

## **Heart and Struggle**

The heart, that vital organ of our lives, nourishes both our physical and spiritual worlds with the blood and values it provides.

This heart -it must be taught love, understanding, tenderness, and compassion. If we fail in this, we cannot leave a gentle echo in the world. Life will erase us as it moves on. For the warmth or coldness of the heart is profoundly decisive in shaping the mental and spiritual realm. It might even be considered the primary factor in whether this shaping is positive or negative.

A steady warmth of heart, which fosters positive emotions, guides humans toward harmony and understanding -both within themselves and with their surroundings. When the heart is warm, soft, and pure, it positively influences relationships through constructive emotions. Understanding, perception, knowledge, wisdom, and refinement grow; the individual expands and matures.

Conversely, a cold heart, which breeds negative emotions, renders a person unbalanced and discordant—both inwardly and outwardly. This leads to a contraction of the mental and emotional world and a stifling of inner potential. When the heart is cold, rigid, and tainted, it fuels mental conflicts through harmful emotions. Understanding, perception, knowledge, wisdom, and decency diminish; the individual contracts and grows tense.

At the root of many struggles in life lies this inner contraction and tension. This internal suffocation often stems from weaknesses in one's spiritual strength and knowledge. Spiritual strength—which sustains the system of meaning and values - refers to the ability to maintain inner peace amid hardships. Knowledge, meanwhile, is the capacity to approach events from the right perspective. If these two foundations are lacking, emotional imbalances arise, and negative reactions dominate.

In this process, the **"inner braking system"** -the spirit of self-control- fails. Self-control is a vital mechanism that allows one to regulate emotions, thoughts, and actions. But in those lacking spiritual grounding and sufficient knowledge, this mechanism becomes dysfunctional. As a result, inner conflicts and tensions spill into the external world as **"struggles."**

In truth, struggle is not between one person and another. The real struggle occurs within a person, deep in the invisible realm, before overflowing outward. Struggle is between:

- Soul and ego,
- Education and ignorance,
- Darkness and light,
- Depth and superficiality,
- Altruism and selfishness,
- Conscience and callousness,
- Right and wrong,
- Bondage and freedom,
- Domination and service,
- Rudeness and courtesy,
- Honor and disgrace,
- Value and worthlessness,
- Halal and haram,
- Empathy and antipathy,
- Loyalty and betrayal,
- Decency and indecency,
- Modesty and shamelessness,
- Reverence for life and its instrumentalization.

All these struggles exist to distinguish good from evil by placing good before evil. They exist to discern what comes first in life and what truly matters. They exist to

transcend arrogance and sanctify human dignity. They exist to help humans discover their inner goodness through heightened awareness. They exist to bear responsibility with "**conscience, ethics, and virtue**" to avoid losing compassion and mercy in fulfilling this duty, and to act in alignment with these noble principles.

This requires embracing love in its breadth and depth. It also demands refusing to condone exploitation or bow to oppression.

Though difficult in a self-centered world, maintaining prudence and wisdom is essential for life's serenity. We must not lose the spirit of self-control.

Sadly, adhering to this understanding is harder than ever in today's harsh conditions. Humans have filled their minds, souls, and hearts with trivial thoughts and material anxieties to such an extent that their very existence suffocates. The spaces where the soul breathes light and air are sealed. The inner world is so crammed with matter that neither air nor light can seep in.

Let us pause and reflect:

- Why so much negativity and unrest?
- Why do these soul-crushing worries and anxieties arise?
- Why are injustice and victimization so widespread?
- Why do cruelty and arrogance persist unabated?
- Why so much hardship when ease is possible?

Yet if humans freed themselves from emotional burdens, selfishness, greed, envy, and the lust for domination, they would notice how their hearts and souls lighten, breathe, and shine. For as selfishness is restrained and base desires mastered, moral failings give way to moral goodness.

Then, virtues that seem scarce in society will qualitatively multiply, and humans will begin to live with greater depth and peace. This is the harmony of life-

sustaining values -love, compassion, understanding, and service- joining hands.  
Such harmony transforms life into a more meaningful and beautiful journey.

Don't you agree?

Let us remember: Humanity's greatest struggle lies within. Those who preserve the warmth of their hearts and triumph in this struggle elevate not only themselves but all of humankind.

**Yusuf Beğtaş**