

## Don't Be Sad

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#### Positivity and Optimism in Islam

- "We will certainly test you with something of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits..." - Surat Al Baqarah, Verse 155
- This is just the nature of the dunya. It's not easy, we'll be struck with calamity repeatedly
- Most of us lack the ability to deal with calamity and stress in life:
- Suicide is one of the leading causes of deaths in America
- 2/3 of all family doctor visits in North America is due to stress related symptoms
- This lecture focuses on practical Ideas and concepts to be able to deal with it in a patient way

#### Lesson 1: Leave the future until it comes

- "The event ordained by Allah will come to pass so seek not to hasten it." - Surat An Nahl, verse 1
- The problem with worrying about "tomorrow":
- There is no practical benefit
- It wastes time from present
- Ex. Even if you know you'll flunk an exam, don't waste time prior to it worrying about, it will happen inevitably
- Tomorrow is from the world of the unseen
- Why it's looked down upon in our religion: it takes away from worship if done excessively,

#### 2 types of worry:

##### 1. Something you have control over:

- Analysis Paralysis: worrying or analyzing a decision to the point of inaction
- Solution: stop worrying about it, be decisive, force yourself to action, pray istikhara ~~as~~ takes away from mental burden

##### 1. Worry of things out of your control

- According to Steven Covey in *7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, there are two area that people can focus on: Circle of Influence and Circle of Concern
- These can overlap but for most people, the Circle of Concern will be much larger than the Circle of Influence
- Successful people should try and focus on the Circle of Influence and ignore the circle of concern: There's no point worrying about things out of our control, Muslims believe its from the Qadr of Allah SWT
- Living in "Day tight compartments": This is a strategy that psychologists put together to help people be less anxious, more productive and less sad. Live life day-to-day as if it were your last day. Don't focus on yesterday as it is often the source of a lot of pain and sorrow and realize that it is gone. Also, don't focus on tomorrow as it is the source of a lot of worry. Focus on today.

### **Lesson 2: Learn to Deal with Your Reality**

- What will you do if calamity strikes you today?
- Ex. Many of us are worried about exams. Assume that you flunk every single one (worst case scenario). Humans are incredibly versatile creatures and we are able to adapt to enormous circumstances.
- Allah Wont test a slave beyond what they're unable to adapt to
- How will you respond to it: accept it or complain and whine? If you picked the latter, not only will it annoy people, it will earn anger of Allah because you weren't able to accept his Qadr.
- "Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things" Surah At-Talaq, Verse 3
- Don't put your energy into things that don't deserve it. Ask yourself: is the stress that I am putting myself through worth it?
- Appreciate that compared to others, your trial is light
- "Look at the people beneath you (in wealth) and do not gaze the ones above you. By this, you will not underestimate the bounty of Allah bestowed upon you." (Prophet Muhammad (s), Bukhari and Muslim)

### **Lesson 3: Wait Patiently for a Happy Outcome**

- "The best form of worship is to wait patiently for a happy outcome." (Prophet Muhammad (s), Al-Tirmidhi)
- Nothing in this world is permanent: Everything will taste death, Allah SWT promised us that with hardship comes relief
- If the rope becomes too tight, it will snap ~~and~~ wont' be tested with something greater than our capacity, every test will end ("snap")

### **Lesson 4: Reflect on the Blessings of Pain**

- "Worry, anxiety, pain, fatigue, or even a thorn that pricks him, when a believer is afflicted by any of these, Allah grants him pardon for some of his sins", Prophet Muhammad (s)
- Say Alhamdulillah to calamities because they are in fact blessings
- It causes you to sincerely turn back to Allah
- Many of us, young western Muslims, leave the Deen (unofficially) and are often only brought back when tested
- Applies to people who are practicing as well: we have the most Kushoo (concentration) in our prayer when we're are experiencing hardship
- Gives us passion and ability to affect others:
- Passion only comes from pain as illustrated by the best poets, artists, authors
- Pain gives us real life experience and allows character building
- Maybe Allah is putting you through this because you are meant to help others after this
- Strengthening and purifying of charcter:
- Eg. The Earliest Muslims were the best of generations. They were tested in ways we were never tested.
- There are no bad days, just character building days.

### Lesson 5: Conquer Misery through Action

- “Secret of being miserable is to have the leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not”.
- George Bernard Shaw
- Fill your life with meaningful activities, make a difference in other people’s life rather than focusing on your own problems

### Summary:

1. Leave the future until it comes
2. Learn to deal with your reality
3. Wait patiently for a happy outcome
4. Reflect on the blessings of pain
5. Conquer misery through action

### References:

Covey, S. R., (1989). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*: Free Press.

### Duas/Supplications that Help Get Through Tribulations (From Attendees):

- “Verily, after Hardship will always come Ease” Surah Ash Sharh, Verse 5
- Allaahumma 'innee 'a'oothu bika minal-hammi walhazani, wal'ajzi walkasali, walbukhli waljubni, wa dhala'id-dayni wa ghalabatir-rijaal.
  - “Oh Allah, I seek refuge in You from worry and grief, from helplessness and laziness, from cowardice and stinginess, and from overpowering of debt and from oppression of men.”
- "Verily, distress has seized me, and you are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy." Surah Al Anbiya
- Dua of the people of the Cave (ashaabul kahf): rabbana atina min ladunka rahmatan wahayyi lana min amrina rashadan
  - "Oh Allah! Bestow on us mercy and facilitate for us our affair in the right way"
- Dua of Yunus: la ilaha illa anta subhanaka innee kuntu mina alththalimeena
  - “None has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allah), Glorified (and Exalted) are You. Truly, I have been of the wrong-doers.”
- Allahumma la sahla illa ma ja altahu sahla wa anta taj'alu al-hazana idha shi ta sahla
  - Oh Allah! Nothing is easy except what you have made easy. If you wish, you can make the difficult easy.
- Surat al-Sharh
- Surat ad-Duha