselves, we have to care about them. They are asking for our prayer, our *du'ā*. I talked to 5 or 6 of them in Egypt on Facebook yesterday. Those of you who work in the LFP and CHI programs,

you have their names in their minds. I'm going to take a break before the second *khutbah*, and I want you to make *du'ā* for them by their names for peace and for safety for every one of them, in your minds. Those of you who don't know them, make a general *du'ā* for these people. They are in a miserable, miserable, miserable situation. Many people have been killed today... there is so much wrong, it is very hard to see right in anything. Who would have thought? You never know. Go through their names, our friends and family there, and make *du'ā* for them.