

When the Soul Cools Down, Human Hardens

In Syriac culture, a human being becomes human not through their intellect, but through the warmth of their heart. The heart is the dwelling place of love. When love withdraws, the heart does not simply empty; it grows cold. A cold heart freezes over time. A frozen heart hardens, and a hardened heart begins to wound both itself and others. Therefore, evil is often described not merely as a moral deviation, but as the cooling of the soul and a state of inner emptiness.

A human being cannot develop empathy without knowing themselves; when empathy does not develop, understanding another becomes difficult. Thus, relationships pass by without turning into true encounters, and lives flow away without ever touching one another. These lives passing without touching lose the ability to feel each other over time. Not being able to feel is one of the heaviest deprivations for a human being. Because a human being remains alive only to the extent that they can make contact with life.

When contact weakens, the soul begins to grow cold. As this chill deepens, undefined voids devoid of meaning form inside the human being. Over time, these voids transform the inner world of the human being into an echoic chamber: there is sound, there are words, but there is no response.

Saint Mor Ephrem of Nisibis (306–373) views the heart as the "**sanctuary of the divine fire.**" This fire is love and mercy. When the fire faces extinguishment, the human being may appear calm from the outside, but they are frozen from within. Today, the fact that anger flares up so quickly and intolerance becomes so widespread stems from the soul growing cold from the inside out. The explosion of great angers over small reasons is because the inner voids cannot find a warmth to be filled with. The place left vacant is filled either with anger or with hatred.

When the soul cools down, not only feelings but meaning also freezes. Formally, everything is in its proper place, but it is disconnected from the inside. For what is decisive in Syriac wisdom is not the shape of the behavior, but the warmth carried by the soul. If the inner fire has gone out, no matter what the human being does, they harden. The cooling soul forms a crust to protect itself; as the crust thickens, mercy cannot enter inside, and love cannot go outside.

Not knowing how to love is the deepest state of ignorance. Yet, this ignorance is born not from not knowing, but from forgetting. When the human being forgets that they were created

with love, they turn toward possessing, dominating, and excluding. The human being who wishes to "dominate" instead of "serving" catches a cold in their soul without realizing it. And thereby, they expand the void inside them a little more.

The human being whose soul cools down collapses inward. The human being collapsing inward cannot make contact with life. The human being who cannot make contact cannot establish a relationship; the human being who cannot establish a relationship becomes isolated. This isolation is not a serenity, but a cold desolation. This state is explained not so much by the "darkening of the heart," but by the freezing of the heart. The frozen heart does not deny the light, but it does not possess the flexibility to carry it.

Yet, Syriac wisdom teaches this: the human being is warmed by love, thawed by mercy, and kept alive by the interaction and relationship of goodness. Inner voids are filled with love; voids not filled with love rot the human being from the inside out. Therefore, the root of all malfunctions is the cooling of the soul; all healings begin with the rekindling of the inner fire. Mercy is the first spark that fans this fire. The merciful human being is not weak; they are the one who approaches closest to the Divine likeness.

The wisdom of life stands precisely here: alongside those who try not to let their soul cool down. Because the universe revolves with love. The human being who falls outside of this movement loses their direction. The heart that loses its inner warmth turns to stone; the heart turned to stone lives, but does not give life.

When the soul cools down, human hardens. When the soul warms up, human becomes human once again.

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