Reclaim Your Heart

Book Review

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**Introduction**

About the book

Reclaim your heart is more than just a self-help book. It is the manual about the journey of the heart in and out of the ocean of this life. It is the book about how to keep your heart from sinking in the depths of that ocean, and what to do when it does. It is the book about redemption, about hope, about renewal. Every heart can heal, and each moment is created to bring us closer to the transformative return. Reclaim Your Heart is about finding that moment when everything stops and suddenly looks different. It is about finding your awakening. And then returning to the better, truer, and freer version of yourself.

About the Author

Yasmin Mogahed is a well-known Islamic author and scholar based in USA. Reclaim your Heart, her masterpiece is a self-liberating book written beautifully by Yasmin. She portrays the lessons she learnt through her life through her writing and relating it to the Creator. It consists of the many relatable phases of life that everybody goes through and she teaches through Ayaahs how people are supposed to withstand problems and stress faced in life.

Dunya is temporary imperfect and transient.

Through Islam she teaches us about that this dunya is shortlived

Many people attach themselves to this dunya instead of the Benefactor, and his eternal Hereafter.

The book also teaches how not to get devastated by every event or moment that goes through our life. It teaches how to not lose hope by saying that if we place our hopes in Allah we would never lose hope because Allah is Ever-Lasting

The book talks about the status of women in the light of Islam and the current despair in the muslim Ummah, and how to reach a certain level of life spent properly according to Islam.

The book consists of 6 chapters each talking about different aspects of life. Below each chapter is briefly elaborated.

**Attachments**

In this chapter the author questions herself and answers some of the many questions people face in life.

The author answers her own question of ‘why people leave each other?’. She then speaks about how people attach themselves to things of this dunia. She explains how even the people in this dunia are temporary and one the parts of this dunia. This helps us understand that even if we attach ourselves to people, we still get attached to this dunia. That is why we get devastated when somebody leaves us or when an aspect of life which we attach ourselves to like money, or any object like a phone leaves us.

The next part of this chapter talks about how this world is non lasting and that anything in this dunia never lasts. Nothing is perfectly good or bad in this dunia. So, the pain and the suffering in this life, and even the happy moments in life aren’t perfectly good or bad hence they never stay forever, because that is not the nature of this dunia; that is the nature of the Hereafter, which is perfect.

She explains the ayah that states: ‘Verily with hardship comes ease’ Quran (94:5). This ayah is often misconceived in a sense that people expect peace and comfort in life after going through a bad phase in life, however this ayah means to say that both the hardship and ease occur simultaneously. Because during the bad times, God provides us with the strength to got through that hardship. And realizing and being grateful for what you have instead of what you don’t and having Sabr during those times never breaks you.

It is man’s nature to always desire something greater and never be satisfied with what he already has. He tries to find perfection in this imperfect world and that is what leaves him disappointed. So, we try to keep filling that emptiness, that search for perfection and happiness and peace in this imperfect phase.

5 pillars of Islam are a source of detachment from this world and its desires. It helps the man empty its heart, its vessel from the worldly things and desires, to fill it with God instead.

In this world Allah gives us gifts which we attach ourselves to, however the good and the bad occurring, or the gifts he provides are for the sole purpose for us to return to Him, for He is the only One. We should hold the gifts in our hands, not the heart for the heart controls us. The heart must be filled with everlasting, unbreakable thing: The Creator.

A valuable learnt from this is that ‘this life isn’t perfect, for if it was, what would the next be called’.

Also, that if we attach ourselves to the Creator, the Source, we will become unbreakable and never unfulfilled, because He is an unending and undiminishing source of fulfillment and will never disappoint us.

The chapter ends leaving the message that:

This world cannot break you – unless you give it permission. And it cannot own you unless you -- give it your heart. And so, if you hand those keys to dunia for a while -- take them back. This is not the End. You don’t have to die here.

Reclaim your heart and place it with its rightful owner: Allah.

**Love**

We should not fall in love such that we depend or enslave to a worldly being, that it be a person, your children, or your own self.

In doing so we create the worst and the most painful of prisons; because it takes you away from the ultimate, unending and perfect: Allah and our relationship to Him.

True love provides you with peace and calm, it is not a sickness or an addiction. True allows you to be at peace with yourself and with God. However, we place love as a torment or a craving for ourselves. And that is Hawa. True love should never contradict or compete with one’s love for Allah. It should strengthen it, that is why true love is only possible within the boundaries of what Allah has made permissible.

Only by struggling against false pleasure, can we attain true pleasure. They are mutually exclusive. For that reason, the struggle against our own desires is a prerequisite for the attainment of paradise.

A person can never provide enough to fulfill you every time. The more you try to create perfection in this world, the more imperfect it feels. And the only true fulfillment of love will occur when your heart is content with the love of God. This is the liberation of the self from servitude to any created thing. And that is freedom. That is happiness

That is love.

It is the nature of human to love something greater than what he already loves. So, fall in love with the greatest, the Real thing.

**Hardships**

When a storm hits you in life, a person tries his level best to survive and in an attempt to survive, he calls on every one of his lifelines and when those fail him, he raises his hands and prays to Allah Almighty. Actually the man in his attempt to survive using all the lifelines has Allah Almighty in life. In this attempt to survive the storm, he kneels down to Allah Almighty and prays. “The hardships are an important part of our life that are there for the sole purpose of testing a Muslim whether he comes to Allah or not.” In order to survive the storm, a person remembers Allah and that indeed helps him, the humility and the humbleness he feels at that time signifies Allah Almighty in his life as the sole Helper in our life. Through different incidents that are detailed in the Holy Q’uran, we have learnt the same lesson that one must always remember to only bow his head down towards Allah and Allah alone. M’usa(AS) through his complete faith(kaamil yaqeen) crossed the red sea knowing that Allah will save him. Ibrahim (AS) jumped into the fire knowing Allah is only one. Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh, the evilest of all the tyrants though was tortured and beaten up to death was smiling because of seeing her home in Jannah during the last of her breathe.

This world being imperfect and transient place for us humans, will cause us pain, will tear us apart, and will break us to our very soul. One should not assert themselves to the worldly desires such that it takes over his mind and soul. The love of the worldly desires shouldn’t be greater than the love for God and only then we will be saved.

We see the ‘bad’ happening to the ‘good’ and ‘good’ happening to the ‘bad’ and call this world cruel, the world is already cruel. In fact the creator won’t let this be the case, in fact only ‘good’ happens to ‘good’ and only ‘bad’ happens to ‘bad’. It is how we perceive things that matter. A ‘sin’ can end up saving a person if he returns to Allah while ‘a good deed’ can lead up to hellfire if a man is ignorant and arrogant.

We must remember that “Everything in life is a test” “Everything that occurs in our life is for a purpose” “Nothing created in the heavens or Earth is purposeless” This questioning ourselves at difficult times, in times of hardship, pain and bad doings in our life are for the sole purpose of liberating and returning to Allah Almighty so one must remember that at all times. One must be all enduring and Saabir in such times. Hardships are there for us to realize the true purpose of the test itself: a created tool to purify, strengthen and bring us closer to the creator of you, me and all of enemies.

This life is a living hell and a prison for a believer while it is a paradise for the disbeliever. It is also the reason why a disbeliever lives his life creating perfection in this life while a believer lives this life attaining deeds for the perfect life in the here-after which is perfect and the most beautiful. It is stated in the Quran that a disbeliever’s soul is difficult to detach from its body and this world, while believer’s soul is easier because it wants to leave this Imperfect place.

**Relationship with the Creator**

The gift brought down to us Muslims after al Israa wal Miraaj (the magnificent journey) was Salah: Our life’s only purpose. We do feed our bodies, but Salah is food to the soul and the source of utter satisfaction and a source to have conversation with the benefactor and the creator of the Entire Universe. We as Muslims have neglected prayer, even though we find time to go to washroom in our workplace while we don’t have time to offer prayer. Offering prayer to a Muslim is the same as breathing oxygen. Past the midnight and an hour before the dawn is a brief period of time where Allah Almighty comes down to the lowest of Heavens and say’s “Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness and I forgive him”, one must offer the two raka’as such that all the insolvable problems of his/her life are now solved. And that closeness to your Creator, which was one unreachable, becomes your only lifeline.

He is the bringer of dusk for the disbelievers and the beacon of light for the believers. Allah Almighty is the all-knowing and the all comforting. Only he knows what is good for us and what is truly bad for us. What we think as good or bad isn’t really good or bad. We pray for a happy dunya or a happy life in this dunya but indeed he is the only one who knows what’s truly good or bad for us.

Facebook and all the other recent apps are “our wordly life focused.” They impart to us a sense of “us”, that everything in our life is less private and within a range of few clicks. Our life is skeptical in that sense instead one should focus on the true purpose of life that is to attain Jannah and Allah Almighty. So while facebook is a powerful tool, let it be your tool of freedom—not a tool of servitude to yourself and an assessment of others.

Following this, the author describes about the highest state of Imaan in one’s life that is called “The Awakening”. During this state Allah makes worshipping easier but this state is temporary and has 2 pitfalls associated it with it. One who turns arrogant to his deed and the other that is hopeless and in despair that he can’t do more. Shaytan lays traps to such a person having Imaan, during the highs and the lows he deceives to you to do bad. During the highs, he makes you arrogant. During the lows, he makes you hopeless.

**“Know that the path to Allah is not a flat one. Your iman (faith) will go up and down. Your ability to worship will go up and down. But know that for every dip, there is a rise. Just stay patient, stay consistent, don’t lose hope and seek help in Allah. The path is hard. The path will have bumps and drops. But like all things in life, this path will come to an end. And that end will make it all worth it!”**

**Women’s status**

In this society, a women is trying to be the same as a man. She wants to be on par with the man in every field of life but that can never be the case. Since man and woman are created different. God dignifies both man and woman in their distinctiveness—not their sameness. Woman has accepted man as a standard and anything feminine such as becoming a mother that can never be done by a man is given less of a priority in these modern woman’s life. Woman instead of showing their faith, represent their beauty and become tools and objects of use for men. Women should have a strong relationship with Allah instead of fitting in to the male dominant society where becoming manly as a woman is better in their opinion. But as woman following the path of God, the author states that “they have been liberated from this silent bondage. We don’t need society’s standard of beauty or fashion to define our worth. We don’t need to become just like men to be honored. Our worth, our honor, our salvation, and our completion lie not in the slave. But in the lord of the Slave.”

Women leading the prayer happened because of woman doing the same as the man. In fact the person leading the prayer is the same as the one who is behind us in the sight of Allah. If it weren’t any different wouldn’t Khadija or Ayesha, or Fatimah—the greatest of the women’s be asked to lead the prayer but that wasn’t the case.

A society where harshness and masculinity is considered spirit and true manliness and where being a macho is better than being gentle, we as Muslims should pursue being the same character as our Holy Prophet.

Being the same gentle, loving human being as him.

“He who is deprived of gentleness is deprives of good.” [Muslim]

**Ummah**

**Poetry**

We as readers have really enjoyed the book. It takes the reader on a very heartwarming and lovingly beautiful journey.

It imparts on the reader the moral ethics and the Islamic concepts in such a clean way that a normal human not just a muslim would be propagated into reading the book.

The Islamic concepts stated in the book are all concretely supported by the Quran or the Hadiths.

Nothing in the book is left vague.

There is no certain weakness in the book.

The book teaches us the true Islamic teachings in a much polite and a much significant way that imbues the reader a sense of responsibility.

An immersive and submissive reading of the book teaches the reader a lot of Islamic details that should be a must read for any muslim person.