

The Cure to Worry, Sadness & Grief According to the Qur'ān & Sunnah

Abū Khadījah 'Abdul-Wāḥid (حفظه الله)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The affair of sadness, grief, worry and distress is something that afflicts all of us. There is not one of us except that he is afflicted by these hardships that affect the heart and soul. Sometimes this grief and worry makes a person feel miserable and they feel down. And sometimes the term 'depression' can be used in a situation where a person has gone to extremes with regard to his sadness and his worry, such that he cannot function normally due to that sadness. The pleasure of his life is spoiled due to anxiety and worry. Yet, alongside that a believer knows that this is something that will occur as a course of his life and he also knows that worry and sadness is an expiation of his sins and it is a means of raising his level before his Lord.

As hard as his worry may seem, he knows that there are positive outcomes if he is patient, if he is truthful, if he is obedient and if he is fearful of Allāh. And from the most beneficial of those outcomes is that because of what he is going through, he is encouraged to turn to Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى), to humble himself before Allāh, to complain of his suffering to Allāh, to make du'ā and beseech Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى). All of this brings to a believer a sense of nearness to Allāh in a manner that is indescribable; that a person recognises that he has reached a stage in his life whereby only Allāh will suffice him. So he opens his eyes and recognises that that which he has been suffering, he should have turned to Allāh right at the outset. Then when he turns to Allāh and he humbles himself, and he beseeches Allāh and he complains unto Allāh and

turns to Allāh seeking His Protection and His Guidance, then that comfort and tranquillity comes upon him. A feeling of nearness to Allāh that cannot be described.

Likewise, the fact that the believer endures this distress and he feels that he can't really taste the pleasures of this world because he is worried about the grief that has overtaken him, so when he realises that, as a believer, he puts the dunyā in its place. He realises that the dunyā is insignificant and that he should depend upon Allāh and rely upon Him and he should look towards the hereafter because the hereafter is lasting. He turns to Allāh in hope, with certainty, free from worry and distress because he knows that whatever worry he is facing now, there will be no worry, distress or sadness in the hereafter for the one who receives salvation from Allāh. Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) has stated,

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

“And they will say: ‘All the praises and thanks be to Allāh, Who has removed from us (all) grief. Verily, our Lord is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate (good deeds and to recompense).’” [Sūrah Fāṭir 35:34]

The Lord Who, out of His Grace, has placed us in a home that will last forever. A home (i.e. Paradise) where the believers will not be touched by toil or by trouble, nor by wariness. How tremendous is this reward for the one who understands the Ḥikmah of Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) behind those hardships and afflictions that befall a person. And he realises that this is something that he will go through naturally throughout his life.

The following are some points that help a person understand distress, sadness and worry. And also those affairs that will take a person away from that sadness and worry by giving him tranquillity:

1. As long as a person has īmān and he is righteous, then Allāh will continue to reward him and write down for him his good deeds. Just as Allāh has stated,

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Whoever works righteousness, whether male or female, while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter).” [Sūrah an-Naḥl 16:97]

This is a promise from Allāh for the one who believes and does good deeds, that Allāh will grant him a happy life. Just as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) has said with regard to the attitude of the believer, *“Truly amazing is the affair of the believer. Indeed, all of his affairs are good, and that goodness is not for anyone except a believer. If something good happens to him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. And if something of affliction befalls him, then he is patient, and that is good for him.”*

So the believer has this attitude that all of the affairs that afflict him are khayr, whether it be hardship or ease.

2. A Muslim will rejoice on Yawmul-Qiyāmah due to the recompense he receives from Allāh because he was sure of the reward from Allāh for the believers who suffer grief and sadness.

Bukhārī and Muslim report from Abū Hurayrah (رضى الله عنه) that Allāh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *“No trouble, nor fatigue, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were a prick that he receives from a thorn, except that Allāh expiates his sins due to that.”*

Likewise, the statement of Allāh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), *"A Muslim is not hurt by a thorn that pricks him, nor what is more than that, except that Allāh raises his rank because of that hurt and wipes out his sins."*

So a Muslim knows that whatever he feels of worry and distress is an expiation for his sins [and] an increase in reward. One of the Salaf said, "Were it not for the afflictions, we would surely find ourselves bankrupt on the Day of Resurrection." Another one of the Salaf used to rejoice when he was afflicted just as one of us rejoices in a time of wellbeing and prosperity. That is how they used to see affliction.

3. Being acquainted with the reality of this world, knowing that it will come to an end. Its pleasure is short lived and what remains in front of us of the delights of this world, then they are not pure. It is not always continual goodness, happiness and joy. There is no pure pleasure and delight in this world for anyone; there is no continuity. You laugh a little and then you cry. If you are happy sometimes, then you are sad more than that. Allāh stated,

وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

"And so are the days (good and not so good), We give to men by turns, that Allah may test those who believe" [Sūrah Āl 'Imrān 3:140]

There will be times of goodness and times of hardship. So one day is for you and you are happy, the next day is against you and you are in sadness and grief.

Abū Hurayrah (رضى الله عنه) said that Allāh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *"This world is a prison for the believer and a paradise for the unbeliever."* So the believer knows that there will come hardship, grief, sorrow and sadness. This world is a place of fatigue and toil, illness and hurt, and grief and sorrow. It is a place of distress and

worry. That is why the believer who is patient and pious leaves this world to the place of comfort and tranquility and everlasting life.

Bukhārī and Muslim report from Abū Qatādah (رضى الله عنه) that he said, “Whenever a funeral passed before the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) he would say, *‘Either he finds relief or the people are given relief from him.’* The Ṣaḥābah said, ‘Who is the one who is given relief and who are the ones who are given relief from him?’ So he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *‘A believing servant is given relief from the trials of this world; and the death of a wicked person, the people, the townships, the trees and even the animals are given relief from him.’*” This ḥadīth shows the reality of this world and shows that the afflictions, sorrow and worry are the normal state of affairs in this life. And this grief and worry are a test of his patience and obedience to Allāh. So upon the believer is to remain steadfast, to trust in Allāh and depend upon Him and not give up hope in the One Who has been Merciful to the believers.

4. Focusing upon this world and its worries and just being overcome, allowing your life to be driven by the worries, sadness and grief of this dunyā causes disarray in the soul [and] disorder in one’s worldly affairs. But for the believing servant in the face of afflictions, who makes the hereafter his goal, then Allāh will put his affairs in order and strengthen his resolve.

Anas (رضى الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, *“Whoever makes the ākhirah his goal, then Allāh will make rich his heart, Allāh will put order in his affairs and the world comes to him whether it wants to or not. And whomsoever makes the world his goal, then Allāh puts poverty right before his eyes and places disorder in his affairs and the world will not come to him except that which has already*

been decreed for him.” [Collected by Imām at-Tirmidhī and authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī]

So that is the affair in reality: that no matter what sadness afflicts you, what worry or stress overcomes you, that you look towards the ākhirah, that you hope in Allāh and you know that the reward is certain for the one who is righteous and patient. The one who takes care of his affairs and is not overcome such that he doesn’t do anything of obedience because he is so overcome by the worry and stress he is under. You find people, instead of coming closer to Allāh in times of worry, they flee from ‘ibādah. “I’m too stressed to pray”, they say. “I’m too busy with my worry to read the Qur’ān”, they say. This my brothers and my sisters, is a fleeing from Allāh and fleeing from the reward of Allāh; and this only gathers for you more harm.

5. Du’ā (supplicating to Allāh), which is without doubt a cure for worry, sadness and grief. To alleviate your difficulties, call upon Allāh and Allāh will come to your aid and relieve you of your hardships, just as He has said,

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ
يُرْشُدُونَ

“And when My slaves ask you (O Muḥammad) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.” [Sūrah al-Baqarah

2:186]

Likewise, we ask Allāh in those times of hardship that He opens up our chests and makes easy our affair and the tasks we have to face. Allāh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to seek refuge with Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) from these afflictions—and that is the

Messenger of Allāh. Anas b. Mālik (رضى الله عنه) mentioned, “I used to serve Allāh’s Messenger and I would often hear him saying,

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلْبَةِ الرَّجَالِ»

“O Allāh, I seek refuge with You from distress and sorrow, from helplessness and laziness, from miserliness and cowardice, from being heavily indebted to others and from being overcome by men.” [Bukhārī]

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to seek from Allāh His Mercy,

«اللَّهُمَّ رَحْمَتَكَ أَرْجُو فَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى نَفْسِي طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي شَأْنِي كُلَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ»

“O Allāh, it is Your Mercy that I hope for. Do not abandon me to myself not even for the instant of the blinking of an eye, and put all my affairs in good order for me, for there is no deity worthy of worship other than You.”

So when a believing servant calls upon Allāh sincerely from his heart, truthfully desiring that which he is asking for from Allāh and he is obedient to Allāh, then Allāh will give to him that which he asks for.

6. Trusting in Allāh.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ

“And whosoever fears Allāh and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allāh, then He will suffice him.”

[Sūrah at-Ṭalāq 2-3]

Meaning that Allāh will suffice him against harm, grief and sorrow in this life and the next life.

The means of bringing relief to grief and sorrow are numerous, and a person should seek them out. Through the recitation of the Qur'ān, he comes close to Allāh, with the dhikr of Allāh and plentiful supplication, alongside trust, reliance and obedience to Allāh, he comes close to Allāh. And in this a person finds illumination of the heart, ease and comfort in the soul.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allāh - Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allāh, Verily, in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find rest.” [Sūrah ar-Ra’d 13:28]

It is in the dhikr of Allāh in times of hardship, ease, calamity, worry, distress, stress, sadness [that hearts find rest]. You do not move away from the dhikr of Allāh, you do not turn away from du’ā, rather, you increase.

These are the cures my brothers and sisters, from sadness and worry. We ask Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) to protect us from the fitnah, hardships and tribulations of this dunyā, worries and sadness, and to focus our hearts upon the hereafter, for in the hereafter is the life that is everlasting that is free from worry.

والحمد لله رب العالمين