

## How Can Visualization Lead to a Sound Heart and Eternal Bliss?

### What Is Meant by Visualization and Acquiring a Sound Heart?

How significant is visualization in your life?

Have you ever visualized yourself achieving a goal you have in mind? What kind of feeling does it evoke in you?

How influential do you think the power of imaginal faculty can be in achieving our goals?

Most of us have experienced the positive effects of visualization on accelerating the achievement of goals. Visualization helps us maintain our motivation and commitment, preventing us from growing weary in our pursuit of the goals we envision. The power of imaginal faculty is so strong that when focused on something, it compels our body and senses to align with it. The more affirmation and mental visualization we practice, the greater our power to continue on the path becomes, and when imagination flies, it also carries the heart along with it.

However, it is important to note that imagination is like a double-edged sword, as much as it can be beneficial, it can also be dangerous. We are free to direct our imaginations, and how we use this extraordinary power and for what kind of goals depend entirely on ourselves. Some people limit the wings of their imagination to obtaining an academic degree, owning a luxury car, or acquiring a grand villa in a scenic region, while others let their imagination soar so high that they conquer eternity and the hereafter.

## H2 The Importance of Visualization in Spiritual Movements

You may have seen families spending large sums of money on the latest and most advanced computer available on the market, yet the most they do with it is just playing games. This is exactly what we do with our imaginal faculty. Unfortunately, most of us have limited our visualization to inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, or at best intellectual aspects of our existence, and we only use this exceptional power for short-term and worldly goals, such as career and academic success, or romantic relationships, while the value of our imagination is much greater than such limited ambitions.

Visualization and love relationships are not limited to worldly beloveds; in fact, the most real and genuine form of love is the one we establish in our imagination with our ultimate Beloved, God, and the most perfect manifestations of Him, the infallible Imams (PBUT).

Imagination is the engine that drives the heart and one of the most important tools for attaining a sound heart. To succeed in spiritual movements, we need visualization and imagination about the human goals we must achieve. If we fail to use this amazing power for our supra-rational growth to become similar to the perfect human being, our progress on the path of human growth will be slow and sluggish.

If properly nurtured, imagination can remove the veils of the material world from the human eye and reveal truths from *Alam Malakut* (Celestial Kingdom) and the *Barzakh*. Most spiritual unveilings<sup>1</sup> that occur for great religious figures and saints actually happen in their imagination. Of course, it is obvious that the path to

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<sup>1</sup>. *Mukashafah* is a form of intuitive or mystical understanding that results in the revelation of divine truths.

reaching God and human perfection is one of purity and cleanliness, and a pure path cannot be traversed with impure imagination. Therefore, the first step in nurturing imagination is its purification and cleanliness.

### **Purification of Imagination: A Necessity for Achieving a Sound Heart**

In previous lessons, we stated that a healthy birth into the *Barzakh* requires having a sound heart. A sound heart is the one that is completely free from any internal vices such as envy, self-conceit, hatred, lust, greed, hypocrisy, deceit, and other impure desires and material attachments, reflecting the names and attributes of God entirely. The prerequisite for achieving such a heart is having a pure imagination, but the question is, how can we keep our imagination pure in this tempting world full of allurements. Naturally, the most important step on this path is controlling our imagination, which, in turn, depends on managing the body; someone who cannot control his body will surely face difficulties in controlling his imagination.

In order to manage our bodies, we must guide our five senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—along with the words we speak, to avoid being consumed by forbidden (*haram*) things. Indulging in forbidden deeds can cloud our imagination and harden our hearts, making us unkind and harsh.

The next step in managing the body is related to permissible (*halal*) matters. It is true that we are allowed to use what is permissible, but excess in this area also weighs down and weakens the imagination, not allowing it to soar and realize its potential. In general, indulging excessively in sensory and worldly pleasures

entangles the heart in the material world and deprives us of the opportunity for spiritual growth.

### **Riding on the Wings of Imagination to Heaven**

One of the exceptional and powerful educational methods that Allah has repeatedly used in the Quran is guiding the human imagination through describing the blessings of Heaven. If listening to these descriptions is accompanied by continuous mental imagery and spiritual preparation, it gradually engages the power of imagination and makes the heart eager for Heaven. This eagerness is like a cool glass of water that extinguishes the flames of inner hell such as anxiety, irritability, anger, jealousy, and so on, increasing the joy and peace of the heart day by day.

Now, in the final section of this article, we want to ride on the wings of imagination and invite you to drift off into a sweet dream, an attainable dream that needs just will and determination.

The eternal realm that God has promised us is a world billions of times greater, more beautiful, and more advanced than this world. Picture trees that touch the sky, their branches overflowing with sweet-smelling flowers and delicious fruit, always ready to be picked.<sup>2</sup> A pleasant breeze caresses our cheeks, while hosts move around the palaces, offering us pure drinks and foods we have neither seen nor tasted before. In that world, pain and suffering will cease to exist, and we will enjoy lasting health, joy, and vitality. We will never grow tired of the blessings of

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<sup>2</sup>. *Nahj al-Balagha*, Sermon 165.

Heaven, and they will remain ever fresh. We will not have to travel long distances to see our loved ones; we just wish, and we will be by their side.

Understanding the beauties of the hereafter is impossible for us, who have lived in this small and limited world; we are just like a fetus who is unaware of the beauties of the world outside the womb.

That's all for now; the rest is up to your imagination. Picture yourself in Heaven—what does it feel like? Share your feeling with us.

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