

The human being was created weak

Description: Sickness reminds us of our weakness and dependence on God. Some take a lesson while others return back to their haughtiness and pride.

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God says: "God would make the burden light for you, for the human being was created weak." (Quran 4:28)

In a state of weakness we were first created, and in a state of weakness we end our lives. During the intervening years, we face one state of weakness after another, in both body and spirit.

Our bodies suffer from sickness. Even those of us who are blessed with robust health must ultimately succumb to the weakness of old age. Our spirits are plagued with heedlessness. Our minds can be touched with insanity. We can see how weakness surrounds our existence from all sides. Our own incapacity causes us to appreciate the greatness and the might of our Creator all the more.



There is one form of weakness that we cannot hope to conceal. It makes our deficiency and dependency all too obvious. It is sickness - that state of being that strikes a person's body and brings it down. It takes its toll on the spirit as well, cutting down its arrogance and excessive pride. All a person's imagined power is knocked right off its foundations, causing a person to return to his original state of being, that state that is so much denied and pushed out of mind by our hubris and pride, and by our false notion of our own strength. Sickness makes us get a taste of our weak origins all over again.

Sickness is debilitating. It exhausts the body. Yet, for some people, it is a source of strength, fortifying their faith in God, restoring them to the natural relationship that they should have with their Lord. Sickness is a wakeup call for some people, dispelling vanity and false desire from the heart, pushing aside vain passions and lusts.

Sickness causes their hearts to become penitent, hastening to seek forgiveness. They rush to the door of God's mercy, that door which forever remains open, but which we are so prone to lose sight of during our years of health and prosperity. Sickness can make those who used to shun that door most haughtily become the most ardent petitioners at its steps.

It is no shame for a worshipper to expose his weakness at times of illness and submit himself humbly to God, beseeching God for his needs. This is something that God loves from His servants.

What is shameful is for that same person - who had so humbly petitioned his Lord at his time of weakness and need - to then shrug aside all of that humility once he is restored to health and deny the blessings of God. It is a shame for him to return to his former haughtiness as if sickness had never touched him and as if he had never supplicated to his Lord for relief. Such a person is indeed shameful and despicable.

God says: "And when affliction touches a person, he calls on Us, whether lying on his side or sitting or standing; but when We remove his affliction from him, he passes on as though he had never called on Us on account of an affliction that touched him; thus that which they do is made fair-seeming to the extravagant." (Quran 10:12)

Few are those who recall at times of strength that there have been and will be times of weakness, times of incapacity. A few short hours of prosperity is all that it takes to make us forget. It takes just a bit of wealth to make us haughty.

When misfortune falls, it is so fast that a person becomes desperate and dismayed, suddenly returning to earnest supplication and impatient for a return to prosperity. Then, when God answers his prayer, he just as quickly turns his back and returns to his former state of heedlessness and disregard.

Some people advocate false ideas, and push those ideas with such force that we cannot doubt the strength of their convictions for the falsehoods that they espouse. Often, it is revealed how flimsy their convictions really are, how much they were based on personal desire and self-deception.

We see this when that person is stricken with a fearful illness, his heart turns hard to those false ideas and seeks to return to its pure, natural state of faith in God and belief in His message. All his false arguments and sophistries fall straight away.

History attests to this fact. There are many examples of people who were not mere followers of false ideologies, but leading proponents of those ideas, philosophers and intellectuals. Their intelligence and sophistication had misguided them and cast them into confusion. However, being touched by a frightful illness dispelled from their minds the vagaries of falsehood, and turned their hearts to God and to His mercy.

Guidance in affliction is better than misguidance in prosperity.

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