

How Islam Deals With Sadness and Worry (part 3 of 4): Gratitude

Description: Give thanks every single day for His blessings upon you.

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Published on 05 Apr 2010 - Last modified on 10 Nov 2013

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As fragile human beings, we are often swamped by fears and anxiety. At times sadness and worry threaten to take over our lives. These emotions can become so consuming that we forget our primary purpose in life, which is to worship God. When pleasing God is at the centre of all our thoughts, actions and deeds, then sadness and worry can have no place in our lives.

In the previous article, we discussed about dealing with sadness and worry by striving to be patient. We also talked about counting the blessings God has bestowed upon us as a way of encouraging patience. Another way of overcoming sadness and worry is by being grateful to God for His countless blessings. God explains in the Quran, that true worshippers are those who are grateful and give thanks.

"Therefore, remember Me (by praying, glorifying, etc.). I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favors on you) and never be ungrateful to Me." (Quran 2:152)

There are many ways to express gratitude. The first and foremost way is to worship God in the manner that He has prescribed. The Five Pillars of Islam^[1] were ordained upon us by God and they guide us to worship Him easily. When we fulfill our obligations towards God, just how truly blessed we are becomes obvious.

When we bear witness that, there is no god worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad is His final messenger we are being grateful for being blessed with Islam. When a believer prostrates before God in quiet, joyful prayer, we are expressing gratitude. During the fast of Ramadan, we become thankful for food and water by realizing that God provides our sustenance. If a believer is able to make the pilgrimage to the House of God in Mecca, it is indeed a cause for thankfulness. The Hajj journey can be long, difficult, and expensive.

The believer also expresses gratitude by giving charity. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, advised his followers to give charity everyday to express gratitude to God for every single joint or faculty in his body.^[2] *Imam Ibn Rajab*, a noted Islamic scholar of the 7th Islamic century said, "Human beings are obligated to give thanks to God every single day for His blessings on them by performing acts of virtue and charity on a daily basis"

If we remember God by reading the Quran and contemplating its meanings, we gain a

greater understanding of the life of this world and the hereafter. Consequently, we begin to understand the transient nature of this life and the fact that even the trials and tribulations are blessings from God. God's wisdom and justice is inherent in even the direst situations.

How often have we heard people with debilitating diseases or terrible disabilities thank God for their conditions, or speak about pain and suffering bringing blessings and goodness into their lives? How often have we listened to others speak about horrific experiences and ordeals, yet continue to thank God?

In times of sadness and worry, when we are feeling alone and distressed, God is our only refuge. When sadness and worry become unbearable, when there is nothing left but, stress, fear, anxiety, and misery, we instinctively turn to God. We know His words are true, we know His promise is true!

"..if you are grateful, I will add more favors unto you." (Quran 14:7)

God knows the wisdom behind why good things happen to bad people, or why bad things happen to good people. In general, whatever causes us to turn to God is good and we should be grateful for it. In times of crisis, people are drawn closer to God, whereas in times of comfort we often forget from where the comfort originated. God is the Provider and He is the Most Generous. God wants to reward us with life everlasting and if pain and suffering can guarantee Paradise, then trials and tribulations are a blessing. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said, **"If God wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials."**[\[3\]](#)

Prophet Muhammad also said, "No misfortune or disease befalls a Muslim, no worry or grief or harm or distress - not even a thorn that pricks him - but God will expiate for some of his sins because of that."[\[4\]](#) We are imperfect human beings. We can read these words, we can even understand the sentiment behind them, but acknowledging the wisdom behind every situation and being grateful for our trials is very difficult. It is much easier to fall into sadness and worry. However, God, the Most Merciful, gives us clear guidelines and promises two things, if we worship Him and follow His guidance we will be rewarded with Paradise and that with hardship comes ease.

"So verily, with hardship, there is ease." (Quran 94:5)

This verse is part of a chapter of the Quran revealed when difficulties in Prophet Muhammad's mission were weighing him down and causing him distress. The words of God comforted and reassured him just as they comfort us today. God reminds us that with hardship comes ease. Hardship is never absolute; it is always accompanied by ease. For that, we should be grateful. For that, we need to express our gratitude.

We must accept the trials, triumphs, and tribulations that are part of being alive. Each one of them, from the highest highs to the lowest lows is a blessing from God. A blessing designed uniquely for each individual person. When we are overcome by sadness or worry we must turn to God, strive to be patient and grateful and put our trust in God. For God is the most trustworthy. By trusting Him, we can overcome any moment of anxiety

and conquer any sadness or worry that tries to creep into our lives.

Endnotes:

[1] Testimony of faith, Prayer, Fasting in Ramadan, Compulsory charity, Pilgrimage.

[2] *Saheeh Bukhari*

[3] *Saheeh Bukhari*

[4] Ibid

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