

CALAMITIES IN THE LIFE OF A MUSLIM

Spiritualight publications

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الحمد لله النَّافِعُ الضَّارَّ، خَلَقَ الدَّاءَ وَالْدَّوَاءَ وَالْمَنَافِعَ وَالْمَضَارَّ، يَبْدِئُ النَّفْعَ وَالضَّرَّ، وَالْخَيْرَ وَالشَّرَّ، وَالنَّهْيَ وَالْأَمْرَ، الْحَكِيمُ الْفَهَّارُ وَالصَّلَاةَ وَالسَّلَامَ عَلَى أَشْرَفِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ، وَأَفْضَلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ، الْمُسْتَسْلِمَ لِلْقَضَاءِ وَالْأَقْدَارِ، وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أُولِيَ السَّمَاحِ وَالرَّيَّاحِ وَالتَّيَقُّظِ وَالْإِعْتِبَارِ

INTRODUCTION

Worldly difficulties are an inevitable part of life; they range from minor issues to fatal diseases and loss of loved ones. This booklet aims to help one see all difficulties in perspective, encourages complete trust in Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى's decisions and perseverance. By defining the mandatory belief of taqdeer (predestination) that, "Whatever happened to you, could not have missed you," this treatise reminds the reader that worldly difficulties are a trial for the believers, along with affirming that many-a-time afflictions result from one's sins and disobedience to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The booklet also illustrates how appropriate behaviour and a correct attitude can change an adversity into a worthwhile opportunity to achieve Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى's Pleasure through sabr and duaa, and how impatience, panic and complaining will only worsen one's situation. Finally, emphasis is made on calling upon Allaah Alone to ease one's affairs.

This booklet was prepared after the rioting and looting that took place in the KZN province, resulting in crippled businesses, lost livelihood and life efforts. After having come across a booklet titled "Worldly difficulties – reality, causes and benefits" I was inspired to compile a booklet of my own with the hope that it would provide comfort and solace , hope and guidance to all our afflicted brothers and sisters. Along with teachings of our pious predecessors I have also included some notes by my younger brother, Ml. Imraan Kajee. I have quickly gathered this information in this booklet. I hope that this booklet will bring solace and comfort to people as they struggle to manage the difficulties of life. I ask Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to adorn this humble effort with acceptance and grant comfort to all those who are suffering. All success is from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

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THIS WORLD – THE PLACE OF EXAMINATION

This world is an oversized examination hall, where every man is sure to be tested. The place of actual reward is the hereafter, which actually commences when a person passes away. Disbelievers see afflictions as mere inconvenience; but for the believers, hardships are a trial and an opportunity to strengthen one's bond with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. If understood correctly, all conditions for a believer are beneficial. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "How excellent is the situation of a believer. All his situations are good for him (to his advantage). This is exclusive to a believer. When he experiences occasions of happiness and he is grateful for it, it is good for him (to his advantage). When he experiences occasions of distress and he is patient upon it, it is good for him (to his advantage)." (Muslim no. 2999)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى uses such tests as proof to record in history the loyalty of His lovers, to show the rest of humanity what patience, determination and steadfastness truly means. He is, through such servants of His, teaching mankind the lessons of love and He is affirming their acceptance. He is revealing to us the true meaning of the concepts of Sabr (patience). Such servants not only display acceptance of a situation which they cannot change, but rather submit happily and totally to His decree in every difficulty which they are put through. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى does not need to test His servants to determine their servitude, as He is Fully Aware of our every state and even knows our innermost secrets. (He tests them to prove their love for Him and to reward them.)

Man is tested at times through calamities, and at times through blessings and good conditions. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْحَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ

Every soul shall taste death. (However, before your death,) We will test you well with good and bad conditions (to see whether you continue obeying Allaah in all conditions) and you will return to Us (after death when We shall evaluate how you performed in your test). (Ambiyaa verse 35)

If the believer endures the calamity with patience, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى rewards him abundantly, expiates his sins and elevates his ranks in Jannah. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has already informed us that we will be tested in this worldly life. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

وَلَتَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

Surely We will test you with fear, hunger, loss of wealth and life and the fruits of your work, but give glad tidings to the patient - those who, when afflicted with a calamity say, 'To Allaah we belong and to Him we shall return.' Those are the ones upon whom are bestowed blessings and mercy from their Sustainer, and those are the ones who are (truly) guided. (Surah Baqarah verse 155)¹

¹ This is the examination paper set by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The exam questions were 'leaked' to allow us to prepare. By leaking the paper, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has made it evident that it should not be an unexpected occurrence, for we have been foretold and ought to be expecting it.

What are the exam questions? The questions which we have been told to prepare for are the following: *'a bit of fear, hunger, loss in wealth, lives, and in the fruits (of your efforts)'*.

Congratulations and Glad-tidings - *'And give glad tidings to those who are patient.'* If one were to congratulate a person experiencing difficulty, it would only add to his grief. In this instance however, it is none other than Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى who is declaring, "O My beloved Muhammad ﷺ, whenever anyone is afflicted by any of these forms of difficulties, give them glad tidings." To whom are glad tidings addressed? To those who 'are patient'. From this we learn that if difficulties were bad for a believer, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى would not have revealed that such people who are afflicted by these difficulties are to be given glad tidings. The One giving the glad tidings is *The Most Merciful* of those who show mercy, and it is being delivered through *the mercy to all the worlds*, our beloved Nabi ﷺ. The Most Beloved has, through the most beloved in the creation given the most beloved message to His creation. This is sufficient proof that whatever difficulty, trial and tribulation we (the believers) may undergo, it is not punishment, but a means of attracting mercy. It heralds imminent great good fortune.

On the other hand, disbelievers and hypocrites are truly at a complete loss for they have no hope of being rewarded for their perseverance or patience.

Ka'b ibn Maalik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِ كَمَثَلِ الْحَامَةِ مِنَ الزَّرْعِ تُقَيِّئُهَا الرِّيحُ تَصْرَعُهَا مَرَّةً وَتَعْدِلُهَا أُخْرَى حَتَّى يَأْتِيَهُ أَجَلُهُ وَمَثَلُ الْمُنَافِقِ كَمَثَلِ الْأَرْزَةِ الْمُجْدِيَةِ الَّتِي لَا يُصِيبُهَا شَيْءٌ حَتَّى يَكُونَ انْجِعَافُهَا مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً

The example of the believer is like a thin stalk in a field swayed by the winds – the winds sometimes tilts it (to the right or left), and sometimes straightens it till it stands upright. This continues till the time his death arrives. And, the example of the hypocrite is like the Cedar Tree² that stands stiff and firm. Nothing can sway it (not even the winds) till it is uprooted once and for all (suddenly). (Bukhaari no. 5644, Muslim no. 2810)

The following lesson could be taken from this beautiful analogy:

The situation of a believer before turbulence and calamity is that of a stalk. As is known, the wind blows from different directions and causes the stalks move in different directions. In such a situation, a stalk may bend to the ground, but it straightens up again when the wind and storm subsides. Despite stooping so low, it stands up again to grow bigger and stronger. This stalk may seem weak and thin, but this weakness and thin nature is what allows it to grow sturdier and stronger. Similarly, a believer 'who seems to be outwardly weak' may be subjected to perpetual 'calamities' throughout his life. Yet he does not topple over in depression by Allaah's permission and grace. He does not fall into kufr (disbelief) and do not complain about Allaah's treatment of them. He faces such difficulties with sabr (patience) and perseverance, he takes it in his stride

Understand this by the example of a person whose motorcycle is stolen, but whose loss is replaced by a Mercedes Benz. Will this be termed as a loss, a misfortune? In short, trials and tribulations, for a believer, are not bad, because in lieu of patience, Allaah جَبَّارٌ وَتَعَالَى is attained!

² The scholars of the Arabic language say that the Cedar Tree (al-arzah) is a tree similar to the stone-pine tree, which grows in Syria, Lebanon and Armenia. It actually belongs to the pine tree family.

and adjusts. When he is relieved of it, he stands up straight in shukr (gratitude). In fact, such difficulties serve to strengthen him. He may 'seem' weak, as he submits happily to every difficulty which comes his way (by saying 'We belong to Allaah, and to Him is our return') and hopes for reward in it. He turns to Allaah alone for help, he understands that every difficulty has come from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and it is for his own benefit. Such thoughts allows him to submit to the decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Inflictions which outwardly make life a misery begin to seem, sound, and feel differently to those who look at his example and, in the end, they see that even the "troubles" they experience become sweet for them.

We also learn from this that one should not be deceived by the apparent situation. Believers may face difficulties one after another, like a stalk which is tilted and swayed by sudden gusts of wind, one after another, be it in the form of sickness, debts, oppression, financial strain, turbulence in marriage, troublesome children, family or associates, disgrace or severe losses. It is the system of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى that He tests those who are dearest to Him. To the onlooker it may seem to be a calamity, but they are in reality a great bounty. An adverse condition followed by steadfastness with patience is a positive sign of true Faith.

As for the hypocrites, their parable is of a Cedar Tree; though it may seem to be strong and unshakable, it confronts small gusts of wind with its strength, but in the face of a severe storm, it is uprooted and toppled, never to stand again. Similarly, hypocrites swagger and give an unshakable impression, assuming that they can confront difficulty and free themselves from it. They wish to confront the difficulty and are obsessed in ridding themselves of the difficulty. They refuse to bow down and submit before even the slightest difficulties. They seem resilient and firm in their attitude. They are prepared to defy all such conditions. Yet they topple over disgracefully when exposed to a severe wind of difficulty, never to stand up again. Their kufr is exposed, they fall into depression and go on complaining about the difficulties they find themselves in. They believe that these difficulties are bad luck, and that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is unjust to them. They can never stand up and recover from this

condition again. They seemed strong, but that stiff and proud attitude of theirs was actually the cause of their destruction.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى describes this in the Qur'aan,

إِنْ تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

If you are in pain, then (remember that) they (the disbelievers) suffer pain just as you suffer pain. But you hope to receive (such rewards) from Allaah which they do not hope to receive. (Surah Nisaa verse 104)

The following pages define in the light of the Qur'aan and the guidance of Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ how a believer can reap the most benefit from his hardships through appropriate behaviour and attitude. Even in trying conditions, one must keep before him the commands of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and the sunnah of Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. He will be greatly rewarded by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Together with this, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى grants a person comfort in the heart despite going through these ordeals. There is great wisdom in trials in this world, even if one cannot understand the wisdom.

BELIEF IN TAQDEER - WHATEVER REACHED YOU COULD NOT HAVE MISSED YOU AND WHATEVER MISSED YOU COULD NOT HAVE REACHED YOU

The belief that everything which happened, happen and will happen is according to the knowledge, will and command of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is called Taqdeer. Belief in Taqdeer is compulsory. It is an essential part of Imaan. When Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was asked, "What is Imaan?" he replied, "Imaan is to believe in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and to believe in Predestination; the good and the bad." (Muslim no. 8)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says, "There is no calamity that descends onto the earth or onto yourselves, but it is recorded in a Book before we bring it into being – That is easy for Allaah!" (Surah Hadeed verse 22)

In fact, the first creation of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى was the pen and then He commanded it to write. When it enquired as per what it should write, it was told, "Write down the decrees of everything until the day of Qiyaamah." (Abu Dawood no. 4700, Tirmidhi no. 2155)

Therefore, whether we panic or relax, scream with displeasure or submit, the decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has to come to pass. Don't add to your life another calamity; the calamity of losing out on the reward of being patient. Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "If you show patience, the decree of Allaah will come to pass and you will be rewarded, but if you show impatience, the decree of Allaah will still come to pass but you will be sinful." (Adabud-Dunya Wad Deen – Al Maawardi)

The advantages of belief in Taqdeer are as follows:

1. No matter what hardship or misfortune befalls one, it will be accepted without panic and the heart will remain strong in the face-of such hardships. Strong belief in Taqdeer will indicate that Allaah's wish is in this occurrence and it cannot be opposed. The hardship will disappear only when so desired by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Thus the man of Taqdeer accepts what comes his way with contented resignation.

2. One who has understood and accepted this conception of Taqdeer will not be overcome with frustration at the delay in the passing of the hardship. He will not become despondent and lose hope when the misfortune endures for any length of time. He will banish weakness.

3. The adherent of Taqdeer will not adopt unlawful ways and means of combating the difficulty, for he knows that the adversity has been brought about by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. He understands well that elimination of the hardship is not possible without the Will of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. He therefore realizes the futility of his efforts in trying to eliminate what Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has willed. He will thus not unnecessarily court the displeasure of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى by the adoption of unlawful measures. Why court Allaah's Wrath when one's purpose cannot be achieved even after having displeased Him.

4. The believer in Taqdeer and Tawakkul will not rely solely on material and mundane measures, but will resort to duaa as well. He believes that nothing can be gained without His Will. He thus derives greater hope and strength by supplicating to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. An additional benefit of engaging in duaa is the strengthening of one's relationship with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. A strong bond of love with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is the basis of peace and all comfort.

5. The believer in Taqdeer will not attribute success, accomplishment and excellence to his efforts. He will attribute everything to the Will and Pleasure of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. He will thus be imbued with humility. Such a man will not be arrogant and haughty. The summary of what has been said above is: The believer in Taqdeer and Tawakkul will be grateful (make shukr) in times and occasions of success and prosperity, and he will be patient (make sabr) when failure and adversity overtake him. This is the great advantage which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى points to in the following verse,

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ
لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ

Every calamity that afflicts you on earth and in yourselves is recorded in the Book (the "Lowhul Mahfoodh") before We even bring it about. This is certainly easy for Allaah. (You are informed of this) So that you do not grieve about

*what you lose (because you know that this is Allaah's will) and you do not boast about what you receive (because you know that it is from Allaah).
(Hadeed verse 22-23)*

The Islamic conception of Taqdeer should not be misconstrued and the essential and correct ways and means for worldly affairs should not be discarded on the pretext of resignation to Taqdeer. Discarding the lawful means and agencies which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has created for worldly affairs is weakness as well as erroneous. Such error and weakness have been criticized in the hadith. Auf ibn Maalik رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that once when Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ decided a dispute, the one against whom the verdict went, exclaimed, "Sufficient for me is Allaah and He is a good Protector." This exclamation was intended to convey that Allaah's Pleasure was the cause of the setback which he suffered. Hearing this, Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Allaah does not like weakness. Be alert!" (Abu Dawood no. 3627) Here Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ exhorted that one should harness the correct means for one's case and activity. However, if in spite of instituting the correct measures, failure results, the one will be justified in saying, "Sufficient for me is Allaah and He is a good Protector."

A FEW AHAADEETH ON TAQDEER:

1.) Jaabir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

لَا يُؤْمِنُ عَبْدٌ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدْرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ، حَتَّى يَعْلَمَ أَنَّ مَا أَصَابَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئَهُ، وَأَنَّ مَا أَخْطَأَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبَهُ.

You can never be a believer as long as you do not believe in Taqdeer, in its good and its bad, to such an extent that whatever is to happen could not have missed him and whatever missed him could not have occurred. (Tirmidhi no. 2144)

2. Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates, "I was (once) behind Nabi صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ when he said to me,

يَا غُلَامُ إِنِّي أَعَلِّمُكَ كَلِمَاتٍ، أَحْفَظَ اللَّهُ يَحْفَظَكَ، أَحْفَظَ اللَّهُ تَحِذُهُ تُحَازِلُهُ، إِذَا سَأَلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ وَإِذَا اسْتَعَنْتَ فَاسْتَعِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ لَوِ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ لَكَ، وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ، رُفِعَتِ الْأَقْلَامُ وَجَفَّتِ الصُّحُفُ

O son! I shall inform you of a few things. Remember Allaah and He will protect you. Remember Allaah and you will find Him close to you. When you have to ask for something, ask of Allaah. When you require aid, seek His Aid. Believe firmly that if all creation desires to benefit you in anything, they can never benefit you but that which Allaah has decreed for you. If they all unite to harm you, they will not be able to harm you in anything, but that which Allaah has decreed for you. The pens have been raised and the books are dry. (Tirmidhi no. 2516)

3. Muaawiya رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

لَا تَعْجَلَنَّ إِلَى شَيْءٍ تَظُنُّ أَنَّكَ إِنِ اسْتَعْجَلْتَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّكَ مُدْرِكُهُ، وَلَا تَسْتَأْخِرَنَّ عَنِ شَيْءٍ تَظُنُّ أَنَّكَ إِنِ اسْتَأْخَرْتَ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ مَدْفُوعٌ عَنْكَ، إِنْ كَانَ اللَّهُ قَدْ قَدَرَهُ عَلَيْكَ

Do not advance to acquire something, thinking that you can acquire it by your efforts even though Allaah has not predestined it for you nor retreat from something, thinking that you will be able to obviate it by your efforts even though Allaah has predestined it for you. (Al-Mu'jamul-Kabeer vol. 19 page 347 no. 807 and Al-Mu'jamul-Awsat no. 3391)

Whatever Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has predestined, will come to pass no matter what efforts are made by man to gain or ward it off.

4. Abu Hurairah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

احْرِضْ عَلَى مَا يَنْفَعُكَ، وَاسْتَعِزْ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْجِزْ، وَإِنْ أَصَابَكَ شَيْءٌ، فَلَا تَقُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ كَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، وَلَكِنْ قُلْ قَدَرُ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَاءَ فَعَلَ، فَإِنْ لَوْ تَفَتَحَ عَمَلُ الشَّيْطَانِ

Strive to acquire what is beneficial for you; seek the aid of Allaah; do not lose courage and if a setback overtakes you, do not say, 'If I had done this, then it would have happened like this (i.e. not what had happened).' Instead, say: *'Allaah has ordained this. Whatever He has willed, has happened. (Muslim no. 2664)*

The slave should therefore refrain from over speculation and conjecture, like saying, 'If I had done such and such... the result would have been different...' or '...I would have been saved from this calamity...' etc. Rasullullaah ﷺ in the above hadeeth has prohibited us from saying such words.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has promised to grant tranquillity and to guide the hearts of the believers if they refrain from speculation. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says,

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

No disaster strikes except by Allaah's Permission, and whoever believes in Allaah, He guides his heart, Allaah is the Knower of all things.

(Surah Taghaabun verse 11)

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَوْلُهُ: {وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ} [التغابن: ١١] يَعْنِي: يَهْدِي قَلْبَهُ لِلْيَقِينِ، فَيَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَا أَصَابَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُخْطِئَهُ، وَمَا أَخْطَأَهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِيُصِيبَهُ

Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said Allaah's guiding the heart of the slave means that Allaah will guide his heart to certainty. Therefore, he will know that what reached him would not have missed him, and what has missed him would not have reached him. (Tabari vol. 23 page 421)

Ibn Katheer رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ writes in his Tafseer,

وَمَنْ أَصَابَتْهُ مُصِيبَةٌ فَعَلِمَ أَنَّهَا بِقَضَاءِ اللَّهِ وَقَدَرِهِ، فَصَبَرَ وَاحْتَسَبَ وَاسْتَسْلَمَ لِقَضَاءِ اللَّهِ هَدَى اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ، وَعَوَّضَهُ عَمَّا فَاتَهُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا هُدًى فِي قَلْبِهِ، وَبَقِينًا صَادِقًا، وَقَدْ يُخْلِفُ عَلَيْهِ مَا كَانَ آخِذًا مِنْهُ، أَوْ خَيْرًا مِنْهُ.

After suffering from an affliction, if the slave believes that it occurred by Allaah's Judgment and Decree, and he waits patiently, seeks Allaah's reward and happily accepts the decision of Allaah, then Allaah guides his heart and will compensate him for his loss in this life by granting guidance to his heart

and certainty in faith. Allaah will replace whatever he lost with the equal or what is better.

BENEFITS FOR A BELIEVER IN HARDSHIPS

Apart from some hardships, difficulties brings about various benefits for the believer. Recognizing them makes easy the path of patience and endurance for the believer:

a.) Hardships teach the believer to be patient and Allaah abundantly rewards His patient slaves.

b.) Sufferings remind the sinful believer about the greatest affliction of life, i.e. death, which may afflict him at any moment.

c.) It reminds him of the severe punishments, which may follow next, as a result of his disobedience to Allaah. When one deviates, he seldom pays any heed to the advice of others; but when calamity strikes, he is reminded of Allaah and His severe punishments. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says, “We will make them taste a lesser punishment (worldly calamities) before the greater punishment (of the Hereafter) that perhaps they may return (to the right path).” (Surah Sajdah verse 21) So, calamities give one the time to reflect over one’s sins and their awful outcome. As a result, one recognizes his errors and returns to Allaah in repentance; worldly difficulties thus, serve as a blessing for the sinful.

d.) Hardships reduce the burden of sins from the believer freeing him from the severe and unbearable punishments of the Hereafter.

Rasulullaah ﷺ said,

“Any Muslim who experiences any hardship, discomfort, worry, sorrow, grief, and distress, even a thorn prick, Allaah will make it an atonement for his sins.” (Bukhaari no. 5641, Muslim no. 2573)

“Do not curse fever, for it removes the sins of humans in the manner that a furnace removes rust from iron.” (Muslim no. 2575)

“When a servant is going to be granted a certain status from Allaah, which he cannot reach through his own deeds, Allaah afflicts him with some calamity in

his body, or to his wealth, or children, then grants him patience, until he reaches that status which has been determined for him. (Musnad Ahmed no. 22338, Abu Daawud no. 3090)

“On the Day of Qiyaamah, when those who suffered difficulties in the world will be given their reward, then (on account of the reward being so immense,) those who enjoyed good health in the world will wish that their skin had been torn apart with scissors while they were in the world.” (Tirmidhi no. 2402)

“When Allaah wills good for a person, He afflicts him [with calamities in his wealth, his body, or his beloved ones]. (Bukhaari no. 5645)

The greater the difficulties, the greater the reward. When Allaah loves a nation, He puts them through trials and tribulations. The one who accepts [and submits to the trials and tribulations], shall receive the pleasure of Allaah. The one who is displeased shall receive the wrath of Allaah.” (Tirmidhi no. 2396)

“Calamities and hardships will continually afflict a believing man and believing woman as regards his or her self, children and wealth, till he or she meets Allaah [on the day of Resurrection] with no sin whatsoever.” (Tirmidhi no. 2399)

Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as to who are the people who are tested most severely. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, “The Ambiyaa, then those most similar to them, and then those similar to them. A man is tested according to his religion. If he is firm in his Deen (in observing his religion), then his trials are severe. But if there is any weakness in his Deen (in observing his religion), then his trials are lightened for him. He continues in this condition (being afflicted with trials and being forgiven) till he walks on the earth without any sin (against him).” (Tirmidhi no. 2398, Ibn Majah no. 4023)

This is why some of our predecessors said: “Whoever is afflicted with a trial has been placed upon the path of the Ambiyaa.” (Al-Bidaayah wan Nihaayah)

Suffering in this world is insignificant in comparison to the harsh and unbearable punishments of the Hereafter. Besides, death puts an end to a person’s suffering in this world, whereas punishments of the Hereafter are eternal! Moreover, Allaah forgives most of our disobedience in the world, and what we suffer of the hardships is a retribution for only a fraction of our sins.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى informs us in the Qur'aan, "Whatever befalls you is a result of what your hands have earned. And He (Allaah) pardons much." (Surah Shooraa verse 30) If we were to be punished for all our evil deeds, everything on the Earth would be destroyed. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says in Soorah Faatir, "If Allaah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a moving (living) creature on the face of the Earth, but He gives respite for an appointed term..." (Surah Faatir verse 45) So, it is from the immense Mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى that He pardons much of our evil deeds and He has made the afflictions of this life an atonement for the harsh and severe punishments of the Hereafter. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "When Allaah wills good for His servant, He hastens punishment for him in this world [as a recompense for his sins]. When He wills evil for His servant, He holds back the punishment for his sins so that he may be given his punishment in full on the day of Resurrection." (Tirmidhi no. 2396)

5.) Hardships establish submission and humbleness in the believer; for instance, when afflicted with sickness, the slave realizes his weakness and need for Allaah. He thus calls out humbly to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for good health; and after having been granted health, he becomes thankful to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for alleviating his hardships and strives harder in worshipping Him. Had he always lived a healthy life without having experienced any difficulty or hardship, he would have grown arrogant and proud. Likewise, if he were to be ill all the time, he would not have had the opportunity to worship Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and be grateful to Him.

These and many other benefits of worldly difficulties together bring about numerous blessings for the believer. Besides, worldly difficulties are necessary for the spiritual growth of the believer since they purify him from sins, help him worship Allaah sincerely and establish his Deen (religion). It is for this reason that the Ambiyaa and their followers were pleased when afflicted with hardships. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The Ambiyaa are afflicted the most, then the ulama, then the righteous. Indeed, one of them would be tested with poverty, so that he would not be able to wear anything except a coarse cloak, and they were tested with lice until it killed them. And indeed, they used to be

pleased with affliction as you are with comfort.” (Mustadrak of Haakim no. 119, Shuabul-Imaan no. 9317)

Note: After reading these virtues, a person may wish to endure worldly difficulties in return for the various benefits, rewards and freedom from the punishments of the Hereafter; but the believer is prohibited from wishing for calamities. The first reason is that one can easily fall into ingratitude and disbelief at the time of difficulties. Moreover, it is not possible for anyone to endure the punishment of his sins in this life. The second reason is that wishing for calamities would conflict with the easy and forgiving nature of Islam. We are instructed to ask for our well-being and forgiveness. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has taught this duaa in the Qur’aan,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا

O Our Sustainer! Punish us not if we forget or fall into error. O Our Sustainer! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us (Jews and Christians). O Our Sustainer! Put not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us and grant us Forgiveness. Have mercy on us.”
(Surah Baqarah verse 286)

So, the believer should take advantage of Allaah’s Mercy and ask for His forgiveness. Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ once visited a Muslim man who was so weak that he was (thin) like a chicken. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked him, “Did you make a specific supplication or ask Allaah for something (because of which you became like this)?” He replied, “Yes, I used to say, ‘O Allaah! Whatever punishment you have for me in the Hereafter, expedite it for me in this life.’” Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Glory be to Allaah! You cannot withstand that. Instead, you should have said, “Our Sustainer, grant us good in this life and in the next life, and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.” (Surah Baqarah verse 201) He then made duaa to Allaah to cure him, and Allaah cured him.” (Muslim no. 2688)

The believer should be thankful to Allaah if he is granted ease and comfort. However, one should not deem ease of life to be a result of one's piety and righteousness because worldly difficulties are not the only trials of the world. Rather, prosperity, wealth and well-being are also part of the test. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says,

وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً

We will test you well with good and bad conditions. (Ambiyaa verse 35)

This means that at times, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى shall test man with difficulties and sometimes with ease, to see who will give thanks and who will be ungrateful, who will be patient and who will despair. Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported from Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will test you with difficulties and with times of prosperity, with health and sickness, with richness and poverty, with lawful and unlawful, obedience and sin, with guidance and misguidance." (Tafseer Ibn Katheer)³

Thirdly, while patience and submission in times of difficulty can bring rewards and blessings for the believer; displeasure and impatience can incur Allaah's Wrath and Punishment on the slave. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The greater the difficulties, the greater the reward. When Allaah loves a nation, He puts them through trials and tribulations. The one who accepts [and submits to the trials and tribulations], shall receive the pleasure of Allaah. The one who is displeased shall receive the wrath of Allaah." (Tirmidhi no. 2396)

Therefore, the safest is to ask Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for well-being (aafiyat) and safety. Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Duaa between the adhaan and iqaamah is not rejected." (Abu Dawood no. 521, Tirmidhi no. 212/3594) In the narration of Tirmidhi (no. 3594), there is an addition: The Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ enquired, "What should we ask for, O Messenger of Allaah?"

³ وَقَوْلُهُ: {وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً} أَي: نَخْتَارُكُمْ بِالْمَصَائِبِ تَارَةً، وَبِالنِّعَمِ أُخْرَى، لِنَنْظُرَ مَنْ يَشْكُرُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرُ، وَمَنْ يَصْبِرُ وَمَنْ يَفْتِنُظ، كَمَا قَالَ عَلِيٌّ بْنُ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: {وَنَبْلُوكُم}، يَقُولُ: نَبْتَلِيكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً، بِالشَّدَّةِ وَالرَّخَاءِ، وَالصَّحَّةِ وَالسَّقَمِ، وَالْغِنَى وَالْفَقْرَ، وَالْحَلَالَ وَالْحَرَامَ، وَالطَّاعَةَ وَالْمَعْصِيَةَ وَالْهُدَى وَالضَّلَالَ

He ﷺ replied, “Ask Allaah for aafiyah (well-being) in this world and the hereafter.”

Abbaas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates, “I said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah! Teach me something which I could ask from Allaah.’ He replied, ‘Ask Allaah for aafiyah (well-being).’ After a few days I went back to him and said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah! Teach me something which I could ask from Allaah.’ He replied, ‘O ‘Abbaas! O uncle of the Messenger of Allaah! Ask Allaah for aafiyat (well-being) in this world and in the Hereafter.’” (Tirmidhi no. 3514)

WHAT SHOULD A BELIEVER DO IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTIES

A.) SABR (PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE)

'Sabr' is an Arabic word coming from a root that means, 'to detain, refrain and stop.' In the Islamic terminology, 'Sabr' means, 'to stop oneself from despairing and panicking; to stop the tongue from complaining, and to stop the hands from striking the face and tearing the clothes at a time of grief and distress.'

Those who possess the quality of 'Sabr' are indeed blessed, for Rasullullah ﷺ is reported to have said, "No one is given anything better and more encompassing than patience." (Bukhaari no. 1469)

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OF SABR?

- 1) The people of sabr are those who recite the following: *'Verily we belong to Allaah and only to Him is our return'*. (Surah Baqarah verse 156)
- 2) The people of sabr are grateful to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for what He has granted them. They appreciate Allaah's favours upon them in the past and at present and consider the condition of those who are less fortunate than them.
- 3) The people of sabr realise that what has befallen them had to happen and it could not have been avoided.
- 4) The people of sabr realize that whatever Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى does has some hidden good in it which is for our benefit.
- 5) The people of sabr never lose hope in Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and never fall prey to despondence.

WHAT WILL ONE RECEIVE IF HE ADOPTS THE QUALITY OF PATIENCE?

For the one who exercises sabr (patience), Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has promised the following in the Qur'aan:

- a) **Allaah loves him.** (Surah Aal-Imraan verse 146) Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى loves sabr (patience) and those who make sabr. Therefore He wants to make him His beloved.
- b) **Allaah is with him** (and He will therefore help and assist him). (Surah Baqarah verse 153, verse 249, Surah Anfaal verse 46 and verse 66)

c) **Allaah will guide his heart to yaqeen** (conviction that the only doer is Allaah). (Surah Baqarah verse 157, Surah Taghaabun verse 11)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, “No difficulty afflicts one except by permission of Allaah. And whoever believes in Allaah, He will guide his heart.” (Taghaabun verse 11)

Elaborating on this, ‘Alqama رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “This verse is in reference to a person who is struck with a calamity, but realises that it is from Allaah and so he surrenders to it and is pleased.” (Tafseer At-Tabari)

d) **He will acquire the special mercies of Allaah** تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى (special exclusive mercies which He will shower down upon him in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty he experiences and which is known to none other but himself) **and the general mercies of Allaah** (His general mercies which are granted to all the patient ones and to His beloved servants) **and hidaayah** (which is the object of man’s life - to walk the straight path till he reaches his destination i.e. Allaah’s love, recognition, ma’iyyat and His pleasure). (Surah Baqarah verse 157)

e) **He will have no reckoning.** Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states: The patient ones will be granted their rewards without having to undergo any reckoning.⁴ (Surah Zumar verse 10)

For those who exercise patience, the following rewards have been promised by Rasulullah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

a) **He will be the envy of all on the day of Qiyaamah and will undergo no reckoning:**

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “The martyr will be brought on the day of Qiyaamah and will be made to wait while the reckoning takes place. Then, a man who would spend generously in charity will be brought, and his reckoning will take place. Then, those who were afflicted with great difficulties in this

⁴ This is one interpretation of this verse, which is borne out by numerous Ahaadith. Another interpretation is ‘The patient ones will be granted their rewards without measure (which are immeasurable and countless)’.

world will be brought front, no scales will be erected for them, nor will their records of deeds be opened. Reward will be showered down upon them in torrents, to the extent that those who lived easy lives (in the world) will wish on the Plains of Resurrection that their bodies were cut up with scissors, due to seeing the great rewards set aside for these difficulties.”(Tabaraani in Kabeer no. 12829)

The people of sabr will therefore be the envy of all on the Day of Qiyaamah due to their position and great reward. On the day of Qiyaamah, when people will see the reward of being patient through great tests and the reward of turning towards Allaah in humility, they would want Allaah to have tested them even more so that they could have reaped the rewards of being patient and turning towards Allaah. It is only on the day of Qiyaamah that man will truly realise how much he had missed out on.

b) He is a true believer: Once, Rasulullaah ﷺ asked a group of Sahaabah, "Who are you?" They replied that they were believers. Rasulullaah ﷺ then asked them, "What is the sign of your imaan?" They replied, "We are patient in times of difficulty, we are grateful in times of ease, and we are pleased with divine decree." Rasulullaah ﷺ remarked, "You are (true) believers, by the Lord of the Ka'bah." (Al-Mu'jamul-Awsat no. 9427)

Ali رضي الله عنه said, "Verily Sabr is to Imaan what the head is to the body. When the head is cut off, the body falls. (He then raised his voice) Verily there is no Imaan for he who has no Sabr (patience)." (Shuabul-Imaan no. 9267)

c) His sins will be wiped away: Rasulullaah ﷺ said: "Tests (calamities and hardships) will continue to befall the believing man and woman, with regard to themselves (by sickness, poverty etc.), their children (by death, sickness, disobedience etc.) and their wealth (by losses etc.), until they meet Allaah (on the day of Qiyaamah) with no sin on themselves." (Tirmidhi no. 2399)

Allaah ﷻ is indeed the Most Wise. He knows what type of trials He puts man through and the wisdom behind it. His love for man is indeed amazing. He

wants to meet every believer in a state where he or she is pure from sin. And what could more beautiful than coming before Allaah with all his sins erased? It may be that a person who has experienced great difficulties in the world will face Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى on the day of Qiyaamah with little or no sins. So tests are a way of Allaah forgiving a person's sins, so that on the day of Qiyaamah, they may have a much lighter load. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has called the day of judgement a "**terrifying**" day. Surely on this terrifying day, man would want as less sins as possible in his accounts, if he were to be successful. Therefore, these trials and tests are very important for him, because they enable us to be forgiven for countless sins that would have been a huge burden on him, had it been in his accounts. Due to the huge tests man faced with patience, then it may well happen that he is left with very little or no sins at all on that day. The greater the trial, the more sins fall away. And even a prick of a thorn expiates ones sins.

d) His reward is Jannah: The reward for patience is Jannah. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The reward for sabr is Jannah." (Sahih Ibn Khuzaimah no.1887)

e) Allaah wants to raise him to a high and lofty position in Aakhirah, which he cannot reach through his good deeds: Muhammad ibn Khalid as Sulami narrated from his father (Khalid) from his grandfather (Lajlaaj رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "If a rank (in Jannah) is decreed by Allaah for his slave which he fails to attain through his deeds, then Allaah tries him (with affliction) in his body, in his property or in his children and causes him to be patient, till he brings him to the rank that had been decreed for him by Allaah." (Musnad Ahmad no. 22338, Abu Dawood no. 3090)

Therefore, patience in the face of trial enables one to attain the station that deeds cannot take one to. True Sabr that will bring about the promised reward has to be practiced at the beginning of the calamity, when one first hears the news of affliction. In spite of the heart's sorrows, the slave does not panic or despair. He exhibits patience and satisfaction with the Decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Patience after the initial shock when the grief has reduced is not true Sabr. The real test of patience is at the time when one is grieved by the calamity.

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Verily patience is at the first hit (of news).” (Bukhaari no. 1283, Muslim no. 926)

Every person practices patience, willingly or unwillingly. The wise person is he who practices patience willingly and from the beginning because he understands the benefits of patience. He knows that he will be rewarded for his patience and will be criticized if he panics. He is aware that impatience and despair can neither bring back missed opportunities nor change the Decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Foolish is he who practices patience only after having complained and shown anguish and he cannot find any other choice. Sabr at this point does no good.

Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Abrarul-Haq رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “As long as man remains in this world, he will continue to face some type or the other of grief and difficulties. To try to live a life wherein such heartache and pain never occurs is an effort which is futile. However, a beautiful method by which we can save ourselves from all negative impacts and effects which arise from such difficulties, a method which is within our reach and which only requires a bit of focus and awareness, is to refresh our beliefs. One aspect of our beliefs is belief in the beautiful names of Allaah. If the following names of Allaah are kept strongly in mind, In-sha-Allah, our worries and depression will significantly decrease. Just as a person takes full benefit of his monetary savings when in need, so too are beliefs our capital, from which man receives support and help during trying circumstances. These beliefs are known to all of us and are very simple:

- a) Allaah is Rabbul-Aalameen – The Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Nourisher and Nurturer of all the universes.
- b) He is Ar-Rahmaan – The One whose mercy is all-extensive.
- c) He is Ar-Rahmaan – The One whose mercy is intensive and unlimited.
- d) He is Al-Maalik – The Owner and Possessor of everything.
- e) He is Al-Qaadir – The Mighty and Powerful.
- f) He is Al-Kareem – The Kind who bestows favours from His grace.
- g) He is An-Naasir – The Helper.
- h) He is Al-Wali – The Friend and Supporter.

i) He is Al-Haakim – The Controller and Maker of all decisions.

j) He is Al-Hakeem – The Most Wise. His every doing is full of wisdoms and benefits.

These are ten of our beliefs, which are all based on the above names of Allaah. If one keeps only the last two names of Allah in mind, Insha-Allah, then that too will be sufficient. (Ma'ariful Abraar page 372)

Important advice: Do not become obsessed with the tragedy and don't continue to brood over it.

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentioned: I am now going to explain something worth millions. There are two types of grief; natural grief and self-imposed grief. The time duration of natural grief is very short and the grief subsides on its own. Self-imposed grief is when one keeps on thinking about the tragedy and creates grief within himself, and he keeps on speaking about the tragedy, thereby increasing his grief. This grief is indeed very severe. However, (to avoid) such grief is within one's control. Stop engaging your mind in thoughts about the tragedy and stop speaking about it (more than is necessary). In this way, this self-imposed grief will not even come near you.

I am in no way denying the existence of natural grief. This will be felt and should be felt. It is because of this grief that one receives great rewards. By this grief does the condition of abdiyyah (servitude to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) become manifest. If man does not experience grief, he will become a Fir'aun (tyrant).

But this natural grief is multiplied many-fold when a man is obsessed with thoughts of the past or the future. He keeps on reliving the past or imagining what may happen in the future. One should not increase one's grief by reliving (thinking over and over about) the tragedy.

Also, don't keep on assuming and deciding what should happen (in the future) and how it should happen. Rather, submit yourself to the decree of Allaah. (Wa'z Faza'il Sabr wa Shukr, adapted from Consolement for a Grieving Heart)

B.) IHTISAAB (HOPING FOR REWARD)

Looking forward to Allaah's reward and forgiveness for every affliction, regardless of the pain and suffering is called Ihtisaab. Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "When Allaah takes away from His believing servant his beloved one of the people of the earth; if he displays patience and Ihtisaab, Allaah will then not accept any reward for him less than Jannah." (Bukhaari no. 6424)

Abu Uthman Al-Maghribi says, "There is no reward beyond the reward of patience."

Ibn Juzayy states: **A point of benefit:** Patience has been mentioned in the Qur'aan in more than seventy places, because of the tremendousness of its position in Islam. Some of the scholars have said that all good deeds have a known reward, except for patience, because the reward of patience is without measure—because Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, **"The patient shall be granted their reward without measure."**

Ibn Qudaama رَحِمَهُ اللهُ wrote, "If a king said to a poor man 'Every time I hit you with this small branch, I will give you 1000 dinars, such a man would wish to be frequently hit, not because it does not hurt, but because of the outcome which he aspires for, even if the hits become painful.'" (Minhaajul-Qaasideen)

Internalise in your mind that this life is a test ground and we are in an examination. We do not know when this examination will end. However, whilst the examination is taking place, we are being rigorously tested and at times we are tested until breaking point, just to see whether or not we will turn towards Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى or go away from Him. Therefore we should realise that being tested with trials and tests will NEVER go unrewarded. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will greatly reward those who pass their exams with flying colours. The harder the tests we undergo, the higher the position we will be granted by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

Is this life not but a taste and a short term home? Or would we rather live in short luxury for an eternal suffering? If cleansing of all of our sins and the above

rewards is not enough, then what is? Therefore let us realise that patience is the main thing Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is looking for within us when we are going through trials and tests.

Take the example of Aasiyah, the wife of Firawn. Aasiyah was severely tortured by her husband, who was a king, because she had accepted the Oneness of Allaah. In spite of the severe anguish and pain, Aasiyah persisted in her faith, displayed immense patience and practiced Ihtisaab. She made dua'a to Allaah and asked Him for a home in Jannah. Allaah mentions her story in the Qur'aan, "And Allaah has set forth an example for those who believe, the wife of Firawn, when she said, "My Sustainer! Build for me a home with You in Jannah and save me from Firawn and his work, and save me from the people who are wrongdoers." (Surah Tahreem verse 11)

When she supplicated to Allaah with this du'aa, the sky opened for her and she saw her home in Jannah. She smiled. Firawn commanded a big rock to be brought and dropped on Aasiyah in order to crush her to death. But Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى took her soul before the rock was dropped. So, Allaah granted Aasiyah two blessings for her Ihtisaab; a home in Paradise and protection from the cunning plans of Firawn. She is thus an example for all those who will come after till the Day of Judgment.

C.) EXPRESS ALLAAH'S SUPREMACY AND SUBMIT TO HIS DECREE VERBALLY

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

وَلَتَبْلُؤَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

Surely, We will test you with fear, hunger, loss of wealth and life and the fruits of your work but give glad tidings to the patient - those who, when afflicted with a calamity say, "Verily we belong to Allaah and towards Him is our return." Those are the ones upon whom are bestowed blessings and mercy

from their Sustainer, and those are the ones who are (truly)guided.” (Surah Baqarah verse 155-157)

In essence, we remind ourselves through this dua that we, along with our wealth, families and health, all belong to Allaah. A true unrestricted owner has the right to use his property and possessions as he wills, and none has the right to object or question his prerogative. However Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, out of His unlimited kindness, has given us consolation that we are soon going to be rewarded in full for the difficulty we endured patiently when we return to Him after our death.

Benefits of reciting this dua:

a) By reciting this dua, one will be recorded amongst the patient ones. (Surah Baqarah verse 155)

b) One will certainly receive something better in return, no matter how unlikely it may seem.

Ummu Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates, “I heard Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying, “Whenever a Muslim is afflicted by some loss or calamity, and he says (the dua hereunder) which Allaah has ordered him to say, Allaah will grant him in replacement something better.”

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ أَجِرْنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

Verily we belong to Allaah, and only to Him will we return. O Allaah, reward me for undergoing this difficulty and loss, and grant me something better in replacement for what I have lost.

She رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا continues, “When (my husband) Abu Salamah passed away, I said to myself, “Which Muslim can ever be better than Abu Salamah, who was the first man to migrate (due to the instruction of) Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ (to Madinah Munawwarah).” In spite of this thought, I recited it, due to which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى granted me Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as a replacement.” (Muslim no. 918)

c) One will receive a palace in Jannah

Abdullah ibn Amr ibnul Aas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “Whoever has four traits, Allaah will build for him a magnificent palace for him in Jannah; a) His protection and support is from ‘Laa ilaah illAllaah’. b) When any calamity afflicts him, he says ‘Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji’oon’. c) When he is granted anything, he says ‘Alhamdulillah’. d) When he commits a sin, he says ‘Astaghfirullah’. (Shu’abul Imaan no.9242)

d) One will receive 6 great rewards

Abdullah ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentioned regarding the verse, “تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى” informed the believer (in the Qur’aan) that when he accepts the decision of Allaah and recites ‘Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji’oon’, then Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى writes down for him three types of goodness: a) special mercy from Allaah (special exclusive mercies which He will shower down upon a person in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty he experiences and which is known to none other but himself), b) general mercy (Allaah’s general mercies which are granted to all the saabireen-patient ones and to his beloved servants), and c) finding the path of guidance (the straight path of hidaayah till he reaches his destination i.e. Allaah’s love, recognition, ma’iyyat and His pleasure). And Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Whoever recites ‘Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji’oon’, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will remove his sins, grant him a good end result and will grant him a better replacement which will please him.”⁵ (Al-Mu’jamul-Kabeer no. 13027, Shuabul-Imaan no. 9240)

Abu Bakr ibn Abi Maryam said that he heard his elders saying that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “People undergo some calamity. They are overcome with anxiety and impatience, and their piety (the nature of their abstention) is spoilt. A person passes by them and recites ‘Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji’oon’. He gets greater reward than those afflicted.” (Az-Zuhd War-Riqaaq of Ibnul Mubaarak vol. 1 page 28 no.110)

⁵ من استرجع عند المصيبة جبر الله مصيبتيه وأحسن عقابه وجعل له خلفا صالحا يرضاه⁵

D.) SALAAH

Salaah is a direct connection with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. When a person is faced with any calamity, he should resort to salaah. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is the only Being who can solve man's problems. Together with this, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى grants man steadfastness in the heart and peace of mind. When the polytheists caused untold harm to Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى revealed the following verses,

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

We know that your bosom is constricted by what they say. Glorify, then, the praises of your Sustainer, and be of those who prostrate. (Hijr verse 97-98)

Allamah Shabbir Ahmad Uthmaani رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ writes, "If you find yourself constricted due to their obstinacy and stubbornness, turn your attention away from them and occupy yourself in the glorification and praise of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The remembrance of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, salaah, prostration, and the worship of Allaah are acts whereby the heart remains at ease and expansive, and all worry and grief is removed. It was therefore the habit of Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that whenever he encountered any trying situation, he hastened towards salaah."

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, "Seek help with sabr and salaah. Verily Allaah is with the patient ones." (Baqarah verse 153)

Whenever any matter worried Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, he hastened to salaah. (Abu Dawood no. 1319)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The person who offers the Fajr salaah is under the protection of Allaah." (Muslim no. 657)

Abdullah ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was informed of the demise of his brother Qutham, whilst he was on a journey. He recited the dua of istirjaa', went to the corner of the road, performed two rak'ats, and sat for a long while. He then stood up and walked to his conveyance saying, "Seek help with patience and salaah....." (Shuabul-Imaan no. 9233)

Another incident is mentioned regarding him that he was on a journey when he was informed of the death of a family member. He recited the duaa of *istirjaa'*, then dismounted and performed two rak'ats of salaah. He then said, "We have done that which Allah commanded us to do, and he recited the following verse, "Seek help with patience and salaah." (Shuabul-Imaan no. 9232)

Thumaamah bin Abdullaah narrates that during the summer months, the caretaker of Anas رضي الله عنه's orchard came to him complaining about the drought. Anas رضي الله عنه sent for some water, made wudhu and started performing salaah. He then asked the man to see if he could see anything (any clouds). When the man reported that he saw nothing, Anas رضي الله عنه returned indoors and again performed salaah. It was after the third or fourth time of asking the man to look that the man reported back to say that he saw a cloud the size of a bird's wing. Anas رضي الله عنه then continued performing salaah and making du'aa until the caretaker came to him and said, "The sky had become overcast and rain has fallen." Anas رضي الله عنه said to him, "Take the horse that Bishr bin Shighaaf had sent and see up to where the rain had reached." When the man went to have a look, he discovered that the rain had not fallen further than the Musayyireen and Ghadbaan areas (i.e. it had fallen precisely on the land belonging to Anas رضي الله عنه)." (At-Tabaqaatul-Kubraa - Anas ibn Maalik no. 2837 vol.7 page 21)

Ali رضي الله عنه relates, "I was once suffering intense pain, so I went to Rasulullaah صلى الله عليه وسلم. He put me where he was standing, covered me with the end of his shawl and started performing salaah. He then said, "You will be alright now, O son of Abu Taalib. There is nothing to worry about. Whenever I ask anything from Allaah, I always ask the same for you. Allaah has granted me everything I have asked, but I have been informed that there shall be no Nabi after me." When I then stood up, it seemed as if I had never had any pain at all." (As-Sunnah of Ibn Abi Aasim no. 1313, Al-Mu'jamut-Tabaraani in Awsat no. 7917, As-Sunanul-Kubraa of Nasai no. 8480)

Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that there was a companion of Rasoolullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ called Abu Mu'liq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He was a trader who traded both his own goods as well as those of others. He was a person who was always engaged in Ibaadah and was extremely abstinent. He was out on business one day when an armed robber confronted him. "Put down your goods," the robber demanded, "because I am going to kill you." "You may have all the goods," Abu Mu'liq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ told him. "It is only your life that I want," the robber barked. "Then permit me to perform salaah," Abu Mu'liq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ requested. The robber laughed, "You may perform as much salaah as you please."

Abu Mu'liq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ made wudhu and started performing salaah. One of the du'aas he made was:

يَا وَدُودُ يَا ذَا الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدِ! يَا فَعَالًا لِمَا يُرِيدُ! أَسْأَلُكَ بِعِزَّتِكَ الَّتِي لَا تُرَامُ وَبِوَلَدِكَ
الَّذِي مَلَأَ أَرْكَانَ عَرْشِكَ أَنْ تَكْفِيَنِي شَرَّ هَذَا الصِّ، يَا مُغِيثُ أَغْنِنِي

O The Most Loving! O Master of the Glorious Throne! O the One Who does as He pleases! By Your Honour that none can hope to have, by Your kingdom that none can harm and by Your light that fills the foundations of Your throne do I implore You to protect me from the evil of this robber. O Helper, do help me.

When he had made this du'aa thrice, a rider suddenly appeared with a spear held high above his head. The rider thrust the spear at the robber and killed him. He then went up to the trader and asked, "Who are you?" Abu Mu'liq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, "I am the one whom Allaah has rescued through you." The rider then explained, "I am an angel of the fourth heaven. When you first made the du'aa, I heard the doors of the heavens rattle. When you made the du'aa the second time, I heard the inhabitants of the heavens cry out. When you again made the du'aa for the third time and it was announced that this was the du'aa of a person in distress, I sought permission from Allaah to grant me the ability of killing the robber. You ought to know that good news that whoever makes wudhu, performs four Rakaahs salaah and then makes that du'aa, his du'aa will be answered whether he is in distress or not." (Ibn Abi Dunya in Mujaabad-Da'wah no. 23)

E.) DUAA

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, “Your Sustainer says, ‘Call to Me so that I may respond to your call.’” (Surah Ghaafir verse 60)

“When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am near. I accept the supplication of the supplicant when he supplicates to Me.” (Surah Baqarah verse 186)

“Who is it that responds to the distressed when he calls Him, and removes hardship?” (Surah Naml verse 62)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Confront calamities with duaa and humbleness.” (Tabaraani in Awsat no. 1963, Kabeer no. 10196 vol. 10 page 128; Maraaseel of Abu Dawood no. 105)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ narrates from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى that He said, “O My servants! I have made oppression prohibited upon Myself and made it prohibited among yourselves as well. You should therefore not wrong each other. O My servants! All of you are astray except the one whom I guide. Therefore ask Me for guidance and I will guide you. O My servants! All of you are hungry except the one whom I feed. Therefore ask Me to feed you and I will feed you. O My servants! All of you are naked except the one whom I clothe. Therefore ask Me to clothe you and I will clothe you. O My servants! You commit sins by day and night, and I forgive all sins. Therefore seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you. O My servants! If you wish to harm Me, you will never be able to harm Me. And if you wish to benefit Me, you will never be able to benefit Me. O My servants! If all your past and future generations, and all the humans and jinn were to reach the level of the most righteous among you, that will not increase My sovereignty in any way. O My servants! If all your past and future generations, and all the humans and jinn were to reach the level of the most wicked among you, that will not decrease My sovereignty in any way. O My servants! If all your past and future generations, and all the humans and jinn were to all stand on a single field, and they were to ask Me [whatever they desired] and I gave to every person whatever he asked for, that will not decrease My treasures in any way except as when a needle is dipped in the ocean. O My servants! It is your deeds which

I store for you, and I will then give you your compensation in full. Therefore, whoever does good, should thank Allaah. And whoever does evil, he should blame none but himself [because evils are committed by the demands of his self].” (Muslim no. 2577)

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ writes, “Duaa does not mean the mere recitation of some words and the mere ritual reiteration of words after Salaat. The nature of duaa consists of petitioning in the Court of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The earnestness and concern which people have when making appeals in the courts of the world should at least be adopted when making duaa in the Court of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. When making duaa, one’s mind and body have to be concentrated and directed into the purpose of duaa. One should never lose hope in the event of fulfilment of the duaa being delayed or if fulfilment is not discerned. One has to submit to the Will of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Duaa is an appeal to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. It is His sole prerogative to grant or reject the appeals of His servants. We have no right to become disillusioned and despondent if we cannot discern acceptance of our duaa. The times of duaa are not restricted to the time of Salaat.

Duaa should be made at any time, whenever one requires something although the time after Salaat is very efficacious for acceptance of the duaa. Whenever and whatever one is in need of, immediately make duaa with the heart as well as with the tongue. This then is the reality and nature of duaa. Now when supplicating, do so according to the reality and nature of duaa as has been described. If you do so, you will discern the efficacy and blessings of duaa. Blessings (barakah) of duaa does not necessarily mean that whatever you ask for will be granted. At times the very object sought for, is obtained, e.g. something in regard to the Aakhirat, because of favour or bounty of the Aakhirah is pure goodness for the servant. For the attainment of the fortunes of the Aakhirat, Imaan and Itaa’at (obedience) are conditions. Without these conditions, the blessings of Aakhirah are not attainable. Sometimes, the object asked for is not attained. This is so because sometimes the worldly object supplicated for is harmful and sometimes beneficial. If it is beneficial in the Wisdom of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, He grants it to the servant and when it is harmful,

He withholds it from the servant just as a father will deny his child an object which is detrimental to his interests. The meaning of blessings in this context is that the Attention of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is directed to the servant. Thus, if due to some reason known to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the object asked for is not granted, then too there is contentment. He is not overcome with frustration and weakness. This spiritual strength with which the heart is imbued is the effect of the Special Attention of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى as a result of dua'a made by the servant. This Special Attention of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is indeed a great treasure. All other treasures pale into insignificance in its presence. This Special Attention is in fact man's original capital which he has to strive for. It is the possession of this treasure which will bring him comfort and peace in this world and in the Akhirah. The limitless bounties of the Hereafter are obtainable as a result of this Special Attention which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى focuses on His servants. There is, therefore, never the slightest fear of being deprived. The one who makes dua'a is never deprived because of this inherent blessings of dua'a. Some ahaadeeth pertaining to the significance of dua'a will now be narrated.

Ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Dua'a is beneficial in everything. It is efficacious in warding off misfortunes which have already descended as well as misfortunes which are about to descend. Therefore, the servants of Allaah should be steadfast in making dua'a." (Tirmidhi no. 3548, Musnad Ahmad no. 22044)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Dua'a is worship." (Abu Dawood no. 1474)

Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "When you have to ask for something, ask of Allaah. When you require aid, seek His Aid. Believe firmly that if all creation desires to benefit you in anything, they can never benefit you but that which Allaah has decreed for you. If they all unite to harm you, they will not be able to harm you in anything, but that which Allaah has decreed for you. The pens have been raised and the books are dry. (Tirmidhi no. 2516)

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said, "No Muslim supplicates to Allaah with a du'a'a that does not involve sin or cutting family relations, but Allaah will grant him one of the three things. He will either hasten the response to his supplication,

save it for him until the Hereafter, or would turn an equivalent amount of evil away from him.” They (the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) asked, “What if we were to recite more (du'aa).” He صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Allaah grants much more.” (Musnad Ahmad no. 11133)

Ibn Abid-Dunya has narrated from Abdullah ibn Shawzab رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that Dawood عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام asked Allaah, “O my Sustainer, where can I find You?” Allaah replied, “You will find Me by those whose hearts are broken.” (Al-Hamm wal Huzn no.61) Wahb ibn Munabbih رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Dawood عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, “O my Sustainer, where can I find You when I search for You?” Allaah replied, “You will find Me by those whose hearts are broken, out of My fear.” (Hilyatul Auliya 4/32) Maalik ibn Dinaar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, “O my Sustainer, where can I search for You?” Allaah replied, “Search for me by those whose hearts are broken.” (Hilyatul Auliya 2/364) Imraan al-Qaseer رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, “O my Rabb, where can I search for You?” Allaah replied, “Search for Me by those whose hearts are broken. Daily, I go closer to them by a baa’ (2 arms-length). Had I not done so, they would crumble (under the weight of their grief).” (Hilyatul Auliya 6/177)

Sabr (patience) causes the hearts to be broken, as it is bitter and difficult to bear. This difficulty you are facing will cause you to become nearer to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and to develop a strong bond with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

There will be many times when one may feel completely empty and utterly alone in pain and grief, despite having loving family members around you. Remember that Allaah is closer to you than the veins in your neck. When you feel alone, remember that Allaah is with you. You may feel that no one knows the extent of the pain we are experiencing and the sadness we are feeling, remember that Allaah knows of our pain, grief and sadness more than we know ourselves. He alone knows exactly how we are feeling, and He will reward us accordingly. He knows our each and every single thought, and He is fully aware of our condition when we remember our beloved in loneliness. Therefore, He is the only One to whom we can pour our heart out to and express our feelings.

At the same time, He is the only One who can ease our pain, lessen our grief and fill up the empty space in our lives. In times of difficulty and pain, our only recourse is in crying to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and begging Him for help and assistance.

All Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى wants from us is for us to turn towards Him in meekness and humbleness and for us to be patient and to turn to Him in dua. Picture the fact that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى loves it when His servant is in desperate need, crying to him for help for Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى tends to those who cry and sob to Him immediately just as a mother tends to its baby promptly when it is crying.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى granted Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام great wealth, riches, properties, land, beautiful palatial houses and a host of conveyances. He was blessed with many children and servants. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى tested him by removing all these bounties. His wealth, land and palaces were burnt to ashes, and his children were crushed by a roof which fell upon them. He was then afflicted by a sickness similar to leprosy, which spread to every part of his body, except his tongue and heart. It seemed as if cancerous cells had eaten away all the flesh on his body, due to which cancerous sores burst open and chunks of his flesh would fall off. Worms even began devouring his flesh, which had decayed. In such a condition, he would spend all of his time in the remembrance of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, in His praises and in His worship. He would speak to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and say, “I thank You, The True Nurturer and Rabb, for the kindness You have showered upon me. You granted me wealth and children, whose love had entered and penetrated into every crevice of my heart. You then took all of this away from me, and emptied my heart from all of these loves, so that nothing remains a distraction and barrier between me and You. If my enemy Iblis knew the reality of what You have put me through, he would certainly become jealous of me.” He suffered from this disease for a period of eighteen years, but not once did he utter even a word of complaint. His wife Layya (the grand-daughter of Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) remained faithful to him, and continued serving him and seeing to his needs. Since he had lost all of his wealth and possessions, she had to now work as a domestic servant, in order to see to their household expenses and fulfill their basic needs of food and drink. After this entire period, his wife, out of

sheer frustration, one day blurted out, “Why don’t you make duaa to Allaah to relieve you of this sickness.” He calmly replied, “Allaah granted me good health for seventy years. Is it not only fair that I bear this with patience for at least seventy years?”

Two very special friends of his, who would still visit him regularly, were once approached by Shaytan, who said to them, “Your brother Ayyub has been afflicted with a very severe disease. Why don’t you visit him? Take along with you some wine, since I am sure he will be cured if he drinks it. They decided to do so. On seeing Ayyub in this pitiable condition, they cried bitterly. He welcomed them, saying, “Welcome to those friends who did not desert me at the time of difficulty.” One of them expressed his thoughts, “O Ayyub, perhaps you had assumed such an appearance before the people which was contrary to that which you have within your heart (you acted as a pious man, while you were evil within), due to which Allaah is punishing you. You must have committed such a grave sin which has not been committed by any other person in the world. Therefore, after eighteen years, Allaah has still not had mercy upon you and cured you.” He replied, “My Allaah knows that my outer appearance was no different from what I have within my heart. My Rabb is merely testing me, to see if I am patient or not.”

After witnessing his wife’s distress, her unyielding tiresome efforts and her forbearance, and after hearing the comments of these people regarding him, he pleaded to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in the following words, **“O my Rabb, difficulty has afflicted me, and You are The Most Merciful of those who show mercy (so remove my difficulty by Your mercy). O my Rabb, Shaytaan has afflicted me with fatigue and pain.”**

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى responded to his supplication, and revealed to him, “Strike your foot on the ground. (A spring will emerge). This is cold water which you should use to bathe and which you should drink.” On fulfilling this commandment, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى granted him complete cure, and sent down for him a pair of clothes from Jannah. Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام then sat down in a nearby spot. His wife was waiting for him nearby, since he had emerged to relieve himself, and came

to see what had happened to him, but did not recognize him. She frantically enquired, “O slave of Allaah, -may Allaah bless you- have you seen that sick Nabi who was here just a while ago. By Allaah, you look just like he did when he was healthy. I hope some wild-dogs or wolves haven’t got hold of him.” She continued prattling on anxiously for a while, after which he said to her, “What is wrong with you? I am Ayyub.” She responded, “Don’t joke with me, slave of Allaah.” He insisted, “I am Ayyub. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has granted me good health one again.”

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى then sent two clouds to his two store-rooms, which were reserved for wheat and barley. One cloud began to rain down gold and the other began to rain down silver until the store-rooms could take no more. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى returned his riches to him, and he became richer than before. Allaah also brought his seven sons and seven daughters back to life for him, who had all passed away at the beginning of this test, and granted him more children equal in number to those who had been brought back to life. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى praised him in the Qur’an-referring to him as one who Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى had found to be truly ‘patient’, and whose incident would remain a lesson for all those who wish to be true slaves of Allaah. (Ad-Durrul-Manthoor, Tafsir ibn Kathir, Ma’ariful Qur’aan)

If Allaah afflicts you with (any) harm, none can remove it besides Him. (On the contrary,) If He intends (any) good for you, then none can prevent His grace (none can stop the good from reaching you). He bestows His grace on those of His bondsmen whom He pleases and He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful. (Yunus verse 107)

F.) RADHAA BIL QADA (BEING PLEASED WITH THE DECREE OF ALLAAH)

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “When Allaah loves a servant, He tests him. If he exercises patience, He chooses him. If he is pleased with Allaah’s decree, He makes him His chosen servant.” (Musnadul Firdaus no. 971)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى sent revelation to Daawood عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, “O Daawood, you intend and I intend. Only that will occur which I intend. If you happily accept that which I intend, then I will be sufficient for you in that which you intend. If you are not pleased with that which I intend, then I will tire you in that which you intend, then too, only that which I intend will come to pass.” (Hakim Tirmidhi has mentioned something similar to this in Nawaadirul Usool no.1981))

LOGICAL PROOFS ILLUSTRATING PLEASURE IN DIFFICULTY

To exhibit pleasure in difficulties and to be pleased when matters go contrary to one’s temperament is possible, due to the following three reasons:

1) Seeing one’s beloved and an excess of love causes one to be unmindful of pain. Thus, if the beloved hits the lover, he does not experience discomfort. When a person is overcome by desires or anger, then we witness that the body is wounded, the head is hurt, blood flows, and the body becomes saturated with blood, but then too, one does not experience pain. At times, you may have noticed that when you were completely absorbed and immersed in something beloved to you, and whilst walking, a thorn settled in your foot, you experienced no pain or difficulty.

However, when the anger dissipates, or the enthusiasm and love fades, then the pain is now felt e.g. when one receives the item he was desirous of, or when one loses hope in ever receiving it. When one does not feel pain, due to this miniscule amount of love, then where there is excessive love, gigantic difficulties will not be felt.

In the world, a person becomes enamoured and is inclined to another human being – who is permeated with filth and dirt. This beloved can only be seen with the eye, which causes so many errors. At times, it sees something huge as small, something far as close, and something ugly as beautiful. When this is the condition with a mortal being, then why is this feeling impossible for that Being whose beauty is everlasting, whose grandeur is perpetual, who can never die

and has no form of imperfection, and who can be perceived with internal vision which is much clearer and truthful than the outer eye?

Based on this, when Junaid Baghdadi رَحِمَهُ اللهُ asked Sirri Saqati رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, “Does a lover feel the pain of difficulty?” he replied in the negative. He then asked him, “Even if he is struck with a sword?” “Even if he is struck seventy times with a sword,” came the reply.

An aarif once mentioned, “I love all things which He has created due to love for Him, so much so, that if He loves the Fire, I would have loved to enter it.” The meaning of this is that due to love, he would not feel any pain in the burning of the fire also.

Umar ibn Abdul Azeez رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said, “For me no pleasure remains except in that which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has decreed.” (Shua’bul Imaan no. 225)

The child of a sufi went missing for three days. He was asked, “Why don’t you make dua to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to return him back to you?” He answered, “My objecting to His decision is much more severe on me than my child being lost.”

2) The second reason why it is possible for one to be pleased with Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى’s decision is that one feels difficulty and dislikes it naturally. However, since his intellect informs him of a great result i.e. reward in the Hereafter, he accepts this difficulty happily. An example of this is when a doctor gives a patient bitter medicine to swallow or encourages him to take an injection. Swallowing bitter medication or taking an injection causes discomfort and pain. Nonetheless, since the patient is aware of its beneficial effects - that it will lead to good health - he is pleased with the doctor, and in fact, feels obligated to him and appreciates him.

A business-man is pleased with all the difficulties and encumbrances he has to undergo, even though it is completely against his temperament. Since his intellect has explained to him the great benefits and results of this difficulty,

this dislike and hardship converts into love and desire. When one does not regard difficulties to be difficulties just for attaining the temporary benefits of this world, then why should it be surprising when one is pleased to bear difficulties and hardships in attaining the felicity and success of the Hereafter?

A pious woman once slipped. Her toenail fell out. Instead of moaning and wailing, she began smiling. People asked her, “Are you not feeling pain?” She replied, “The enjoyment of the reward I will receive has removed from my heart the bitterness of its pain.”

In short, whoever believes from the bottom of his heart that he will receive such a great reward from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for every difficulty he bore; that this difficulty will bear no comparison to the reward will find himself happy and pleased even in difficulties.

3) A person understands that there are amazing secrets and workings of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in every action. In every amazing incident and new event, there is not one, but hundreds of mysteries hidden, some of which only a person of great insight will be able to fathom. Looking at these benefits and wisdoms, a difficulty does not remain a difficulty. Whatever is happening in this temporary world which is regarded to be a cause of worry, concern and anguish by an ignorant person is seen in a different light by people of understanding.

The surprise of this person is like that of the surprise shown by Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام to Khidhr عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام after staying in his company, as explained in Surah Kahf. Whilst sitting in a boat of poor people, Khidhr عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام damaged it by removing a board from it. Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in surprise asked him why he committed such an act of excess. Thereafter, Khidhr عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام killed an immature youngster. Again Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, in astonishment, objected, that since when had the blood of an innocent youngster become permissible.

Continuing ahead, they reached a certain area where the inhabitants did not even care to host them. In the morning, whilst leaving the area, their gaze fell

on a wall which was about to collapse. Khidhr عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام repaired this wall. Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was again taken aback, objecting that he should not have favoured such an unfriendly community who cared not in the least bit for their guests. After this third objection, the two of them parted ways, in accordance to their agreement.

It is clear that the only reason Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was surprised with these incidents was that he was not aware of the underlying secrets and wisdoms of these incidents. Thereafter, Khidhr عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام informed Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام that the boat belonged to some poor sailors. The king at that time was unjustly seizing ships that were in an excellent condition. He thus damaged the ship, so that these poor people's means of livelihood would not be taken away.

The child who was killed was naturally irreligious, and there was a strong fear that on reaching adulthood, he would lead his believing parents astray, since due to their parental love for him, they would not be able to resist his demands. This child was thus taken away and another child was to be bestowed to them, which would be pious and a cause for their success in the Hereafter. As for the wall, it belonged to two orphans whose father was pious. Underneath this wall was buried his wealth which he had left behind for these two children. Thus, he straightened the wall, so that these two children could retrieve the wealth after attaining maturity. If the wall had to fall now, the wealth would have been usurped by others. After these explanations, the amazement of Moosa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was eradicated.

An incident is mentioned of a pious man who would always utter in every problem, "Goodness is in that which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى ordained." He used to reside in a village. He possessed a donkey on which he would load his goods; a dog that would guard his house; and a cock that would wake him up in the morning. One day, a fox came and grabbed the cock, taking it away. When he saw his wife disheartened, he said to her, "Goodness is in that which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى ordained." Thereafter a wolf came and killed the donkey. Again, he uttered these words to console his wife. The dog thereafter fell sick, and died.

Once again, he uttered, “Goodness is in that which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى ordained.” His wife was astonished at him, that there was so much of loss caused to them, but he continued to say that there must be goodness in these actions.

One morning, they woke up to find that all the houses around them had been attacked the night before. All the people were imprisoned and all the children made into slaves. The soldiers had recognized the houses in the darkness of the night by the braying of the people’s donkeys, the barking of their dogs and the crowing of their cocks. The pious man then said to his wife, “You have seen now that goodness is in what Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has ordained. The animals of the people were the cause of their problems. If our animals had not died before this, then you and I would also have been taken away as prisoner.”

A Nabi was once sitting worshipping Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in the cavern of a mountain. Nearby a stream flowed. Once, a person riding a horse came to this stream. He removed his money-belt and placed it on the floor before drinking water. He then went away, forgetting this belt in which was a thousand dinars (gold coins). After a short while, another person came and took this belt away. Then a poor man came, carrying a bundle of wood on his back. He removed this bundle from his back, and sat down to drink and rest. The horseman, in the meantime, returned very agitated looking for his money-belt. He caught hold of the poor man and started beating him, asking for his bag. When the poor man denied any knowledge of the bag, he brandished his sword and killed him. The Nabi, having witnessed this whole incident, remarked, “O Allaah! This incident was most amazing. This poor man did not take the bag but was killed for it, and the other oppressor who stole the bag was not taken to task.”

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى revealed to him, “Remain engaged in your worship. Knowing the mysteries behind divine workings is not your work. The reality of this matter is that this poor person had killed the father of the horseman. I thus allowed retribution to take place by the son of the murdered person. The horseman’s father had once stolen one thousand gold coins from the person who took the bag. I thus returned it from his estate.”

In summary, whoever believes in these wisdoms and deeper secrets, will not be in the least bit surprised at the actions of Allaah ﷻ. In fact, he will be surprised at his own ignorance and foolishness. He will not question divine decisions by using words like, 'why' and 'how'. He will be pleased with the decisions which Allaah ﷻ has determined. (Extracted from Tablighe-Deen)

Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Abrarul-Haq رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, "As long as man remains in this world, he will continue to face some type or the other of grief and difficulties. To try to live a life wherein such heartache and pain never occurs is an effort which is futile. However, a beautiful method by which we can save ourselves from all negative impacts and effects which arise from such difficulties, a method which is within our reach and which only requires a bit of focus and awareness, is to refresh our beliefs.

- 1) Allaah is Al-Haakim. He can do whatever He wishes to do with His servants. Whatever occurs, it occurs only by His decision and judgement. Even a single atom cannot move without His permission.
- 2) Allaah is Al-Hakeem. No single doing of His is devoid of wisdom. Every doing of His is full of benefit. However, man is not required to know of those benefits, nor is it necessary to know of it.

These two points should be repeatedly brought to mind, so that they be remembered at the opportune occasions. When one is faced with any difficult situation, he should immediately realize the fact that it has happened by the will and decision of Allaah ﷻ, and that there will definitely be some benefit in it, even though we may not know it. In-sha-Allaah, in this manner, despite pain being felt by the body, the heart will not become agitated and depressed.

The example to illustrate this is that of an intelligent man who had to undergo an amputation. There is surely pain in amputating an arm, but knowing that it is being done for my benefit, the patient remains happy and pleased with the doctor. He even pays his bill. Yet, if a small child who is not of the age of understanding has to undergo the same operation, because of not knowing the benefit, he will even swear at the doctor. From this, we understand that

pondering over the benefits will bring about a lot of peace and contentment. Do so, and also make a lot of duaa, as this is very effective. (Ma'ariful Abraar pg.372, 376)

Remember that every difficulty we face is only for our benefit. Saeed ibnul Musayyib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates: Luqmaan (the wise) once said to his son, "O my dear son. Whenever you are faced with a situation which you are happy with or a situation which you are unhappy about, understand in your heart that this condition is best for you." His son replied, "As for this advice of yours, I cannot agree to it without convincing proof that what you are claiming is a reality." Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "Son. Allaah has sent a Nabi. Why don't you go to him? He will be able to explain to you what I have said." His son said, "Come with me to the Nabi."

So they both set out, each one riding on his own donkey. They carried with them food which was sufficient for their journey. They travelled for a few days and nights till they reached a desert. They prepared themselves as best as they could and they commenced their journey through the scorching arid desert. They travelled for as long as Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى willed them to travel. Eventually, their water was depleted and their food ran out. It was midday and extremely hot. The donkeys were trudging ahead too slowly for them. They got off the donkeys and began to run on foot. Suddenly, Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ looked ahead and saw a dark shadow and smoke in the distance. He knew that the dark shadow in the distance meant trees and greenery, and that the smoke was a sign of an inhabited city where people must be living.

As they rushed ahead, Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ's son ran over a bone which was sticking out from the sand. It pierced through the bottom of his foot, and could be seen jutting out from the other side. (Due to the pain and shock) he fell down unconscious. Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ looked back to see what had happened, and he was shocked to see his son flat on the ground. He rushed to his son and embraced him. Quickly, he set about removing the bone by slowly extracting it with his teeth. He tore his turban into a few pieces and bandaged the foot. Looking compassionately at his son's face, he began to cry. A tear-drop of his

fell onto the boy's cheek. He regained consciousness, only to find his father crying. He blurted out, "Father, why are you crying?!! You are the one who says that this condition must be best for me. How can this situation be best for me, and you are crying over it?!! The food has run out. The water is depleted. You and I are alone in this place. If you go, and leave me like this, you will pass the rest of your life in sorrow and grief (that you deserted me to save your life). If you stay here with me, we will both die. Please explain to me how this can ever be better for me, if you are crying like this?!!" Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ explained, "I am crying because I wish I could have sacrificed whatever I had in this world for your sake. I am a father. I am crying because I am overtaken by the compassion of a father. As for your question 'how can this be best for me', perhaps the calamity which you were saved from was worse than what you have been afflicted with, and perhaps this difficulty of yours is lighter than the calamity which you may have been saved from."

During this discussion, Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ looked ahead. But he was now unable to see the dark shadow and smoke. He thought to himself, "Maybe I didn't see anything. (I had just imagined it)" Then he said to himself, "I am sure I has seen something. Perhaps my Rabb (Sustainer) has caused something to happen to whatever I saw." Consumed with these thoughts, he looked ahead again and happened to see the form of a rider wearing white clothes and a white turban proceeding towards him on a piebald horse. The horse was galloping forward with tremendous speed, as if it was running in the air. He kept his eyes fixed to this person until he reached close by.

Suddenly, the man disappeared out of sight. But Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ heard a voice calling out to him, "Are you Luqmaan?" He replied, "Yes." The mysterious man asked, "Are you Luqmaan, the wise?" He replied, "That's what people call me." The man asked, "What did this foolish son of yours say to you just now?" Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, "O servant of Allaah, Who are you? I can hear you, but I can't see your face. The man said, "I am Jibreel. Only the special angels or the Nabis who have been sent normally see me. If it was not for that, you would have seen me. Now tell me what this foolish son of yours said to you just now?" Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said to himself, "If you are Jibreel, you should know better

than me as to what my son said.” Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام commented, “I have really nothing to do with the two of you, but I was allowed to save you. I was commanded to sink this city, along with its people, under the ground. The angles came to me and informed me that you two are heading for this city. I made du’aa to Allaah to delay you for a while. So Allaah delayed you by putting your son through this difficulty. Had it not been for this little difficulty that your son had to undergo, I would have made you sink into the ground with the rest of them.” Then Jibreel عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام passed his hand over the boy’s foot, and he was able to stand. He passed his hand over the food-bag and the water-skin, and they were filled with food and water. Then he lifted them and their donkeys into the sky and released them like a carrier pigeon is released and they found themselves back at home. (Ar-Ridhaa anillaahi bi qadha’ihi by Ibn Abid Dunya no. 29, Mukhtasar Minhaajul Qaasideen by Ibn Qudaamah Maqdisi vol. 4 page 123, Ad-Durrul Manthoor vol. 6 page 514)

Mufti Muhammad Hasan Amritsari, the founder of Jamiah Ashrafiyyah Lahore, was a scholar who was an expert in logic. He had come to Thanabawan to spend some time in the company of Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, his spiritual guide. During his stay, he received a letter from home stating that his wife and children had become very sick and were afflicted by a torrent of problems, which distressed him greatly. He informed Moulana Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ of this, to which Moulana responded by saying, “Since a Mu’min (believer) believes that whatever occurs is ‘muqaddar’ (destined and decided by Allaah), what is the need for him to ever become ‘mukaddar’ (upset, worried, miserable and distressed).” Moulana Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ then explained to him the reality of the matter based on logical premises, “I will prove to you logically that every difficulty which afflicts a believer is only for his benefit. There are only four logical possibilities with regards to difficulties and that afflict any believer:

- 1) Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى benefits 100% from his servants suffering. This is impossible, as that would necessitate that Allaah is in need of His servants for acquiring benefit. The reality is that Allaah is beyond and pure from benefitting from His creation, since Allaah is totally independent of his creation.

- 2) Allaah benefits 50%, while His servant benefits 50%. This is also impossible, since this too would necessitate that Allaah needs His servants to acquire benefit, from which Allaah is pure. (Allaah is not in need of anyone in the least, not a little and not a lot. The entire creation is dependent on Him.)
- 3) Allaah does not benefit from His servant's suffering, nor does the person himself benefit. This too is impossible, since any occurrence which has no benefit is useless and futile, whereas it is impossible for Allaah, the Wise, to do something which is futile.
- 4) Allaah does not benefit at all, while the person who is suffering from that difficulty benefits 100%. This is the only possible conclusion, since all other possibilities have been exhausted and proven false."

From this, we understand that man benefits totally from every sort of difficulty he experiences. Allaah himself declares in the Qur'aan: "Say (to the Muslims, o Rasulullaah ﷺ), "Under no circumstances does any difficulty ever afflict any of us except that Allaah has decreed it for **our benefit**. He is our Maula (Friend and Helper)." (Surah Taubah verse 51) Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى also informs us in the Qur'aan, "Many a time you dislike a thing while (in fact) it is good for you, and many a time you love a thing while it is evil for you. And Allaah knows while you do not know." (Surah Baqarah verse 16)

This is the beginning of a bright future – an example: The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He feverishly made Du'aa for Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to rescue him. Every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect himself from the elements, and to store his few possessions. One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with smoke rolling up to the sky. He felt the worst had happened, and everything was lost. He was stunned with disbelief, grief, and anger. He cried out, 'Oh Allaah! How could you do this to me?' Early the next day, he was awakened by the sound of a ship approaching the island! It had come to rescue him! 'How did you know I was here?' asked the weary man of his rescuers. 'We saw your smoke signal,' they replied.

The Moral of This Story: It is easy to get discouraged when things are going bad, but we shouldn't lose heart, because Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is at work in our lives, even in the midst of our pain and suffering. Remember that the next time your little hut seems to be burning to the ground. It just may be a smoke signal that summons the Mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and it may be the beginning of a bright future.

G.) SHUKR (SHOWING GRATITUDE)

We should be grateful to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for what He has granted us. Appreciate Allaah's favours upon us and consider the condition of those who are less fortunate than us. Try not to forget Allaah's favours upon us in the past.

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ stated: "[Among the] first people to be called to enter Jannah will be those who praised Allaah in times of happiness and sadness [in prosperity and in adversity]." (Mustadrak Haakim no. 1851, Al-Mu'jamul-Awsat no. 3033)

Shaddaad ibn Aws رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and as-Sunaabihy رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ are reported to have visited a sick man. They asked him, "How are you this morning?" He said, "I am passing the morning with a great bounty (of patience and submission to Divine decree)." So Shaddaad said to him, "I give you glad tidings that your sins are removed and your shortcomings erased, for I had heard Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say, 'Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says, 'When I try one of my slaves who is a believer (with illness or anxiety) and he praises Me for the trial with which I try him, then he will get up from his bed without sins as he was on the day his mother had given birth to him.'" Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says (to the angels), "I restricted My slave (by this sickness) and I have tried My slave (to see whether he is grateful or not). So continue to record for him (in his record of deeds) what you had been recording for him (i.e. his righteous deeds) when he was healthy. (Musnad Ahmad no. 17118)

FOUR FAVOURS IN EVERY DIFFICULTY

Shurayh رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, “Whenever I am afflicted with any difficulty, I praise Allaah and thank Him over that condition 4 times;

- a.) I praise Him because the difficulty could have been worse than what it is.
- b.) I praise Him because He is the One who granted me the patience to bear it.
- c.) I praise Him because He is the One who gave me the ability to recite ‘**Innaa Lillahi wa Innaa Ilayi Raaji’oon**’, as I hope to receive great reward for reciting that.
- d.) I praise Him because He did not make me suffer a calamity regarding my Deen.” (Shu’abul Imaan of Bayhaqi no.9507)

LOOK AT THE CONDITION OF THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN US AND APPRECIATE ALLAAH’S FAVOURS UPON US.

Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Look at those who are below you [as regards worldly possessions and comforts] and do not look at those who are above you [in this regard]. In doing this, it will be more likely that you will not be ungrateful for Allaah’s bounties on you.” (Muslim no. 2963)

Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Abrarul-Haq رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, “It is our nature to always notice that which causes us pain and grief. This causes us to become depressed and to lose patience. If we take care to notice that which is positive and which brings us comfort, and to ponder over Allaah’s numerous favours upon us, In-sha-Allaah, our burden of grief will become lighter.” (Tareequs-Sabr pg.18, 19)

Look at those who have less than us. We have clean tap water and food on our plates every day. We have clothes and shelter from the harsh weather. Whereas there are those who walk miles just for a sip of water and even then it is dirty. There are those who have the same clothes for years and cannot even wash them. There are those who go days without proper food and even then they have scraps and end up being malnourished. There are those like in flood disasters who have no shelter and are exposed to terrible diseases. There are those who have little or no money to buy even basic things, not even

medication for their sick family members. There are those who are suffering the severest punishments in torture camps, whose family have been butchered in front of them or their honour and dignity stripped from them in the most barbaric ways. May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى protect us and grant them all ease from their difficulties! Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ always taught us to look at those who have less than us. Read the following incident and ponder over the favours Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has blessed you with:

A FEW INSPIRING INCIDENTS

1.) A lady narrates her meeting with a lady in Syria: I walked up the stairs along with my daughter Nour in the poorly lit corridor. I entered the room shyly and in broken Arabic greeted all the sisters in the room. A family in this Syrian village had invited me for dinner and I looked forward to such invites. Not only because I finally got to eat well-prepared food but also because I met new sisters in such gatherings. Some of these sisters and their stories in this war-ravaged country astonished me, and some ingrained themselves in me, forever changing me.

After we had eaten, a sister brought in a frail man and gently sat him against the cushions on the wall. I was struck by the noor emanating from the sister's face. I stared at her in wonderment of why her face lit like a bright light. The brother had a white beard humbly resting on his face and the softness of his face resembled that of a child.

She fed him soup, and he barely moving, swallowed slowly. I assumed that this must be her frail father she is taking care of, though he looked too young to be her father.

When I got home, I couldn't forget the sister and the brother. Coincidentally, I found myself at her house few weeks later as we were passing through the village. I noticed the brother again in her house.

"Umm Muhammad, who is he, the one you take care of?"

"He is my husband. He wasn't always like that. In the 80's my husband was part of Muslim Brotherhood, he was an active da'ee and a hafidh al Qu'ran. When Bashar's father released his relentless force against the Muslims in Hama, my

husband was arrested. I was left with three young children. For nearly a decade, I had no idea if he was alive or dead.

She continued. "One day, he was home. Just like that. But he had been tortured severely, he was beaten ruthlessly, electrocuted, and made to endure all sorts of psychological torture during his time in detention. Even though a year after his release, I was blessed with a son- his health started deteriorating every year. And today, he has lost all normal function. He doesn't remember his children, he doesn't speak at all, and he can barely comprehend anything around him. So I feed, bathe and take care of him as a child"

I couldn't believe how much this sister had borne. A decade without a husband, and now have lost her home, her wealth and are refugees on the border of the country. Though her husband is now finally with her, he is not her companion in the loss and pain this war has brought her family. He can't help her or their children nor even comfort her.

"SubhaanAllaah, sister, how did you manage all these years?"

"I chose Qur'aan, the words of Allaah to accompany me. I read Qur'aan every single day, each day increasing in the amount I read. I found a teacher to teach me tajweed. And subhaanAllaah by the time my husband was released, I had memorised the whole Qur'aan and had raised our three children in his absence."

She got up to head for the kitchen and prepare the afternoon meal. I heard her reciting Qur'aan the entire time. She brought a tray of rice and soup. After we ate, I asked her more questions about her life.

"My 16 year old was martyred few months ago. The son that was born after my husband's release." She said this with a smile and you could not find misery in any corner of her eyes.

"Would you like to hear what happened to him? She explained that he went out for the protest. He dragged an injured man on the street, trying to save him. But as soon as he brings the man to safety, he was shot and fell flat on the pavement. Her son was killed saving another. As this mother relates the incident of her son getting shot, she did not wince, nor tear up. Rather she smiled, as if watching the moment she was given an award.

"Does your husband understand that his son is now killed?"

“No, he has no understanding. I buried my son and sat in his grave and asked Allaah to remove all grief in my heart and He did.”

This is why this mother’s face endeared me to her. Her patience, her tawakkul in Allaah, her love for the Qur’aan and her struggle and sacrifice in the path of Allaah was inspiring.

“There is one time though, my husband does speak”

“Oh, when is that?”

“I recite all day, reviewing a juz’ or two a day. No matter where in the house, I am reciting- if I make a mistake, he speaks up and corrects it.”

I felt hair on my arms stand up in amazement of their faith. These are the sisters in war that we do not hear of. We hear of misery and pain but we rarely hear of the sisters who are backbone of resistance, who are an inspiration not just to other women but to the men in their path.

(This story was shared by sister Umm Nour as a recollection from her time in Syria.)

2.) This story was recounted by Prof. Khalid Al-Jubeir, consulting cardiovascular surgeon, in one of his lectures:

Once I operated on a two and a half year old child. It was Tuesday, and on Wednesday the child was in good health. On Thursday at 11:15 am – and I’ll never forget the time because of the shock I experienced – one of the nurses informed me that the heart and breathing of the child had stopped. I hurried to the child and performed cardiac massage for 45 minutes and during that entire time the heart would not work.

Then, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى decreed for the heart to resume function and we thanked HIM. I went to inform the child’s family about his condition. As you know, it is very difficult to inform the patient’s family about his condition when it’s bad. This is one of the most difficult situations a doctor is subjected to but it is necessary. So I looked for the child’s father whom I couldn’t find. Then I found his mother. I told her that the child’s cardiac arrest was due to bleeding in his throat; we don’t know the cause of this bleeding and fear that his brain is dead. So how do you think she responded? Did she cry? Did she blame me? No,

nothing of the sort. Instead, she said “Alhamdulillah” (All Praise is due to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) and left me.

After 10 days, the child started moving. We thanked Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and were happy that his brain condition was reasonable. After 12 days, the heart stopped again because of the same bleeding. We performed another cardiac massage for 45 minutes but this time his heart didn’t respond. I told his mother that there was no hope. So she said: “Alhamdulillah. O Allaah, if there is good in his recovery, then cure him, O my Lord.”

With the grace of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, his heart started functioning again. He suffered six similar cardiac arrests till a trachea specialist was able to stop the bleeding and the heart started working properly. Now, three and a half months had passed and the child was recovering but did not move. Then just as he started moving, he was afflicted with a very large and strange pus-filled abscess in his head, the likes of which I had never seen. I informed his mother of the serious development. She said “Alhamdulillah” and left me.

We immediately turned him over to the surgical unit that deals with the brain and nervous system and they took over his treatment. Three weeks later, the boy recovered from this abscess but was still not moving. Two weeks pass and he suffers from a strange blood poisoning and his temperature reaches 41.2°C (106°F). I again informed his mother of the serious development and she said with patience and certainty: “Alhamdulillah. O Allaah, if there is good in his recovery, then cure him.”

After seeing his mother who was with her child at Bed#5, I went to see another child at Bed#6. I found that child’s mother crying and screaming, “Doctor! Doctor! Do something! The boy’s temperature reached 37.6°C (99.68°F)! He’s going to die! He’s going to die!” I said with surprise, “Look at the mother of that child in Bed#5. Her child’s fever is over 41°C (106°F), yet she is patient and praises Allaah.” So she replied: “That woman isn’t conscious and has no senses”. At that point, I remembered the great Hadith of Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, “Blessed are the strangers.” Just two words... but indeed two words

that shake a nation! In 23 years of hospital service, I have never seen the likes of this patient sister.

We continued to care for him. Now, six and a half months have passed and the boy finally came out of the recovery unit – not talking, not seeing, not hearing, not moving, not smiling, and with an open chest in which you can see his beating heart. The mother changed the dressing regularly and remained patient and hopeful. Do you know what happened after that? Before I inform you, what do you think are the prospects of a child who has passed through all these dangers, agonies, and diseases? And what do you expect this patient mother to do whose child is at the brink of the grave and who is unable to do anything except supplicate and beseech Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى? Do you know what happened two and a half months later? The boy was completely cured by the mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and as a reward for this pious mother. He now races his mother with his feet as if nothing happened and he became sound and healthy as he was before.

The story doesn't end here. This is not what moved me and brought tears to my eyes. What filled my eyes with tears is what follows: One and a half years after the child left the hospital, one of the brothers from the Operations Unit informed me that a man, his wife and two children wanted to see me. I asked who they were and he replied that he didn't know them. So I went to see them, and I found the parents of the same child whom I operated upon. He was now five years old and like a flower in good health – as if nothing happened to him. With them also was a four-month old new-born. I welcomed them kindly and then jokingly asked the father whether the new-born was the 13th or 14th child. He looked at me with an astonishing smile as if he pitied me. He then said, "This is the second child, and the child upon whom you operated is our first born, bestowed upon us after 17 years of infertility. And after being granted that child, he was afflicted with the conditions that you've seen."

At hearing this, I couldn't control myself and my eyes filled with tears. I then involuntarily grabbed the man by the arm, and pulling him to my room, asked him about his wife, "Who is this wife of yours who after 17 years of infertility

has this much patience with all the fatal conditions that afflicted her first born?! Her heart cannot be barren! It must be fertile with Imaan!” Do you know what he said? Listen carefully my dear brothers and sisters.

He said, “I was married to this woman for 19 years and for all these years she has never missed the [late] night prayers except due to a valid excuse. I have never witnessed her backbiting, gossiping, or lying. Whenever I leave home or return, she opens the door, supplicates for me, and receives me hospitably. And in everything she does, she demonstrates utmost love, care, courtesy, and compassion.” The man completed by saying, “Indeed, doctor, because of all the noble manners and affection with which she treats me, I’m shy to lift up my eyes and look at her. So I said to him: “And the likes of her truly deserve that from you.”

3.) Imam Awzaa’i رحمه الله narrates from Abdullah ibn Muhammad that he said: I went out to the shore as a patrolman, as our patrol at that time was in al-‘Areesh in Egypt. When I arrived at the shore, I came upon an open area in which I saw a tent. In the tent was a man who had no hands and legs, and he could hardly see or hear. None of his limbs were functioning, except his tongue. He was saying: *“O Allaah, grant me (the ability) to praise You with such praises through which I can sufficiently thank You for the favours You have bestowed upon me by which You have preferred me greatly over many whom You have created.”* Abdullah said to himself, “By Allaah, I will go to this man and I shall ask him about this speech. Did it come to his mind, did he learn it (from someone) or has he been inspired with it?”

So I approached the man, greeted him and said to him, “I heard you saying, ‘O Allaah, grant me (the ability) to praise You such praises through which I can sufficiently thank You for the favours You have bestowed upon me by which You have preferred me greatly over many whom You have created’. What favour from the favours of Allaah upon you are you praising Him for? And in what way did He grant you preference over others that you are thanking Him?”

He said, “Don’t you see what my Lord has done for me? By Allaah, if He sent the sky upon me as a fire which burned me, or ordered the mountains to crush me, or the oceans to drown me, or the earth to swallow me up, it would only cause me to be more grateful to my Lord for the favour of this tongue He bestowed upon me. However, O slave of Allaah, as you have come to me, I need a favour from you! You can see me and the state I am in, I cannot harm nor benefit myself. I had a young son who used to come to me at the time of salaah and help me do my ablution; and when I would become hungry, he would feed me; and if I became thirsty, he would provide me with a drink, but I have not seen him for the last three days. Would you please search for him on my behalf? May Allaah have mercy on you.” I said, “By Allaah, no being could fulfil the need of another which is greater in reward by Allaah similar to a need like yours.”

So I set out in search of the young boy, and I hadn’t gone far before I came across a sand dune, and behold, I found the boy, who had been attacked by a wild beast which had eaten his body! I recited *istirjaa’* (‘inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji’un’) and said to myself, “How am I going to face this man?!” As I was heading towards him, I remembered the incident of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. So when I reached him, I greeted him and he responded. He enquired, “Are you not my companion?” I said “Yes!” He asked, “Did you do me that favour?” I responded, ‘Are you more honourable in the sight of Allaah or was Ayyub, the Nabi?’ He replied, “Of course, Ayyub the Nabi.” I then asked, “Do you know what His Lord did with him? Did He not test him regarding his wealth, family and children?” He replied in the affirmative. I enquired, “How did He find him?” He answered, ‘He found him patient, grateful and thankful.’ I continued, “That was not all, he was finally deserted (by all people)?” He responded, “Yes.” I enquired, “How did His Lord find him?” He answered, “He found him patient, grateful and thankful. Cut the story short! May Allaah have mercy on you!” I said to him, “The young boy you sent me in search of, I found him behind a sand dune. He had been attacked by a beast which had feasted on his body. May Allaah increase for you your reward and may He inspire you with patience.”

The man said, "Praise be to Allaah who did not create from my progeny such people who would disobey Him, whom He would then punish by the fire." He then recited *istirjaa'*, breathed a heavy sigh and passed away.

I said, "Indeed to Allaah we belong and to Him is our return. What a huge calamity has befallen me; if I were to leave a man like this, the wild beasts would feast upon him, and if I remain with him, I will not be able to harm nor benefit him." So I covered him in the cloak which he was wearing and sat at his head-side crying.

As I was sitting there, four men passed by me and said, "O slave of Allaah, what is your situation, and what is your story?" So I related to them my story regarding this man. They said to me: "Uncover his face for us, perhaps we know him." I uncovered his face and the men fell upon him, kissing his eyes and his hands, saying: "May our father be sacrificed for him; for how long have these eyes been lowered from the prohibitions of Allaah. May our father be sacrificed for him; for how long has this body prostrated before Allaah, while the people were sleeping." I asked: "Who is this, may Allaah have mercy on you?" They said, 'This is Abu Qilabah Jarmi, the companion of Ibn 'Abbaas. He had tremendous love for Allaah and His Rasul ﷺ!!'

So we washed him, shrouded him with some clothing which we had with us, performed *salaatul-janaazah* over him and buried him. The men left and I went back to my station. When night fell, I put my head down (onto my pillow) and saw him in a dream, in a garden from the gardens of Jannah wearing two garments from the garments of Jannah, while reciting the revelation (which means), "Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. And excellent is the final abode." (Surah Ra'd verse 24)

I asked, "Aren't you my companion?" He replied, "Yes." I enquired, "How did you receive this?!" He replied, "Verily, by Allaah are elevated ranks that cannot be attained except through *sabr* (patience) at times of difficulties and calamities, and *shukr* (gratitude) at times of prosperity, along with fear of

Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, in private and in public.” (‘Ath-Thiqaat’ of Ibn Hibban)

4.) Urwah Ibn Zubair رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, the nephew of A’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and the ‘jurist’ of his time, once set out with his most beloved and extremely handsome son Muhammad to visit the Khalifah Walid Ibn Abdul Malik in Damascus. The Khalifah was obviously overjoyed to have such an honourable guest and thus went ‘all out’ in welcoming him. Little did he know that his guest was going to be very soon tested by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى with such a test which only hearts filled with imaan and trust in Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى can withstand.

During Urwah’s journey towards the palace, Urwah felt some pain in his left leg, and noticed a sore on it. On reaching the palace, he showed it to Walid, who ordered for the expert doctors to be brought in. After examining the leg, the chief doctor apprised him of the situation; he was inflicted with gangrene in one leg. To prevent further damage, it was deemed necessary to amputate his leg from his shin. The doctor suggested putting him under general anaesthetic, so that he would feel no pain. He, however, blankly refused, saying, “I never thought it possible for man to become so debased that he would be ready to drink a medicine which will cause him to lose his intellect, to such a level that he (inspite of being awake) cannot even recognize his Rabb (Nourisher, Nurturer and Sustainer). Go on and do your work,” and he lied down. The surgeon brought along three small saws, and, after placing them in a fire, used them one after another. As the surgeon began cutting through the bone, Urwah dug his face in the pillow underneath him, and began perspiring profusely. The third saw finally severed the bone. Urwah neither cringed, nor writhed. His face did not become contorted. In fact, not even a sound was heard from him during the procedure, except a slight ‘sss, sss’ which escaped his lips. Walid commented, “I never ever saw a person more patient than him.”

After his leg was totally severed, he lifted his head and saw the people holding it. He asked for it, and, after taking hold of it in his hands, he surveyed it carefully. He then remarked, “I take an oath by that Being who allowed me to walk upon you that He knows very well that I never used you to walk towards

His disobedience. O Allaah, although You have taken (one limb) from me, you have retained and left me with plenty. Although you have tested me with a difficulty and afflicted me (in one limb), You have kept me protected from calamities time and time again. (وَأَيْمَكَ لِنَ أَخَذْتَ لَقَدْ أَبْقَيْتَ وَلَنَ ابْتَلَيْتَ لَقَدْ عَافَيْتَ) He then asked for his leg to be taken, washed, perfumed, wrapped in a cloth, and buried in a Muslim graveyard, which they promptly did. That night, he even completed his daily portion of recitation of Qur'an as usual.

In the meanwhile, Urwah's most beloved son Muhammad, entered the royal stable that night and advanced too close to the wild horses and mules, as a result of which he was trampled to death. (May Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى have mercy on him). All who were present felt uncomfortable to break the news to Urwah. They approached Majishoon and requested him to convey this bitter message. Majishoon visited Urwah and found him performing salaah. After entering, Majishoon began discussing death, the shortness of this life, the temporary nature of this world and the generations of people who had already passed on from this world. Urwah sensed that there was something amiss. He said, "Are you talking of one of those who have come with me?!" Muhammad just left this room a while ago!" Majishoon responded, "Allaah has just taken Muhammad back to Him." Urwah instantaneously responded, "(إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ)" To Allaah do we belong, and to Him is our return. I anticipate great rewards by Allaah over (the loss of) Muhammad. O Allaah, O Allaah, although You have taken (one child) from me, you have retained and left me with plenty. Although you have tested me with a difficulty and afflicted me (through one son), You have kept me protected from calamities time and time again. (وَأَيْمَكَ لِنَ أَخَذْتَ لَقَدْ أَبْقَيْتَ) (وَلَنَ ابْتَلَيْتَ لَقَدْ عَافَيْتَ)" Not a word of complaint was heard emerging from his lips.

The Khalifah Walid Ibn Abdul Malik sat grief-stricken in his royal chamber. In just a couple of days, his most honourable guest had lost his leg and thereafter his son. While brooding over this and pondering over how to console Urwah رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ, a group of travelers happened to arrive, amongst whom was a blind man. When the Khalifah questioned him concerning the loss of his eyesight, he replied, "O Amirul Mumineen! There was no man in my tribe who possessed

more than what I had, nor was there any family larger than the one I was blessed with. Then, one night, while I was out travelling, our area was hit by floods, the like of which we had never seen before. It destroyed whatever I had owned, taking with it my beloved family and possessions. I returned to find nothing left except my youngest son and one camel. Intending to catch the camel, I placed my child on the ground, and proceeded forward. Suddenly I heard a scream. I turned immediately, to find the head of my little child in the mouth of a wolf. I raced back, but was too late to save him from being torn apart by the jaws of death. Overcome with grief, I made a final attempt to catch the camel. As I approached closer, it kicked me in the face, causing me to go blind.”

On hearing of the traveller’s tragic events, Walid ordered his doorkeeper, “Take this man to Urwah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ and let him narrate his story once again, so that Urwah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ may realize that, from amongst men, there are those who are in a more pitiable condition than the one he finds himself in.”

When Urwah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ finally returned home, he met his family and friends, saying, “O Allaah, You have taken from us only a little, while You have left us with plenty. O Allaah, You very rarely test us with difficulties, while You keep us protected from calamities time and time again. O Allaah, You had blessed me with seven sons, from which You have only taken one back, leaving the remaining for me. From the four limbs which You had blessed me with, You have only taken one back, leaving the remaining for my benefit.”(Al-Maradh wal Kaffaaraat of Ibn Abid Dunya and Suwarum-min-Hayaatit-Taabi’in)

5.) Abul Hasan Siraaj رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ says: During my journey of Hajj, I was once performing tawaaf. My eyes fell on a very beautiful woman, whose face was shining with beauty. I said to myself in a slightly audible voice, “I have never seen such a beautiful woman in my life. This beauty and glow on her face is surely because she has never experienced any grief or sorrow (i.e. she was probably brought up in the lap of comforts and luxuries and lived such a life that she never experienced gloom or sadness which would make her face pale, dark or rugged).”

She overheard me saying this. She said, “What did you say? By Allaah, I am fastened and tied in chains of sorrow and grief. My heart is wounded with worries and calamities. Added to that, I am alone and have no one with whom I can share my grief with.”

I asked, “What happened?”

She replied, “My husband once slaughtered a goat as a Qurbaani offering. My 2 children were playing nearby. My baby child who was still suckling was in my lap. When I got up to cook the meat of that goat, my elder sons said to his younger brother, “Come, let me show you how our father slaughtered the goat.” The younger brother consented. The elder brother then made the younger one lie down and slit his throat, just as his father had slaughtered the goat. When he realized what he had done, in panic, he ran away into the mountains. There, a wolf attacked him and devoured him.

His father went out to search for him. He searched from place to place until (after losing his direction) he died of extreme thirst. In the meantime, I was at home, frantic with worry and waiting for news of him. I put down my baby child and went to the door to inquire about anyone who might have some news of my husband. The baby crawled to the stove where a pot was boiling. The child pulled it and the boiling pot fell upon the baby, burning it to death in such a ghastly manner that the child's flesh was separated from the bones.

I had a big daughter who was already married and living in her husband's home. When she heard all of this, she collapsed in shock. Her death was also preordained to occur at that very time. So she also passed away. By Divine will, I was left alone to bear all of that.”

I asked her, “How did you manage to patiently bear all of these misfortunes?” She replied, “Whoever compares between the reality and outcome of patience and impatience (anxiety, depression and intolerance) will find a world of difference between the two. The outcome of patience is praiseworthy; whereas for impatience there is no reward whatsoever.”

She added before walking away, “I was patient because patience is the greatest support. If being impatient had any sort of benefit in it for me, I would have taken that route. I have patiently bore such difficulties that if they were placed on mountains, the mountains would crumble into tiny stones. I have managed to control my tears and stopped them from flowing; instead, my tears which are within now drip onto my heart.” (Rawdhur-Rayaaheen, Fadha’il Haj pg.200)

TRY NEVER TO FORGET ALLAAH’S FAVOURS UPON YOU IN THE PAST THE INCIDENT OF LUQMAAN THE WISE

Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was employed by a rich man. Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had such great love for Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and contact with Him that it created within him high moral character and exemplary habits. This was a clear sign of his nobility and nearness to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The nobility of Luqmaan's character had a great effect on his master, to such an extent that the master considered him as a great friend and a beloved companion. Although he was the master, yet in fact the master became like a slave to his employee. It thus became the practice of the master that whenever he had something special to eat, he would first feed Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ of it and after Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had filled himself, he would then eat the leftovers. Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would consider the love of the master and his habit, so he would eat moderately and send what was left over to the master. One day, during the melon season, the master received a melon from somewhere. At that time, Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was not present. The master sent one of his slaves to call him. When Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ arrived, the master cut the melon into slices and slice by slice gave them to Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to eat. As he ate the slices, the master felt overjoyed at the reaction of Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to his loving gesture. Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ate the slices of melon with great pleasure and continuously expressed his gratitude over the kindness of his master. When just one slice remained, the master said, “Let me eat this slice and see how sweet this melon is.” Saying this, he put the slice into his mouth. Immediately, such bitterness spread from the tip of his tongue down to his throat that he fell unconscious and remained in a stupor for a whole hour. When he regained consciousness, he questioned Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “O Beloved

one, how did you manage to push those slices of melon down your throat, and still act as if you were enjoying it? Just one slice of the melon had such an effect on me, how did you manage to eat so many slices?" Luqmaan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, "My master, I have received hundreds of gifts and favours from your hands. The burden of your kindness has bent my back. Hence, I felt ashamed to turn away from that hand that had granted me so many favors and express dissatisfaction, if one day some small bit distastefulness or bitterness should reach me through it. O master who has always been so kind to me, the pleasure of knowing that it comes from your hands has changed the bitterness of the melon to sweetness."

Moulana Abdul-Ghani رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, while relating this story, used to advise thus, "At every given moment, there are innumerable bounties and favours of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى upon men. But, if for a moment, some difficulty comes our way, we lose patience and fail to be grateful. On the other hand, there are those whom Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has granted the understanding of Deen, through the blessings and the company of the friends of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. When sorrows and difficulties afflict them, they remain happy and pleased with their Rabb. At such times, they draw strength from their understanding of Deen and realize that this world is like a hospital and we are all like patients admitted into it. There are times when the doctor prescribes for the patient to consume sweet medicine (or instructs the patient to eat tasty foods as part of his diet), while at other times he prescribes bitter medicines (and tasteless food). However, in both situations, the results are beneficial for the patient. Similarly, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is "Al-Hakeem"- the All-Wise, and at the same time He is "Al-Haakim"-The Supreme Ruler. He is also "Al-Raheem"-The Most Merciful One. Hence, whatever conditions befall us in accordance with Allaah's will, whether they bring comfort or discomfort to us, all are beneficial and in our interest. The Hadeeth informs us that Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى sometimes sets a high rank for some people, but they are unable to attain that rank through their good deeds. Consequently, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى afflicts them with some calamity which, if they accept and bear patiently, will enable them to reach that high position. Hence, a believer should remain pleased even in times of misfortunes. In other words,

there should be no complaints or objections from his tongue. (Ma'arif-e-Mathnawi)

H.) DO NOT COMPLAIN

Habbaan ibn Abi Habalah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ (a Tabi'i) narrates that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was asked to explain 'sabr jameel' - 'beautiful patience'. He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied,

صبر لا شكوى فيه. قال: من بث فلم يصبر

It is that patience in which there is no complaint (to others about one's difficulty). The one who broadcasts (his sorrow) has not been patient. (Tafsir Tabari no.18872, Ad-Durrul Manthur, Tafsir Ibn Kathir)

Sufyan Thawri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ quoted the following from one of his companions: "It was said (by our predecessors):

ثلاث من الصبر: أن لا تحدّث بوجعك ، ولا بمصيبتك ، ولا تزكّي نفسك

Three qualities constitute sabr (patience); Do not discuss your misfortune, do not discuss your pain, and do not praise yourself." (Tafsir Abdir-Razzaaq San'ani no.1243, Tafsir Tabari no.18873, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Hilyatul-Awliya, vol. 6 pg. 389)

However, if one complains to Allaah of one's grief and sorrow, there is no harm in that. In actual fact, that is included in sabr jameel, as clarified by Hasan Basri رَحِمَهُ اللهُ.

وأخرج ابن أبي حاتم عن الحسن رضي الله عنه قال : الصبر الجميل الذي ليس فيه شكوى إلا إلى الله (الدر المنثور، روح المعاني Ahnaf ibn Qais رَحِمَهُ اللهُ once said to his students, "Are you amazed at my level of tolerance and my character? (This is no achievement of my own.) This is something I learnt and picked up from my uncle Sa'sa'ah ibn Mu'aawiyah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. I once complained to him of a pain which I was suffering from in my stomach. He twice bade me to be silent. He then said to me, "My dear nephew, never complain of your difficulties to anyone. If the one you complain to happens to be your friend, you will cause him grief. If he happens to be your enemy, your complaint will bring him joy and happiness. If you wish to complain, then complain of your difficulty to the Being who is testing you with

it. Don't ever complain of it to another creation like yourself who cannot even save himself from a difficulty similar to that which you find yourself in. My dear nephew, for the last twenty years, my eyesight is so weak that I cannot even see a slope or a mountain. I haven't complained of this to anyone, not even my wife." (Al-Isaabah fi Tamyizis-Sahaabah)

Shakwaa (complaining) thus falls into two categories:

(a) The first type is to complain to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and this does not contradict patience. A number of examples of complaining to Allaah can be found in the Qur'aan, one of which is the complaining of Yaqub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who said, "I complain of my distraction and anguish to Allaah." (Surah Yusuf verse 86)

(b) The second type of shakwaa involves complaining to people, either directly through words or indirectly through the way we look and behave, like dressing shabbily, shaving the head, displaying distress, etc. all in order to show one's grief and pain. This type of shakwaa is contradictory to Sabr because it implies disagreeing with Allaah's Decree and lack of trust in Him. One may, however, mention his suffering to some people like close friends.

Ibn Mas'ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates, "I went to Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ when he was ill. I touched him and said, 'You have a very high fever.' He صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, 'Indeed. My fever is equal to the fever of two of you.'" (Bukhaari no. 5648. Muslim no. 2571)

Allamah Subki رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ has written that it is permissible for a sick person to inform people of his sickness or pain, but not in such a manner that he is complaining about Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى or exhibiting anger. A manner of doing this is to first say "Alhamdulillah" and then state one's sickness. Abdullah ibn Mas'ood رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, "Place *shukr* (gratitude) before mentioning your grievance, it will not remain a grievance."

Scholars state:

1.) If the distressed person moans and groans without complaining, then this is permissible.

- 2.) If the person is displeased with the decision of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, making statements such as, “Was I the only person who remained that Allaah afflicted me? There are so many other people,” etc., then this is prohibited.
- 3.) If the groaning is due to a person losing patience, then this is makrooh (disliked).
- 4.) If a person feels comfort by groaning, then in this case it will be permissible.
- 5.) If the object of one’s groaning is to express one’s weakness and inability before Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, then this will be mustahab (liked).

I.) SALAWAAT ALAN NABI ﷺ

عن أبي بن كعب قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي أَكْثِرُ الصَّلَاةَ عَلَيْكَ فَكَمْ أَجْعَلُ لَكَ مِنْ صَلَاتِي؟ فَقَالَ: "مَا شِئْتَ". قَالَ: قُلْتُ: الرَّبْعُ، قَالَ: "مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنْ زِدْتَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ"، قُلْتُ: التَّصَفُّ، قَالَ: "مَا شِئْتَ، فَإِنْ زِدْتَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ"، قَالَ: قُلْتُ: فَالثَّلَاثَيْنِ، قَالَ: "مَا شِئْتَ، فَإِنْ زِدْتَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكَ"، قُلْتُ: أَجْعَلُ لَكَ صَلَاتِي كُلَّهَا قَالَ: "إِذَا تُكْفِيَ هَمَّكَ، وَيُغْفَرَ لَكَ ذَنْبُكَ" (رواه الترمذی) وفي روايةٍ لاهمده عنه قَالَ: قَالَ رَجُلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ جَعَلْتُ صَلَاتِي كُلَّهَا عَلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ: «إِذَنْ يَكْفِيكَ اللَّهُ مَا أَهَمَّكَ مِنْ دُنْيَاكَ وَآخِرَتِكَ» (و اسناد هذه جيد)

Ubay bin Ka'b رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reports, "I asked, "O Rasulullaah; I recite salaah on you in abundance. To what extent should I adopt this practice?" Rasulullaah ﷺ replied, "As much as you desire." I said, "One quarter" (i.e. ¼ of the time he had set aside for nafl ibaadah) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "As much as you desire, and if you increase it, it will be better for you." I said, "One half?" Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "As much as you wish. If you increase it, it will be better for you." I said, "Then I shall only recite salawaat (i.e. all extra time will only be devoted to salawaat). Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "Then it will suffice for all your worries and your sins too will be forgiven." (Tirmidhi no. 2457)

In a narration by Imam Ahmed, a man asked, "O Rasulullaah ﷺ how will it be if I should devote all my time for the recitation of salawaat on you?" Rasulullaah ﷺ replied, "In that case, Allaah shall alleviate all your worries, in this world and the hereafter." (Musnad Ahmad no. 21242)

Allamah Suyuti رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ has written, “Ibn Abi Hajalah has written in his book on taa’oon (epidemics), “Some pious have stated to him that the most beneficial action found in times of epidemics and other great calamities is recital of abundance of salawaat....The proof for this action was the above narration, “Then it will suffice for all your worries and your sins too will be forgiven.”

Moulana Hakeem Akhtar Saheb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said, “The recitation of abundant salawaat (durood) upon Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is extremely beneficial in repelling calamities and disasters. Through reciting a single durood, one’s rank is elevated by ten stages, ten good deeds are recorded in one’s account, and ten sins are forgiven. Additionally, through reciting abundant durood, one is trying to fulfil the right of love which he owes to Rasulullaah.” (Aadaab-e-Ishq-e-Rasul صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ page 11)

J.) ISTIGHFAAR (SEEKING FORGIVENESS FROM ALLAAH تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى)

Hadhrat Shaikh Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ once mentioned, “My beloved friends! Going on discussing one’s difficulties and problems will not bring about any solution, nor will it help you. In the face of hardships and difficulties, nothing benefits a person except istighfaar and earnestly turning to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in du’aa. Mention this advice of mine to your friends and associates and frequently remind them of it as well. We should understand that all the difficulties and calamities that we experience are actually the result of our evil actions. In reality, the difficulties that we face on account of our sins and wrongs are much less than what we are deserving of. My beloved friends! Each person should look into his own heart to introspect over his condition and see what sins he is involved in. The truth of the matter is that we are only continuing in our present condition due to the mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and the blessing of Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ as we are definitely deserving of far greater punishments and difficulties. When difficulties and calamities overcome us then falling into anxiety and depression will not help us. It is crying to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in repentance that will help us. (Qutbul Aqtaab Hazrat Shaikhul Hadeeth Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya page 421-422)

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمַتَّعْكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ ط وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيرٍ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ح وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

That you ask your Sustainer to forgive you your sins. Then turn towards Him, that He may grant you wonderful enjoyment till an appointed time, and bestow His grace on every one who deserves it. If you turn away, I fear for you the punishment of a great day. It is to Allaah that you have to return. And He has power over everything. (Surah Hood verse 3-4)

The person who has his past sins forgiven and turns with his heart towards Allaah for the future will live an enjoyable life. This is because, irrespective of the state in which an obedient servant may be, he has high hopes and aspirations of Allaah's grace and kindness. He is so lost in his vision of gaining Allaah's pleasure and great enjoyment in the future that he does not even bother about the greatest of hardships of this world. When he thinks that he is fulfilling the obligations of his life in the proper manner whereby he will definitely have to meet the Lord of the universe, then upon his reliance on his good deeds and the promises of Allaah, his heart begins to jump with joy. He experiences such tranquillity and internal peace with the paltry wealth of this world that cannot be acquired by kings who own unlimited wealth and resources. In fact, at times he experiences delight in the hardships and difficulties of a few days which the affluent people and kings cannot experience in their life of comfort and luxury. Assuming a patriotic political prisoner is fully convinced that through his imprisonment, his country will be freed from the colonization of a foreign power and that no sooner he is released from prison he will be made the president of the republic, will he not experience more joy and tranquillity in that tiny cell of his than that king [who is living in his palace]? – who has all the comforts of life at his disposal but harbours that fear that he will be disgracefully removed from the royal seat within a week? One can gauge the life of an obedient servant [of Allaah] in this worldly prison in the same light. (Tafseer Uthmani)

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ ط وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ

Allaah will never punish them as long as you are among them. And Allaah will never punish them as long as they continue asking for forgiveness.” (Surah al-Anfaal verse 33)

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Should I not show you your sickness and its remedy?” Your sickness is sinning and your remedy is to seek forgiveness (istighfaar).” (Shuabul-Imaan no. 6746)

Istighfaar- Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Whoever holds firm onto istighfaar, Allaah will make for him an opening from every grief, an exit from every difficulty, and Allaah will grant him sustenance from where he never imagined.” (Abu Dawood no.1518)

Rabee' ibn Khath'am رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ told his companions, “Do you know what is the sickness, the medication and the total cure?” When they replied in the negative, he said, “The sickness is sins, the medication is istighfaar, and the cure is repenting and then not returning (to a life of sin).” (Hilyatul-Awliya vol. 2 no. 108)

On another occasion, he mentioned: I have mentioned the following verse of the Quraan Majeed many times in the past:

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فَمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

Whatever calamity afflicts you is because of that which your hands have earned (evil deeds), and He forgives many (of your sins). (Surah Shura v30)

By Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, one will be dealt with according to his actions. At times, the result of one's actions is not seen immediately. However, it does not mean that if one does not see the result of one's actions immediately, there is no result that is forthcoming. The consequence of one's actions will definitely be seen sooner or later. Similarly, if we experience some difficulty, the difficulty we experience may not always be due to the apparent cause that we see before us. Sometimes, there is another hidden cause (i.e. our sins) which we don't consider, whereas this is the actual cause for the difficulty. It is for this reason that you should make istighfaar constantly and make a habit of reciting Aayat-

e-Kareemah (لا إله إلا أنت سبحانك إني كنت من الظالمين) in abundance. We should turn to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى at all times for He is the only source of help. (Qutbul Aqtaab Hazrat Shaikhul Hadeeth Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya page 429)

Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu) says: Even if one's condition is such that he has been put through any difficulty as a punishment because Allaah is angry with him, remember that it is very easy to please Allaah again. To please Allaah is not difficult. Moulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ had explained, "Imagine if doctors had to invent such a balm that would immediately and cure the severest of burns, not only providing immediate relief from the pain and the burning sensation experienced, but even leaving no evidence on the skin to suggest that the person had been burnt on that spot. Actually, upon application, the skin would become even better than it was before the burn. A medicine of this nature has not, and in all likelihood, will not be created in all time. However, Allaah has given us, the Ummah, a medicine of this nature, and had placed it in our spiritual 'medicine chests'; the balm of Taubah. After one has burnt himself by sinning and is suffering its excruciating effects, all he needs to do is make sincere Taubah and he will be forgiven immediately, and will actually return to a better state than before. His sins will be wiped out and he will become the beloved of Allaah. Even if one does not realize where he had faltered, the antibiotic of Taubah will do its work and remove the 'bug' or virus'. (Antibiotic to Depression by Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq)

K.) SADAQAH

Zakaat must be discharged, even of past years if they were not given. Besides this, nafl sadaqah should be given in abundance.

a.) Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Verily charity extinguishes the anger of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and removes an evil death." (Tirmidhi no. 664)

b.) Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Hasten with charity, because calamities do not surpass it." (Shuabul-Imaan no. 3082, Al-Mu'jamul-Awsat no. 5643)

Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Charitable deeds save one from calamities, discreet and undisclosed charity cools the anger of Allaah, and having good relations with one's relatives and family members increases one's lifespan.” (Al-Mu’jamul-Kabeer vol. 8, page 261 no. 8014) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Charity removes seventy doors of evil.” (Al-Mu’jamul-Kabeer vol. 4, page 274 no. 4402)

c.) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Whoever makes it easy for a person in difficulty (by assisting financially, overlooking a debt, etc.), Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will grant ease to him in the world and the hereafter.” (Bukhari no.2442, Muslim no. 2580)

d.) Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Protect your wealth by giving zakaat, cure your sick through charity, and face calamities with duaa and humbleness.” (Tabaraani in Awsat no. 1963, Kabeer no. 10196 vol. 10 page 128, Maraaseel of Abu Dawood no. 105)

e.) Ibn Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ states, “A beggar came begging to a woman. At that moment the woman only had a morsel of food which was already in her mouth. She took that morsel out of her mouth and gave it to the beggar. After some time, a child was born to this woman. When the child grew a little older, a wolf came and snatched the child away. The woman came out of her house running behind the wolf and at the same time shouting for help. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى sent an angel and ordered him to free the child from the wolf's mouth. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى added, "Also convey My salaams to that woman and inform her that I did this in return for the morsel of food which she had given to that beggar." (Ibn Sasraa in his Amaali as quoted in Kanzul-Ummaal no. 16031, Al-Mujaalasatu wa Jawaahirul-Ilm of Deenawari vol. 8 page 263 no. 3529) Moulana Ashraf Ali Thaanwi رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ writes, “This is the blessings of charity that the child's life was saved and the woman was also rewarded. We should give charity abundantly so that we may live in this world and in the hereafter in peace and comfort.

L.) ABSTINENCE FROM SIN

This is most important. Nu'man ibn Basheer رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said,

إن الهلكة كل الهلكة أن تعمل عمل السوء في زمان البلاء

Complete destruction is that you do evil in times of calamity.

M.) INTROSPECTION

We understand from the discussions on the previous pages that worldly difficulties are a trial, during which the believer is required to be patient and submit to Allaah's Decree. But more often afflictions are also a result of the believer's sins and evil deeds. They are a punishment from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and a warning to shun evil deeds and return back to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in repentance. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

Whatever of misfortune befalls you is a result of what your hands have earned. (Surah Shoora verse 30)

It is very important to clearly understand this aspect of worldly difficulties and give it due consideration. The Noble Qur'aan is a witness that Allaah severely punished and subsequently destroyed the past nations who did not pay heed to His admonitions and warnings. He punished the disbelievers at the time of Nuh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ with a terrible flood. He sent a wind storm upon the people of Hud عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as a punishment. A disastrous earthquake destroyed the arrogant at the time of Saalih عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. The people of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ were turned upside down and stones of baked clay rained on them ... These and other incidents of the past nations warn us about the bad consequences of disobeying Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and disregarding His admonitions. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states,

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Let those who contradict his (Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) command beware of a trial or a severe punishment. (Surah Noor verse 63)

Punishments can be in various forms. Perhaps, today what seems the most obvious punishment afflicting mankind is AIDS, which appeared for the first time in the 80's. AIDS is a fatal disease that weakens the resistance of body and makes it defenceless against all kinds of infections. Many who develop AIDS die within a few years. AIDS is spread mainly due to indiscriminate sexual activity, homosexuality and drug abuse, all of which are actions that transgress the limits of Allaah. Some may argue that AIDS is not limited to sinful people but has also spread among the chaste individuals. The Qur'aan gives the reply that when the punishment of Allaah befalls, it does not only besiege the sinful, but afflicts the society as a whole. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says,

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

Beware of a trial which will not afflict only the sinful among you, and know that Allaah is severe in punishment. (Surah Anfaal verse 25)

AIDS is only one in the series of calamities and adversities afflicting mankind. Interest is another. Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "A time will come on the people in which none will remain except that he will eat (utilize) interest. Whoever does not utilize it will be affected by its smoke." (Abu Daawood no. 3331, Nasai no. 4455) Those engaged in consuming interest are actually placing themselves in great danger as Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has declared war against them in the Noble Qur'aan. Rasulullaah ﷺ said, "When fornication and interest become apparent in any place, then they have brought upon themselves the punishment of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى." (Mustadrak of Haakim no. 2261) In another narration, he ﷺ said, "By that Being in whose control is my life, some people of my ummah will pass the night in disobedience, pride, play and amusement. In the morning, they will be transformed into swines and monkeys. The reason for this will be: regarding haraam as halaal, using singing girls (for entertainment), drinking alcohol, consuming usury and wearing silk." (Musnad Ahmad no.22790)

Today, we hear of a number of diseases, unexpected storms, floods and earthquakes afflicting different parts of the world. Punishing reminders also come in the form of oppression from the enemy. This is a result of our

disobedience to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى that we are surrounded by hardships and adversities. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is warning us. Know that the only solution is to refrain from violating the laws of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and restricting oneself within the bounds of Islam. The Qur'aan says,

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

Corruption has appeared on the land and in the sea because of what man's hands have earned in order that (Allaah) may make them taste a part of what they have done, and in order that they may return (to the right path).

(Surah Room verse 41)

We should greatly consider these warnings and hasten towards repentance, and distance ourselves from all such acts, which may become the cause of our destruction. We should work towards righteousness and please Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى before it is too late - and before we get caught up in punishments that become difficult for us to escape.

How unfortunate are those who, when afflicted with difficulty and hardship turn away from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and seek solutions outside the Deen of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. We should remember that none can remove afflictions except Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT

If the affliction results from acts of obedience to Allaah, such as injury in struggling in the way of Allaah, losing money during Hijrah (migrating for the sake of Allaah), losing a job because of accepting Islam or because one attempts to follow the Sunnah of Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, then the affliction is a trial. Whoever bears it with patience will be rewarded and whoever exhibits annoyance will evoke the wrath of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى upon himself.

If the affliction befalls due to sinful actions, such as illnesses caused by drinking alcohol and using drugs, etc. then the affliction is a punishment from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Hasten to avoid all sinful acts and turn towards Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in

repentance and ask His forgiveness. Otherwise, know that the punishment of the Hereafter is far more severe and unbearable.

If the affliction is neither connected to a good deed nor a sin such as other kinds of diseases and sicknesses, losing a child, or failing in business, then one needs to review his actions; as calamities are in most cases a result of one's actions.

When these types of calamities fall, they are meant as a trial and test for good people in order to atone their sins or raise their status, and for others to punish them for their sins. In both cases, the form of the calamities look alike. Then how can they be differentiated?

a.) Shah Waliyyullaah رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has said that calamities are a test for good people when they endure it with contentment, which is a gift of Allaah. They remain happy and contented in troubles and calamities like a patient, who remains contented on his treatment by medicines of bitter taste or by a painful surgery. Not only does he not complain of the pain he faced during treatment, but he also pays fees for it and utilizes all his resources for getting himself treated in such a painful manner. As against this, the evildoers, on whom the calamities fall as punishment, take it to heart and cry and moan against the sufferings they are placed in. Sometimes they utter words of ingratitude to the extent of blasphemy.

2.) Hakeem-ul-Ummah Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has given another method of distinguishing between the two: If one becomes aware of his sins and faults and finds greater inclination toward seeking pardon from Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, then it is a sign of His kindness and favour. But if one gets frustrated and indulges more in sins and evil, then it is a sign of Allaah's wrath and torment. (condensed from Ma'ariful-Quraan Surah Room)

DUAAS FROM THE QUR'AAN AND AHAADITH

1.) Duaa read by the Bani Israaeel when in difficulty:

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

O our Sustainer! Open the gates of patience upon us and cause us to die as Muslims. (A'raaf verse 126)

2.) Abdullah ibn Khubaib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated that Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “A person who recites Surah Ikhlāas, Surah Falaq and Surah Naas thrice morning and evening, Allaah will suffice/protect him from everything (all forms of harm). [Tirmidhi no. 3575, Nasai no. 5428]

3.) Ibn Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates, “Rarely did Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ get up from an assembly without making the following duaah.”

اللَّهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا تَحُولُ بِهِ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيكَ ، وَمِنْ طَاعَتِكَ مَا تَبْلُغُنَا بِهِ جَنَّتِكَ ، وَمِنْ الْيَقِينِ مَا تُهَوِّنُ عَلَيْنَا مَصَائِبَ الدُّنْيَا ، اللَّهُمَّ مَتِّعْنَا بِأَسْمَاعِنَا ، وَأَبْصَارِنَا ، وَقُوَّتِنَا مَا أَحْيَيْتَنَا ، وَاجْعَلْهُ الْوَارِثَ مِنَّا ، وَاجْعَلْ ثَأْرَنَا عَلَى مَنْ ظَلَمْنَا ، وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى مَنْ عَادَانَا ، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مُصِيبَتَنَا فِي دِينِنَا ، وَلَا تَجْعَلِ الدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرَ هَمِّنَا ، وَلَا تَبْلُغْ عَلِمْنَا ، وَلَا تُسَلِّطْ عَلَيْنَا مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُنَا

O Allaah! Bestow us with Your fear to the extent that You become a barrier from us disobeying You, and bestow us with Your obedience to the extent that You convey us to by means of it to Your Paradise. Bestow us with conviction by which You will make all the calamities of this world insignificant before us. O Allaah! Enable us to benefit from our hearing, eyesight and strength for as long as You keep us alive. Make these senses to inherit us [i.e. enable them to remain with us till the end of our lives]. Exact revenge from those who oppress us. Help us against those who are antagonistic towards us. Do not put us through trials and tribulations in our religious matters. Do not make the world our main concern nor the limit of our knowledge. Do not empower over us those who have no mercy for us. (Tirmidhi no. 3502)

CONCLUSION

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once mentioned that when a person is afflicted with any calamity or difficulty, then he should adhere to the following six points:

1. He should exercise patience as this is the sign of a true believer. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "If a believer experiences favourable conditions, he should express gratitude, and this is good for him. And if he experiences unfavourable conditions, he should exercise patience, and this is good for him." (Muslim no. 2999)
2. He should not become despondent and lose hope in the mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Rather, he should continue to hope for the mercy of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, as the power and grace of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is above all worldly means. Only a disbeliever who does not believe in taqdeer loses hope. People of true imaan and Deen are always pleased with the decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.
3. He should not allow the difficulty to cause him to become negligent in regard to fulfilling his Deeni obligations.
4. He should continue to make du'aa to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to make the calamity easy for him, and he should also adopt the means to remove the problem. However, he should not place his reliance on the means, but he should place his reliance upon Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Through turning to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in du'aa, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will place barakah in the means and cause the desired effect to materialise.
5. He should continuously engage in istighfaar and beg Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to forgive his sins.
6. If a calamity has afflicted any of his Muslim brothers, then he should regard his brother's difficulty as his own difficulty. He should make du'aa for him and if he is able to assist him, then he should adopt the similar means in assisting him that he would have adopted to remove his own difficulty. (Malfoozaat Hakeemul Ummat 23/174)

ALWAYS REMEMBER

Hardship and ease are a Trial for you.

Everything Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى chooses for you; good and evil, is for your benefit.

Whatever occurred to you could not have missed you and what missed you could never have reached you.

Sabr (Patience) is obligatory.

Rewards are only for those who are patient with the Decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

Panic and impatience cannot prevent the Decree of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

Shakwaa (Complaining) is contradictory to Sabr.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى Alone can protect you from harm and ease your difficulties.