

How to Replace Anxiety and Sadness with Happiness and Contentment

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

One of the ways to accept the calamities that befall us is by understanding Qadar and having good thoughts about Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) mentions in *al-Fawā'id* that that which Allāh ordains upon His slave revolves around 'adl (justice), maṣlaḥah (the betterment of the slave), Ḥikmah Bālighah (the Perfect Wisdom of Allāh), and the Raḥmah (Mercy) of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). It does not exit from these four things, as is made manifest in the ḥadīth on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd (رضى الله عنه) that the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *"There is not a slave that has been afflicted with sadness and distress and says,*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ ابْنُ أَمَتِكَ نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَاؤُكَ أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمِّيَتْ بِهِ نَفْسُكَ أَوْ أُنزِلَتْهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَبِيعَ قَلْبِي وَنورَ صَدْرِي وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي

'O Allāh, I am Your slave, and the son of Your male slave, and the son of your female slave. My forehead is in Your Hand (i.e. you have control over me). Your Judgment upon me is assured, and Your Decree concerning me is just. I ask You by every Name that You have named Yourself with, revealed in Your Book, taught any one of Your creation, or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You, to make the Qur'ān the spring of my heart, and the light of my chest, the banisher of my sadness, and the reliever of my distress.'

except that Allāh (عز وجل) will remove that stress and anxiety and exchange it for happiness.”

Upon hearing that the Companions said, “Then it is upon us to learn these words O Messenger of Allāh.” The Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *“Indeed, it is imperative that the one who hears these words should learn them.”*¹

It is upon every male and female Muslim—as mentioned in this ḥadīth—to learn this great du‘ā’ because there is not one of us except that in our lifetime we will be sad and there will be things that will cause us stress and anxiety, but here we have a gift from the Sunnah of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). However, in order for it be of benefit, we must understand what it indicates, implement its intent and likewise act upon it.

The ‘Ulamā’ have said that four great foundations stem from this ḥadīth, which should be understood and acted upon in order for us to have that great reward when our hearts are tight and we are sad and have that sorrow or anxiety. If we turn back to Allāh (عز وجل) with the correct understanding, Allāh will remove that from our chests.

1. The slave understands that Allāh is our Lord and Creator and we are His slaves. When we understand this, it will cause us to implement the worship of Allāh alone as He deserves to be worshipped. Us, our mothers, fathers and forefathers stemming right back to Ādam (عليه السلام) and his wife [are slaves of Allāh].

2. The slave believes in and accepts the decree of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). We have to understand that whatever Allāh (عز وجل) wills, will occur and that which He does not will, will not occur. There is no questioning regarding Allāh’s Judgement; no one can take our Lord to task regarding what He ordains, and what He has ordained will occur. Allāh (عز وجل) says,

¹ Reported by Imām Aḥmad (رحمه الله) in his Musnad, and graded authentic by Shaykh al-Albānī (رحمه الله).

وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُورًا

“And the Command of Allāh is a decree determined.” [Sūrah al-Aḥzāb 33:38]

In addition to that, we have to understand that Allāh (عز وجل) does not wrong any of His slaves. That which Allāh has ordained for us is just and has mercy in it, even though we may think differently at the time it occurs due to the little knowledge we have regarding Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى).

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

“And verily, Allāh is not unjust to His slaves.” [Sūrah al-Anfāl 8:51]

We have to understand that regardless of whatever we face and however the outcome of what we are facing may seem, Allāh is not unjust.

3. The slave believes in and understands the Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes of Allāh. Allāh says in the Qur’ān,

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

“And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them” [Sūrah al-A’rāf 7:180]

As the ‘Ulamā’ say, the greater the slave is in his knowledge of Allāh’s Names and Attributes then it will increase him in fearing Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) and he will be more diligent regarding the Murāqabah of Allāh (checking himself regarding how he is before Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), knowing that Allāh is Ever an All-Watcher over him). It will likewise cause you to distance [yourself] from the disobedience of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), as the Salaf used to say that the more you have knowledge of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), the more you shall fear Him.

4. We give importance to the Book of Allāh. The Qur’ān comprises of guidance and is a cure for the heart, souls and even the bodies. It is sufficient for the slaves, it brings about wellbeing if you

read, understand and act upon it, it causes a person to reflect and ponder upon the Qur'ān, and we act upon it and implement its laws. If that is done, the 'Ulamā' say that [it is] then you will gain happiness and have rāḥah (relaxation of the heart, feeling ease in your heart), your anxiety and stress will be removed and your sadness will be exchanged with happiness, according to how much of the Qur'ān you implement.

These are beautiful principles that have been given to us because we are created weak and our hearts are weak and what occurs to us in this world is sometimes too challenging, to the degree that we forget ourselves, our dīn and the rights of Allāh (عز وجل) so Allāh (عز وجل) from His Mercy has given us these gifts.

It is for every one of us now to learn and memorise this du'ā' and when that sadness, hardship and anxiety hits us, then we believe in these words of aṣ-Ṣādiq al-Maṣdūq. May Allāh (عز وجل) make us firm, replace that sadness and anxiety we have in our hearts with rāḥah and surūr, Āmīn.

والحمد لله رب العالمين