

# With the Noble Quran

## The Nature of the Human Soul

(Translated)

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Allah (swt) said, **رَزَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبَّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ، وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثَ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ (14)** قُلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْ ذَلِكَ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿

**“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire—women, children, heaps of gold and silver, fine branded horses, cattle, and fertile land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but with Allah is the best return. (14) Say, “Shall I inform you of something better than that? For those who are mindful of Allah, with their Lord are gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever—along with purified spouses and the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is All-Seeing of His servants.” [TMQ Surah Aal-i Imran: 14-15].**

The first verse begins with a past tense verb in the passive form, without mention of the fa'il (doer,) the verbal noun of which is tazyeen (adornment), meaning to make something beautiful, or pretty. This adornment is in human nature, that is, in the very nature of man. Man is naturally inclined to love the desires detailed in the verse, and others that are not detailed. The adorer is Allah (swt) who created and proportioned, who determined and guided. “Desires” is the plural of “shahwat” in the grammatical form of fa'lah, in the original noun of marra, and it indicates the recurrence of craving for whatever is desired.

The first verse includes two types of desires beloved by the soul. The first type is related to the preservation of the human species, which is women and children. Sheikh Taher bin Ashour, may Allah have mercy on him, says, **وَبَيَّانُ الشَّهَوَاتِ بِالنِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ** وَمَا بَعْدَهُمَا، بَيَّانٌ بِأَصُولِ الشَّهَوَاتِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ الَّتِي تَجْمَعُ مُشْتَهَاتٍ كَثِيرَةً، وَالَّتِي لَا تَخْتَلِفُ بِاخْتِلَافِ الْأُمَمِ وَالْعُصُورِ وَالْأَقْطَارِ، فَأَلْمِئِلٌ إِلَى النِّسَاءِ مَرْكُوزٌ فِي الطَّبْعِ، وَضَعَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِحِكْمَةٍ بَقَاءِ النَّوْعِ بِدَاعِي طَلَبِ التَّنَاسُلِ إِذِ الْمَرْأَةُ هِيَ “مَوْضِعُ التَّنَاسُلِ، فَجُعِلَ مِثْلُ الرَّجُلِ إِلَيْهَا فِي الطَّبْعِ حَتَّى لَا يَحْتَاجَ بَقَاءُ النَّوْعِ إِلَى تَكَلُّفٍ رَبَّمَا تَعَفُّهُ سَامَةً.” The explanation of desires for women and children and what comes after them is an explanation of the origins of human desires that gather many desires, and which do not differ with the difference of nations, eras and countries. The inclination towards women is rooted in nature, and Allah Almighty placed it. For the sake of the survival of the species, the pursuit of procreation is sought, since women are the site of procreation. Thus, the inclination of men toward women is innate, so that the survival of the species does not require the effort that might be followed by boredom.”

He added, **إِذْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ فِي الْوَالِدَيْنِ، مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ، شُعُورًا وَجَدَانِيًّا يُشْعِرُ** بِأَنَّ الْوَلَدَ قِطْعَةً مِنْهُمَا، لِيَكُونَ ذَلِكَ مَدْعَاةً إِلَى الْمُحَافَظَةِ عَلَى الْوَلَدِ الَّذِي هُوَ الْجِيلُ الْمُسْتَقْبَلُ، وَبِبَقَائِهِ بَقَاءُ النَّوْعِ، فَهَذَا بَقَاءُ النَّوْعِ بِحِفْظِهِ مِنَ الْاضْمِحْلَالِ الْمَكْتُوبِ عَلَيْهِ، وَفِي الْوَلَدِ أَيْضًا جِفْظٌ لِلنَّوْعِ مِنَ الْاضْمِحْلَالِ الْعَارِضِ بِالْإِعْتِدَاءِ عَلَى الضَّعِيفِ مِنَ النَّوْعِ لِأَنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ يَغْرِضُ لَهُ الضَّعْفَ، بَعْدَ الْقُوَّةِ، فَيَكُونُ وَلَدُهُ دَافِعًا عَنْهُ عَدَاءً مَنْ يَغْتَدِي عَلَيْهِ، فَكَمَا دَفَعَ الْوَالِدُ عَنْ ابْنِهِ

“The love of children is also innate, since Allah (swt) placed in parents, both men and women, an emotional feeling that makes them feel that the child is a part of them, so that this would be a reason to preserve the child, who is the future generation, and through his survival the species will survive. This is the survival of the species by preserving it from the extinction that is written for it, and in the child there is also the preservation of the species from the extinction that occurs through aggression against the weak of the species, because man is exposed to weakness after he was strong, so his son defends him against the hostility of whoever attacks him. Just as the father defends his son when he is weak, the son defends the father when he is weak.”

The second type is related to human survival, and is manifested in the love of owning heaped-up ‘qanateer’ of gold and silver, and the love of branded horses, livestock, and crops. ‘Qanateer’ is the plural of ‘qintar’, an Arabized word meaning something weighing one hundred pounds. What is meant by ‘Qintar’ is multiplied and multiplied. Humans are naturally inclined to love owning gold and silver, and this love knows no bounds. This is confirmed by the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (saw), **«لو كان لابن آدم واديان من ذهبٍ لابتغى إليهما الثالث ولا يملأ جوف ابن آدم إلا التراب»** **“If the son of Adam had two valleys full of gold, he would long for a third, and nothing will fill the belly of the son of Adam except dust.”**

As for the branded horses, Ibn Ashour says about them, **«الخيل المسومة فيقول عنها ابن عاشور: "والمُسَوِّمَةُ الْأَظْهَرُ فِيهِ مَا قِيلَ: إِنَّهُ الرَّاعِيَةُ، فَوُ مُشْتَقٌّ مِنَ السَّوْمِ وَهُوَ الرَّعْيُ، يُقَالُ: أَسَامَ الْمَاشِيَةَ إِذَا رَعَى بِهَا فِي الْمَرْعَى، فَتَكُونُ مَادَّةً فَعَلٌ لِلتَّكْثِيرِ أَيْ الَّتِي تُتْرَكُ فِي الْمَرْعَى مُدَّةً طَوِيلَةً وَإِنَّمَا يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ لِسَعَةِ أَصْحَابِهَا وَكَثْرَةِ مَرَاعِيهِمْ، فَتَكُونُ خِيْلَهُمْ مُكْرَمَةً فِي الْمَرْجِ وَالرِّيَاضِ، وَالْأَنْعَامُ زِينَةً لِأَهْلِ الْوَبَرِ، وَفِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ، ذُكِرَ بَعْضُ مِنْهَا فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْكَرِيمِ. The most apparent of what was said about the branded is that it is the shepherdess, so it is derived from the word saawm, which means grazing. It is said: ‘Asama al-Mashiyya,’ if he grazes them in the pasture, so the substance of the deed is for multiplication, meaning that which is left in the pastures for long periods, and this is only due to the generosity of their owners and the abundance of their pastures, so their horses are honoured in the meadows and gardens, and livestock are an adornment for the people, and they have many benefits, some of which are mentioned in the Holy Quran.”** He added, **«أما الحرث فأصله مَصْدَرٌ حَرَثَ الْأَرْضَ إِذَا شَقَّهَا بِآلَةٍ لِيَزْرَعَ فِيهَا أَوْ يَغْرِسَ، وَأُطْلِقَ هَذَا الْمَصْدَرُ عَلَى الْمَخْرُوثِ فَصَارَ يُطْلَقُ عَلَى الْجَنَاتِ وَالْحَوَائِطِ وَحُقُولِ الزَّرْعِ** **“As for the cultivation, its origin is the source of the ploughing of the land when it is split with a machine to plant or sow in it, and this source was applied to the ploughed, so it came to be applied to gardens, fences, and fields of crops.”**

The noble verse described these adornments as the fleeting enjoyment of worldly life, and the description of fleeting enjoyment is an accurate description that matches its reality, as it is what is enjoyed temporarily, then it disappears and does not remain, and what remains is what is with Allah (swt), as is made clear at the end of the same verse, **﴿وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَآبِ﴾** **“And with Allah is the best return.”**

The second verse begins with Allah (swt) commanding His Messenger to say to the people. “Shall I inform you of something better than that?” This is a question intended to create anticipating suspense for what will come next, which is the reward of the righteous in the Hereafter with their Rabb, namely, the Gardens beneath which rivers flow, with eternity therein, and spouses purified from faults and everything that disgusts the soul, and above all that, the pleasure of Allah, the pleasure that was

denied to those who followed their desires in this world. The second verse concludes with a mention of the truth of Allah Almighty's knowledge of people. He is the One who created them, and He is the All-Knowing of the desires He has placed within them, and He is the All-Seeing of their deeds. Allah (swt) said, ﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾ **“Would He not know, He who created? And He is the Subtle, the All-Aware.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Mulk: 14].

The predicate (khabr) of the phrase “for those who fear Allah” precedes the subject (mubtada) “gardens.” This is because of the importance of the attribute included in the preceding predicate, which is piety, which means that the servant adheres to the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt) in every small and large of his actions. This means that he proceeds in satisfying the desires that he loves according to the commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt), thus mixing his material actions with seeking the pleasure of Allah (swt), and thus he has mixed matter with spirit.

With all of the above, the two verses have indicated the three instincts rooted in human nature, with some of their manifestations. The first mentioned is the instinct of procreation, and two manifestations of it are mentioned in the verse, women and children. The second is the instinct of survival, with the manifestation of ownership and the manifestation of honour, sovereignty, and strength by owning horses. The third is the instinct of religiosity, with the manifestation of sanctifying the Creator, Glory be to Him, the Most High, with whom is the best return, and the manifestation of piety in conducting business and satisfying desires.

It is worth noting in this context that these instincts impart in human nature, with their various and diverse manifestations, in addition to his organic needs, motives for behaviour, generating within him the desire to perform actions to satisfy those instincts and needs. However, concepts that govern satisfaction are essential. Thus, man chooses among the gratifiers, favouring some and rejecting others, based on his own concepts, his viewpoint in life, and his ultimate goal and mission in this world. All of this can be summed up in the term “piety,” due to the inability of the mind to establish a system for gratification and its inability to legislate. Only Allah, Who created man, charged him with obligations, and will resurrect him and hold him accountable for his commitment to what He charged him with on the Day of Judgment, is capable of doing so. Whoever adheres to Allah (swt)'s system in satisfying his desires with the legal rulings emanating from the Islamic Deen will earn Paradise and eternity therein, after the Day of Judgment. As for those who turn away from the system of Allah (swt), their punishment will be from Allah Almighty, and Allah (swt) likened them to livestock that have no purpose other than mere enjoyment and eating. Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ﴾ **“And those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as livestock eat, and the Fire will be a residence for them.”** [TMQ Surah Muhammad: 12].

In conclusion, these two verses are a suitable basis for studying the human soul. In addition to them are the many verses in the Noble Quran that relate to the human soul, which reveal the reality of that soul and guide it to constructing it in a sound manner, leading to happiness in this world, and success in the Hereafter, through the pleasure of Allah (swt).