

Fascination with Vegetative Perfections: Factor in Becoming a Plant in Human Form

What Is the Vegetative Heart, and How Do We Turn into a Plant in Human Form?

Have you ever heard of the vegetative heart or a level lower than an animal? The vegetative heart is one of the types of heart, classified based on the nature of our loved things and pleasures. Interests such as being beautiful, reproducing, having a fit body, and so on originate from it, and it is the identifier of a plant in human form. As humans, we possess the strongest and best existential structure in the creation system. However, this does not necessarily mean that all of us succeed and achieve bliss. In truth, it is our heart and the type of our concerns that determine our success or failure. Unfortunately, many of us leave this world and are born into the hereafter while facing an eternity accompanied by hardship and distress, due to being unfamiliar with the criteria for assessing our performance. For a successful entry and a healthy birth into the hereafter, we need to know:

-What is the criterion for our value?

-What brings us closer to the purpose of our creation, and what factor takes us further away?

-And, as our lives pass, are we getting closer to Allah day by day, or are we distancing ourselves from Him?

As we know, there are various classifications for human beings, ranging from race to personality. However, logically, no standard or criterion is superior to the one set by our Creator, by which He categorizes us. According to the Quran, the

criterion for our value in the sight of God is our heart [1]. But this is not the heart we were born with at the start of our lives because hearts, based on their *fitrah* and initial creation, do not differ from one another, and therefore, cannot be categorized. In fact, the classification of different types of hearts only becomes possible when the doors of our hearts open to various matters, and the heart determines its path by acquiring perfection or darkness. We have generally become familiar with the types of hearts in previous lessons. In this lesson, we intend to understand how factors like the desire for beauty or other vegetative perfections can degrade our human status to the level of a plant. What are the characteristics of a plant in human form, and will we reach our ultimate destination by possessing a vegetative heart?

How Does Our Heart Change?

In previous lessons, we learned that the type of our concerns determines our value, our inward state, and the category we belong to. Therefore, the more we are inclined toward the perfections of any of the existential levels within us, the more we have effectively set our position and value at that level. For instance, if we constantly move from one gym to another solely because of our interest in beauty or physical fitness; if we boast to friends and acquaintances about our ability to reproduce or have more children; or if our entire focus is on obtaining a sports medal, we have effectively lowered ourselves to the level of vegetative perfections and the stature of a plant in human form. Consequently, we cannot expect these actions and perfections to result in us possessing a sound heart.

Our assets in the hereafter do not depend on the extent of our vegetative or animal perfections, or even our acts of worship. We must observe to what extent each of these perfections has influenced our heart and in which direction they have steered it. In essence, we must pay attention to the output of our actions on our hearts. Every of our activities in life influences our heart, depending on the goal and intention we set for them. For example, when we exercise primarily to achieve better physical fitness or a more beautiful physique, or when we undergo surgery simply to be more beautiful, we nurture the vegetative dimension of our self and strengthening the vegetative heart within us. In other words, we have become a plant in human form. In contrast, if we set our goal for exercise as having a healthy body to serve our human dimension and to prepare for fulfilling our supra-rational needs, we are actively strengthening our human heart. Therefore, whether we ultimately reach the human status or that of a plant in human form largely depends on our knowledge of our existential dimensions and how we prioritize and arrange our beloved ones. We determine our worth and status based on the degree of interest and inclination we show toward the perfections of each part of our existence. Thus, if our attention is constantly focused on acquiring vegetative perfections, and prioritizing beauty, nutrition, pride in greater reproduction, or higher physical ability defines our life, we will ultimately be born into the hereafter with a vegetative heart, appearing as a plant in human form. This is exactly like a student who spends their time on games and entertainment instead of focusing on their studies, and ultimately develops the ability to play games rather than scientific proficiency.

Characteristics of a Plant in Human Form

It is important, therefore, how we define ourselves as human beings and what limits and standards we set for ourselves. Possessing a vegetative heart confines us to the level of vegetative perfections. In fact, once we fill our hearts with loves that are limited to the vegetative level of our existence, no attraction remains for higher levels within us. Thus, we neither understand nor seek the beloved things of higher levels. To better illustrate this, imagine a child who has filled themselves with all kinds of snacks before the main meal. It is natural that they will have no desire for the main food, even though it may be very delicious and have higher nutritional value. If they persist in this trend, over time their palate will shift and they'll lose their appetite for proper, wholesome food.

Of course, since vegetative perfections are considered achievements in their own right, they can mislead us. For example, by having a beautiful face, a fit and muscular body, healthy children, etc., we may fall into the illusion of success in life and become oblivious to the main purpose of our creation.

Therefore, we must constantly examine our inclinations and our beloved ones. If our goals, concerns, and desires do not extend beyond the concerns of a plant, then we have lowered our human status to the level of a plant. We have turned into a plant in human form, and instead of possessing a sound heart, we have acquired a vegetative heart. In such a condition, we will not have grown beyond the level of a plant in this world, and we will not have a healthy birth into the hereafter.

Can We Reach the Destination with a Vegetative Heart?

According to the Quranic classification, human beings are generally divided into two categories: *Fasiq* and believer. By having a stony heart (or lower than stone), an animal heart (or lower than animal), or a satanic heart, we are considered *fasiq* and abnormal. This is because we are not moving toward the purpose of our creation. When our Creator has designated for us the potential for similarity to Himself, and we disregard this goal, dedicating all our thoughts and minds to actualizing vegetative potentials or other lower perfections of our existence, we turn into a plant in human form (or even a lower level) and will certainly not reach the destination.

Suppose the condition for entering a specific conference involves unique features such as possessing a valid degree, presenting an article, meeting a specific age requirement, and so on. Naturally, only those who meet the necessary conditions can gain entry and succeed in the conference. Otherwise, they will not even receive permission to enter. Similarly, if we wish to reach our destination, we must seek to acquire the minimum necessary conditions for a successful entry into the hereafter, and a plant in human form has no place there.

Fitrah means every phenomenon being placed in its true position. When we steer our inward self toward vegetative perfections- which are at a level lower than animal perfections- instead of human perfections, we deviate from our human inward self and our state of balance. Instead of acquiring a tool suitable for our eternity, which is the sound heart, we content ourselves with merely obtaining an inanimate or a vegetative heart. Apart from possessing a sound heart, having any other heart, including the vegetative heart, will lead to our loss and detriment.

Make no mistake: Having vegetative perfections is not inherently bad. The desire to be beautiful, possessing physical capabilities, etc., are good within their limits, but they are perfections at the level of a plant. If these perfections become the axis of our life, they will transform us into a plant in human form with a vegetative heart. Yet, we are humans, and we require a heart that counts as our tool and asset in the hereafter.

If we are familiar with the existential structure of the human being, we know that having a vegetative dimension is not meant to be an insult to plants or a level more terrible than the animal level. The vegetative dimension is simply a level lower than the animal one in our soul, possessing its own specific characteristics. A human being who is at a level lower than an animal, meaning the vegetative level, does not set limits for their concerns and desires higher than the needs and characteristics of a plant. When we define ourselves only at the level of a plant, it means that our very definition of ourselves, the concept of eternity, and the path ahead have not gone beyond the limits of this world. Therefore, it is natural that with this limited self-definition, we will ultimately acquire a heart that neither has vitality nor is compatible with the living conditions of the hereafter. In truth, the only way to reach the destination is to break the limited framework to which we are confined.

In this lesson, we examined the vegetative heart as one of the types of human hearts. We stated that if our attention is solely focused on the vegetative perfections of our existence, such as the desire for beauty, physical growth and development, reproduction, and so on, our taste and the limit of our desires will

change. Our status and worth will descend to the level of a plant in human form, and we will ultimately acquire a vegetative heart instead of a sound heart.

Vegetative perfections—like the desire for beauty or a fit physique—are not intrinsically bad, provided they are pursued according to proper principles. However, these perfections are only at the level of a plant in human form and are far removed from our ultimate human destination.

How much value do you place on your vegetative perfections? Does the acquisition of vegetative perfections play a central role in your life? How far are you from being a plant in human form?

References

[1]. Holy Quran, 26:89