

# FRIDAY MESSAGE

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## The Power of a Softened Heart: A Journey Towards Spiritual Renewal

In the fast-paced rhythm of modern life, it's easy to lose touch with what truly matters. The state of our hearts, both spiritually and emotionally, often becomes overlooked amid the rush to meet deadlines, achieve goals, and fulfil obligations. Yet, it is the heart—the sacred vessel within us—that holds the key to true fulfilment and ultimate purpose. A heart connected to its Creator, Allah Almighty, is one that flourishes with light, peace, and unwavering faith.

## The Watchful Heart: A Sign of Spiritual Vitality

One of the clearest indicators of a living and righteous heart is its constant awareness of Allah's presence and watchfulness. Such a heart knows that Allah is fully aware of every thought, action, and emotion. Nothing remains hidden from His knowledge. This constant awareness serves as both a guide and a guard. It encourages good deeds, instils a love for acts of worship, and deters sinful actions. This inner compass, grounded in reverence and humility, keeps the believer aligned with the path of righteousness. Allah reminds us in the Quran of the transformative power of this awareness: **"This is what you were promised—for everyone who constantly turns to Allah and preserves His commandments; who fears the Most Merciful unseen and comes with a penitent heart."** [Surah Q: 32].

## The Central Role of the Heart

Imam Ibn Qayyim eloquently emphasises the profound importance of the heart, calling it "the most noble part of a human being." He describes the heart as the seat of knowledge and love for Allah, the source of faith and recognition, and the ultimate recipient of divine messages. It is through the heart that believers comprehend their purpose and establish their connection with Allah. The limbs and actions merely follow where the heart leads. Consequently, nurturing and purifying the heart becomes an essential endeavour for anyone seeking a life of meaning and righteousness.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) reinforces this truth in Sahih Muslim, saying: **"Allah does not look at your bodies or appearances, but He looks at your hearts and deeds."** This profound statement reminds us that external appearances and material achievements pale in comparison to the purity and sincerity of one's heart.

## The Neglected Heart: A Warning Against Spiritual Apathy

Hearts require constant care, nourishment, and attention. Without regular introspection and remembrance of Allah, the heart is prone to spiritual decay. It can become hardened, rusty, and distant from its Creator. The accumulation of sins, the neglect of repentance, and a heedless lifestyle can layer the heart with spiritual grime. Over time, this leads to a state where

the heart struggles to respond to the divine call, becoming indifferent and detached.

Ibn Al-Mubarak poignantly captures this reality: "I have seen sins kill hearts, and addiction to them brings humiliation. Leaving sins gives life to hearts, and it is better for your soul to disobey them."

This spiritual apathy, however, is not a death sentence for the heart. Rather, it serves as a wake-up call, urging us to reevaluate our priorities, reconnect with Allah, and seek His mercy. The Quran beautifully addresses this need for renewal, posing a poignant question to believers: **"Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?"** [Surah Al-Hadid: 16].

#### **A Call to Action: Reviving the Heart**

The verse above is more than just a rhetorical question. It is a divine invitation to self-reflection and renewal. It prompts believers to examine the state of their hearts and measure their level of humility, submission, and dedication to their Creator. It reminds us that the passage of time, if left unchecked, can lead to spiritual stagnation, hardening our hearts and diminishing our faith.

This call to action is not just an encouragement; it is also a warning. Allah cautions believers against falling into the same pitfalls as previous generations who neglected their spiritual responsibilities: **"Let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened, and many of them are defiantly disobedient."** [Surah Al-Hadid: 16]. Hard hearts are a result of prolonged heedlessness and rebellion against divine guidance.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) offered a practical remedy for this condition, advising: **"Indeed, faith wears out in one's heart as clothes wear out, so ask Allah to renew the faith in your hearts."** (Authenticated by Al-Albani). This supplication serves as a powerful reminder that spiritual rejuvenation requires both effort and divine assistance.

#### **The Renewal of Faith: Allah's Boundless Mercy**

Allah's mercy knows no bounds. Just as He revives the earth after its death, causing it to bloom with life and vibrancy, He can also revive hearts that have grown cold and distant. No matter how far a person may feel from Allah, His mercy and guidance remain within reach. The Quran reassures us: **"Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs so that you may understand."** [Surah Al-Hadid: 17].

Al-Shawkani reflects on this verse, noting that Allah is fully capable of softening hearts after their hardness and reviving them after their lifelessness. This divine attribute offers hope to every believer, reminding us that spiritual transformation is always possible, regardless of past shortcomings.

#### **Embracing the Journey of Renewal**

The journey towards a softened and enlightened heart begins with sincere intention and steadfast action. It requires regular self-assessment, repentance, and a commitment to remembrance and worship. By turning to Allah, seeking His guidance, and striving to align our hearts with His commands, we open the door to a life of fulfillment, peace, and unwavering faith.

Let us heed the divine call, awaken from our spiritual slumber, and rekindle the light of faith within our hearts.