DEALING WITH GRIEF IN ISLAM (PART 5 OF 5)

Rating: 4.4

Description: So how should we deal with grief?

Category: Articles Worship and Practice Islamic Morals and Practices

By: J. Hashmi (© 2008 IslamReligion.com)
Published on: 03 Nov 2008
Last modified on: 04 May 2011

All of what has been stated in this article is extremely interesting, but it all boils down to the following question: how should we deal with grief when a calamity strikes? Every person on earth will face some grief in his life, and some more than others. People deal with grief in different ways, but how should a believer deal with it?

The first thing that a believer should realize is that the calamity is from God. The Quran declares:

"All things (good and bad) are from God." (Quran 4:78)

Once we realize that it is from God, we should realize that God is the Most Loving (*Al-Wadud*) and the Most Kind (*Al-Barr*). Therefore, there is some good in whatever God has decreed for us, even if we do not immediately see what it is. God Almighty says:

"Perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not." (Quran 2:216)

Imam Hasan al-Basri, a great scholar of Islam, said:

"Do not resent the calamities that come and the disasters that occur; perhaps in something that you dislike will be your salvation, and perhaps in something that you prefer will be your doom."

For example, if a man is laid off, perhaps it will be a means to securing an even better job, which he might not have opted for had he not been fired in the first place. One of the benefits of calamity that we know about for sure is the fact that a person's sins are forgiven by the will of God. Mus'ab b. Sa'd b. Malik narrated that his father said:

"O Messenger of Allah, who are the most tested and tried people in this world? He answered: 'The Prophets, and then who are simlar to them (i.e. the god-fearing and pious)**. A man would be tested and tried according to his piety and faith. If the individual has strong faith, he would be tested and tried in a severer manner;**

similarly, if the man's faith is weak, he would be tested accordingly. A person would be struck by calamities until he is be sin-free." (Ibn Hibban #2901)

Fadl ibn Sahl said:

“There is a blessing in calamity that the wise man should not ignore, for it [calamity] erases sins, gives one the opportunity to attain the reward for patience, dispels negligence, reminds one of blessings at the time of health, calls one to repent, and encourages one to give charity.”

The believer should turn to God when a calamity strikes. In this way, the calamity reminds the believer that his only purpose in life—the reason for his creation—is to worship God alone. This is in fact the meaning of our existence and the purpose of our life. God says in the Quran:

“I created the jinn and humankind only to worship Me.” (Quran 51:56)

Oftentimes, when life is good and man is living in prosperity, he forgets to worship his Lord. It is only when calamity strikes that he remembers to invoke God. So, in this way, a calamity serves as a reminder to fulfill the purpose for which we were created. *Shaykh al-Islam* Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“A calamity that makes you turn to God is better for you than a blessing which makes you forget the remembrance of God.”

Imam as-Sufyan said:

“What a person dislikes may be better for him than what he likes, because what he dislikes causes him to call upon God, whereas what he likes may make him heedless (of worship).”

Therefore, whenever calamity strikes, we should show our gratitude to God by saying “All praise is due to God” (*Al-Hamdu Lillah*). Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, commented:

“How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him.” (Sahih Muslim)

When *Shaykh al-Islam* Ibn Taymiyyah was wrongfully imprisoned, he regarded it as a blessing that his enemies had enabled for him. *Shaykh al-Islam* used that time to increase his worship of God. He said:

“What can my enemies do to me? …My imprisonment is a religious retreat (an opportunity to worship God), my being killed is martyrdom, and my being expelled from my city is a journey.”

Prophet Muhammad said:

“There is no Muslim who is stricken with a calamity and (then) says what God has enjoined (to say): ‘Verily, to God we belong and unto Him is our return; O God, reward me for my affliction and compensate me with something better’ but God will compensate him with something better.” (Sahih Muslim)

We should remember that God tests those whom He loves most. The Prophet said:

“The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When God loves a people, He tests them. Whoever accepts this, wins His Pleasure.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

And the Prophet said further:

“The path to Paradise is surrounded with difficulties.”

Calamity and grief is a way of having our sins forgiven in this life, so that we won’t have to face the punishment for these sins in the next life. Prophet Muhammad said:

“Trials will continue to befall the believing man and woman—with regard to themselves, their children, and their wealth—until they meet God with no sin on them.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

God does not send calamity down upon us in order to destroy us, nor to shatter our will, nor to finish us off, but rather as a means of checking on us, to test our patience and faith. If it were not for trials and tribulations, a person would develop arrogance, heedlessness, and hardheartedness, which would lead him to the pits of Hell. So it is indeed a Mercy of God that He sends down upon us this remedy to cure us of these diseases of the heart, and to eliminate all evil elements in our personality that might lead to our doom.

When some calamity strikes us in this life, we should remember that God will recompense us, but we must show patience; the *ultimate* recompense will not even be in this life, but in the next one, and in this, we should take comfort. Abu Sufyan lost his eye in battle whilst defending the Muslims; he asked the Prophet to pray to God that he (Abu Sufyan) get his eyesight back. The Prophet asked him if he would rather have his eye in this life or the next, and Abu Sufyan responded that he would rather have the recompense in the next life. Abu Sufyan would in fact go on to lose his other eye as well.

God says:

"We shower Our Mercy upon whomever We will, and We never fail to recompense the righteous. Additionally, the reward in the Hereafter is even better for those who believe and lead a righteous life." (Quran 12:56-57)

A believer must never despair in God's Mercy; he should not think that God will not get him out of this rut. In fact, the name of Satan in Arabic (*Iblis*) comes from the root word *ablasa*, which means "to despair". A certain calamity hit Satan (he was "demoted" when Prophet Adam was created); instead of thinking that this was something good from God, Satan despaired of God's Mercy, and thereupon began his hedonistic lifestyle. Likewise, when calamity strikes some people, they resort to booze and other sinful devices to ebb their pain. But the believers do not fall into despair, but rather they turn to God in worship. God reassures His creation:

"By the Glorious Morning Light, and by the Night when it is still! The Guardian-Lord has not forsaken you nor does He hate you. And verily the Hereafter will be better for you than the present. And soon will your Guardian-Lord give you that wherewith you shall be well-pleased." (Quran 93:1-5)

The web address of this article:

https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1850/dealing-with-grief-in-islam-part-5

Copyright © 2006 - 2023 IslamReligion.com. All rights reserved.