HEALING WOUNDED HEARTS

DEALING WITH THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

A gift to console, comfort and support the bereaved

Part 1

By Moulana Imraan Kajee

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Introduction

The death of a loved one is a very difficult test which we face repeatedly in our lives. Islam, which is a complete way of life, has provided us with the most beautiful guidelines to manage through these difficult periods of life. It provides guidance on how to think, react, behave and grieve. It gives us hope, courage and strength. It teaches us what rewards are in store for us if we bear these losses with patience, as well as the methods by which we can continue benefitting those dear ones who have left this temporary world. The teachings of Islam contain the greatest consolation for all those who are grief-stricken and it presents the ideal prescription to heal the hearts of the bereaved.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the pain, grief and sadness of this traumatic experience lead many people into depression, anxiety and feelings of despondency and misery. As humans, we sometimes forget the innumerable favours of Allah ﷻ upon us which leads us to complain over Allah's ﷻ decisions and become impatient. This ultimately leads to many sins and finally into the displeasure of Allah ﷻ. This causes our lives in this world to become miserable and gloomy, and destroys our rewards in the Hereafter.

May Allah ﷻ reward our Beloved Guide, Rasulullah ﷺ, with the greatest of rewards for passing on to us the beautiful teachings of Islam, which ensure for us happiness and success in this world and the Hereafter.

This book was written as a gift for all my Muslim brothers and sisters who have experienced the pain and difficulty of losing their loved ones. May Allah ﷻ, make this book beneficial to all those who have lost their loved ones, and make it a means of their consolation and comfort. We hope that it will Insha-Allah be of great benefit to those who may be struggling to come

to terms with what has happened and will provide answers to unanswered questions in their minds. For those who are in such a situation, please study this book carefully and read it more than once to benefit fully from its contents.

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "Whichever believer consoles his fellow Muslim when he is afflicted by some difficulty, Allah ﷻ will clothe him with a suit of honour on the day of Qiyaamah." (Tirmizi, Ibn Majah) It is our hope that we may also be included amongst those who earn the great rewards of consoling the bereaved. It is also hoped that any person who is instrumental in passing on this book to others will earn those very rewards as well. Therefore, we request that you pass this book on to as many people as you can.

May Allah ﷻ accept it and make it a source of benefit for mankind and jinnkind until the day of Qiyaamah, and accept it from myself, my parents, family, asaatizah, mahaayikh and all those who assisted in its preparation, publication and dissemination. Aameen.

Imraan Kajee
13 Zul-Hijjah 1441

A Letter of condolence

From: Imraan Kajee
To: A friend

Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu.

May Allah ﷻ greatly reward you, inspire you with sabr, and guide us all to be grateful servants of His.

Our lives, wealth, parents, wives, children and dear ones are all great wonderful gifts from Allah ﷻ to us, and a trust which He had entrusted to us. We were meant to benefit from them for a stipulated time, and then return them back to their original owner, at the time He wishes to take them back. When we have the chance to enjoy these favours, Allah ﷻ wishes us to make shukr. Now that He has tested us, He desires that we be patient and pleased with His decree. Your loved ones were such gifts from Allah ﷻ and trusts who were entrusted to your care. Allah ﷻ allowed you to benefit from them and granted you much happiness and joy from them. Now that He has taken them back into His care, He has promised you great reward: salawaat (special exclusive mercies which He will shower down upon you in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty you experience and which is known to none other but yourself), rahmah (general mercies which are granted to His beloved servants) and hidaayah (which is the object of our lives- to walk the straight path till we reach our destination i.e. Allah's ﷻ love, recognition, ma'iyyah and pleasure). Allah ﷻ has also promised great rewards for the one who exercises sabr: Allah ﷻ loves him. (Surah Aal-Imraan v.146), Allah ﷻ is with him (and He will therefore help and assist him) (Surah Baqarah v.153, v.249, Surah Anfaal v.46,66) and that Allah ﷻ will guide his heart to yaqeen. (Surah Baqarah v.157, Surah Taghaabun v.11)

Allah ﷻ never takes anything from us without granting us a better substitute. What better substitute can there be than the love of Allah ﷻ and His ma'iyyah (togetherness). However, this will only be attained with sabr (patience) and ihtisaab (expectation of reward). As for those who have passed on, what could be better for them than to be cared for and pampered by Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ says: "I am with those whose hearts are broken."[1] 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 Allah ﷻ and to develop a strong bond with Allah ﷻ. This is because sorrows and grief create feelings of weakness and humility in the heart, and cause one to cry and weep. At such times, Allah's ﷻ special communion and togetherness is experienced. Make the most out of that, and beg Allah ﷻ for your needs, as it is certainly a great opportunity of acceptance.

The Sunnah dua for you to recite is:

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1 This is not a Hadith of Rasulullah ﷺ, as is assumed by many. Imaam Ghazaali has mentioned this in Bidaayatul-Hidaayah, as in al-Maqaasidul Hasanah no.188. Mulla Ali Qaari ؒ has stated that there is no basis for these words in the Marfu' Ahaadith of Rasulullah ﷺ. (Al-Asraarul Marfoo'ah v.1 pg.117) Ibn Abid-Dunya has narrated from Abdullah ibn Shawzab ؒ that Daud ؑ asked Allah ﷻ, "O my Rabb, where can I find You?" Allah ﷻ replied, "You will find Me by those whose hearts are broken." (Al-Hamm wal Huzn no.61) Wahb ibn Munabbih ؒ narrated that Daud ؑ said, "O my Rabb, where can I find You when I search for You?" Allah ﷻ replied, "You will find Me by those whose hearts are broken, out of my fear." (Hilyatul Auliyaa 4/32) Maalik ibn Dinaar ؒ narrated that Musa ؑ said, "O my Rabb, where can I search for You?" Allah replied, "Search for me by those whose hearts are broken." (Hilyatul Auliyaa 2/364) Imraan al-Qaseer ؒ narrated that Musa ؑ said, "O my Rabb, where can I search for You?" Allah ﷻ 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 Auliyaa 6/177)

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ اَللّٰهُمَّ أْجُرْنِىْ فِىْ مُصِيْبَتِىْ وَأَخْلِفْ لِىْ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

(Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon. Allahumma'jurni fee museebatee wa akhlif lee khayram minha)
Verily we belong to Allah, and to Him will we return. O Allah, reward me for undergoing this difficulty and loss, and grant me something better in replacement for what I have lost.

In essence, we remind ourselves through this dua that we, along with our wealth, families and health, all belong to Allah ﷻ. 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 Allah ﷻ, 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, and that we will soon re-unite with our beloveds who he had taken back when we return to Him. Our separation is only temporary, just for a period of a few days or years, whereas we will be reunited forever in the Aakhirah.

Man benefits fully from every sort of difficulty he experiences. Allah ﷻ Himself declares in the Qur'aan: "Say (to the Muslims, o Rasulullah ﷺ), "Under no circumstances does any difficulty ever afflict any of us except that Allah has decreed it for **our benefit**. He is our Maula (Friend and Helper)." (Surah Taubah v.51)

May Allah ﷻ grant you Sabr Jameel. May your grief not lead you to such actions which will destroy your reward, for that will certainly cause you regret on the day of Qiyaamah. What was destined to happen had to happen, and could never have been avoided. May Allah ﷻ make them a treasure for you in the Hereafter, and grant myself, yourself and the deceased the highest positions of Jannatul Firdaws. Aameen

I make the very dua for your loved one and for all those who have passed away, which Rasulullah ﷺ made for the family of Abu Salamah ؓ after his tragic demise: O Allah, forgive them, raise them in rank among the guided ones, You be their replacement in their family who are left behind, forgive us and forgive them, O Rabb of the worlds. Expand their graves for them (i.e. by making it spacious and by protecting them from being squeezed in the grave) and make it bright with radiance for them (i.e. save them from its darkness by filling it with noor)."

Wassalaam - A friend, Imraan Kajee

The Philosophy of Tests

Allah ﷻ indeed does love those whom He tests, and most certainly what you are going through is a very difficult test. The Messengers of Allah ﷻ went through more difficult tests than anyone.

Rasulullah ﷺ, for instance, saw the death of his uncle, his wife, several of his children and countless of his close companions during his lifetime, some all within the same year. He mourned their loss, felt sadness and grief, and asked Allah ﷻ for ease during difficult times.

Yet he accepted their deaths — as with everything else in life — as from Allah ﷻ, with its own wisdom and purpose.

Every time Allah ﷻ took something from him, He gave Rasulullah ﷺ something of great importance in return. For instance, after the loss of his beloved wife Khadijah ؓ and his uncle Abu Talib in the same year, Allah ﷻ blessed Rasulullah ﷺ with the Isra and Miraj–the night journey to Jerusalem, then to the Heavens.

It is well-known that those whom Allah ﷻ loves the most, He grants the

most difficult tests. This is why the Messengers had to endure what they did. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an:

> *And Ayyub (Job), when he prayed to his Lord, saying, "Verily, distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy." We accepted his prayer and relieved his affliction, and restored his family (children) and an equal number of people in addition to them as a favour from Us so that it may serve as a reminder to Our worshipers. (Qur'an 21:83-84)*

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "There is nothing (in the form of trouble) that afflicts a believer, even if it is the pricking of a thorn except that Allah records for him some virtue or obliterates some sin." (Sahih Muslim)

Death is a natural part of life: I know there are usually few words that can be spoken to ease the pain of losing a loved one. Thus, I know I cannot say much that will make you feel better.

We just have to realize that death is a part of life and that as believers, there is a much greater life to come after this one, where, insha-Allah, we will be with our loved ones in Paradise for all eternity by Allah's ﷻ mercy. For those that are able to accept the will of Allah ﷻ with patience, acceptance, and perseverance, the reward is great, greater than anything that can be imagined. Allah ﷻ says,

> *[...] Those who endure with patience will be rewarded without measure. (Qur'an 39:10)*

And in another verse: Do the people think that they will be left alone saying "We believe," and that they will not be tested? We did test those who have passed before them. Allah will determine who are the truthful and who are the liars. (Qur'an 29:1-3)

Allah's ﷻ wisdom exceeds ours. That is Allah's ﷻ promise to us. Furthermore, only Allah ﷻ knows the reality behind life events, both the perceived good and bad. Although we may feel that our loss is a bad thing, understand that there is always wisdom behind whatever Allah ﷻ wills and Allah ﷻ never tests people beyond what they can handle: Allah ﷻ puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. Allah ﷻ will grant after hardship, ease. (Qur'an 65:7)

Acceptance and surrender in difficult times are what separates the believers from those who do not believe. I know you are suffering anguish, but insha-Allah with the help of Allah ﷻ, you will overcome this loss and challenge.

Ask Allah ﷻ to make your trials easy for you, and to grant you the good in it. Always remember that He always knows what is best for us, even though it may be difficult to understand and grasp at that particular moment. Also, after difficulties, Allah ﷻ promises ease, so do not despair...

> *Surely with every difficulty there is relief. Surely with every difficulty there is relief. (Qur'an 94:5-6)*

I wish you all the best and pray for you and your children. Remember this last bit of advice from Allah ﷻ in the Qur'an whenever we must deal with trials and hardship:

> *"Without doubt, most assuredly, will We test you with a bit of fear, hunger, loss in wealth, lives, and the fruits (of your efforts). And give glad tidings to those who are patient. Those who say, when an affliction afflicts them: Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we will return. They are those upon whom descend salawaat - the special mercies of Allah (special exclusive mercies which He will shower down upon you in lieu*

of the exclusive pain and difficulty you experience and which is known to none other but yourself) and rahmah - the general mercies of Allah (His general mercies which is granted to all the saabireen-patient ones and to his beloved servants). And they are the rightly guided ones (who walk the straight path of hidaayah till they reach their destination i.e. Allah's love, recognition, ma'iyyah and His pleasure). (Surah Baqarah v.155-157)

Such are the people on whom there are blessings and mercy from Allah; and they are the ones that are rightly guided. (Qur'an 2:155-157)

I hope this helps ease your hardship. May Allah ﷻ grant you patience and the highest level of Paradise Aameen.[2]

Emotions you may experience at your loss

It is never easy losing someone you love dearly. It could feel as if the sun has gone and will never rise again. Grief at times affects not just our hearts, but even the way we think and act. When someone experiences a loss, they may go through one or all of the following stages of grief, which are: denial, anger, depression and guilt. These stages are not always the same, but typically involve the following reactions:

Denial: "This is a mistake, this can't be happening." In this stage, the person may be in shock or feel numb. The loss or trauma may feel like it hasn't quite registered yet. You may even disbelieve that your beloved has actually passed away.

Anger: "Why did this happen to me!" "Whoever did this will pay." Anger can be projected at oneself, others, or sometimes even Allah. People often feel very angry at this time — toward doctors and nurses who did not prevent the death, towards friends and relatives who did not do enough,

2 Adapted from aboutislam.net by Dr. Abdul Lateef Krauss Abdullah

or even towards the person who has left them.

Depression: "I'm never going to get over this." Before coming to full acceptance, it's not unusual to fall into a phase of depression. In this phase, there is a lot of sadness about the loss.

Guilt: "I should have asked for forgiveness." "I should have given him whatever he wanted." "I should have spent more time with him." "It's all my fault." People find themselves going over in their minds all the things they would like to have said or done. They may even consider what they could have done differently that might have prevented the death.

Physical responses are also to be expected. You may experience tightness in your throat, heaviness across your chest, or pain around your heart. Your stomach may be upset, along with other intestinal disturbances. You may have headaches, hot flushes, or cold chills. You may be dizzy at times, or tremble more than usual, or find yourself easily startled. Some people find it hard to get their breath. You may, in addition, undergo changes in your behaviour. You may sleep less than you used to and wake up at odd hours. Or you may sleep more than normal. You may have odd dreams or frightening nightmares.

Some people engage in what's called "searching behaviour"—you look for your loved one's face among a crowd of people, for instance, even though you know they've died. You may become attached to things you associate with your loved one, like wearing an article of their clothing or carrying a keepsake that belonged to them. Or you may wish to avoid all such reminders.

You may find it hard concentrating. You may sit unproductive for hours on end. Your thinking may be confused. Some of us will look for some work to do, anything to keep us distracted yet the mind will keep wandering back

to our beloved whom we lost.

It's natural to cry and show emotion. We have been taught that sadness is a natural feeling that we express by shedding tears, while adopting patience (sabr). However, Islam has regulated our expression of grief and has taught us what methods are recommended, what is allowed and what is detrimental to ourselves.

What is important is that we should not grieve in the same way as those who have no hope. Allah ﷻ states: "They (the disbelievers) undergo pain as you undergo pain. But you have hope (for such rewards) from Allah which they cannot hope for. And Allah is the All-Knowing and All-Wise." (Surah Nisaa v.104) Allah ﷻ also states: "So do not lose courage, and do not fall into despair; for you will overcome and triumph (every challenge) if you are true believers". (Surah Aal Imraan v.139)

For that, Allah ﷻ has granted us the psychology of Imaan

The psychology of Imaan

Islam is a complete way of life, and offers guidance in every situation. The feeling of sadness is natural when we lose something beloved in life. However, Islam has provided us with the most perfect and appropriate coping mechanisms and methods of consoling and comforting our grieving hearts. Imaan contains an in-built system to manage the grief and emotions which come along after losing any beloved of ours. Keep in mind the following realities and read it over and over again. It will Insha-Allah strengthen your heart and make you understand the reality of death in its proper perspective.

1. Why has Allah ﷻ put me through this?

Allah ﷻ is testing us because He loves us and He wants good for us.

Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Great rewards are granted due to great difficulties.

When Allah loves any group of people, he tests them. **If they are happy with the decree of Allah**, Allah is pleased with them. If they are unhappy, Allah is displeased with them." (Tirmizi, Ibn Majah)

Abu Hurairah ﷺ narrated that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "When Allah wills good for any person, He afflicts him with some unfavourable condition." (Bukhari)

Rasulullah ﷺ said: "How excellent is the situation of a believer. All his situations are good for him (to his advantage). This is enjoyed by none but a believer. When he experiences occasions of happiness and he is grateful over this, it is good for him (i.e. to his advantage). When he experiences occasions of distress and he is patient over it, it is good for him (i.e. to his advantage)." (Muslim)

Muhammad ibn Khalid as-Sulami narrated from his father (Khalid) from his grandfather (Lajlaaj ﷺ) that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "If a rank (in Jannah) is decreed by Allah for his slave which he fails to attain through his deeds, then Allah 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 Allah." (Ahmad, Abu Daud)

Losing one's beloved is a difficult test, indeed. But Allah ﷻ only tests us with what He knows we have the capacity to bear. The harder the test, the more positive the indicator of the good Allah ﷻ has in store for you. He knows you best, as He is your Creator and Master. He knows if you are equipped to pass this test of His.

Remember that those who suffer the most are those who are the closest to Allah ﷻ. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas ﷺ asked Rasulullah ﷺ as to who are the people who are tested most severely. Rasulullah ﷺ 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)." (Tirmizi, Ibn Majah)

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)

2. Allah ﷻ uses such tests as an excuse to draw us closer to Him

Whenever we are going through difficult times and trials, then we should put our full trust, hopes, faith and reliance in Allah ﷻ. He will NEVER let us down. He is only testing us because He wants us to turn humbly towards him so that He can draw us closer to Him. He tests people because he wants good for them. These tests and difficulties are a blessing in disguise for you. These tests are an indication that He wants you to get much closer to Him. This is in fact a great privilege.

Shaytaan is our eternal sworn enemy. He only wants us to lose hope, become despondent and depressed. His wish is that we become disillusioned and we turn away from Allah ﷻ. Never fall for his tricks. He is our enemy who only wants our destruction. His evil whispers are all lies and deceit. He will whisper to us: 'there is no way that you will ever get over this loss', 'how could Allah do this to you?', 'why did Allah single you out for this pain?' and similar evil thoughts. He wants us to give up and lose hope. This is certainly a test for you. You are being tested to see if you will become closer to Allah ﷻ or be turned further away from Him. We must realise that if we keep turning towards Allah ﷻ and being patient, then the final outcome will be most pleasant and wonderful. For that, we are required to strive through the tests and trials that Allah ﷻ has sent our way.

Through every test, Allah ﷻ brings out goodness for us. The following article sheds light on this idea:

When Things Are Lost[3]

The following is a dua of Rasulullah ﷺ:

اَللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يَّنْفَعُنِيْ حُبُّهُ عِنْدَكَ ، اَللَّهُمَّ مَا رَزَقْتَنِيْ مِمَّا أُحِبُّ فَاجْعَلْهُ قُوَّةً لِيْ فِيْمَا تُحِبُّ ، اَللَّهُمَّ وَمَا زَوَيْتَ عَنِّيْ مِمَّا أُحِبُّ فَاجْعَلْهُ فَرَاغًا لِيْ فِيْمَا تُحِبُّ.

> *"O Allah! Grant me Your love, and the love of those persons whose love will benefit me in Your Presence. O Allah! Whatever You have granted me from that which I love, make it a means of strength for me to do that which You love. O Allah! Whatever You have held back from me from that which I love, then make that void a means of preoccupying me in that which You love."*[4]

My aunt and I were having a conversation the other day, and this dua (supplication) came up. It's not uncommon when I speak with her that the conversation flows to an ayah (verse) from the Qur'an or a hadith (narration) of Rasulullah ﷺ that she reflected on and that her heart desired to share with me. But when she recited this dua, she didn't realize that my heart had a connection with this prayer too and it was with these words that I often found serenity.

While discussing the dua with her, I learnt that, for some reason, she had not been able to grasp and memorize this dua. At first she did not pay too much attention to this, but it continued to tug at her consciousness until

3 By Hena Din. Adapted from: Islam Today May-June 2017 #137

4 Tirmizi no.3491, Jaami'ul Usool no.2363, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah no.30208 – narrated as mauquf

she decided to sit down once and for all and fully learn it.

It wasn't until then, she said, that she immersed herself in its beautiful meaning and reflected on these words Rasulullah ﷺ uttered, and it hit her. The depth of meaning and the sincerity of love that is present in this dua was a sudden epiphany.

My aunt's heart has experienced a lot of loss in her life. She lost her eldest son suddenly when he was only 13 years old. He was hit by a bus on his way to school and died instantly. She has always been patient mashaa-Allah (by the will of God), but try as they might, neither she nor her husband were ever the same after this loss.

She lost her husband about 8 years ago, after he slowly became bedridden from his illness and suffered to the point that he was barely conscious. The loss of someone so dear and who was such a support truly shook her, not to mention that she was left behind as a single mother in a developing country with 4 children to raise. And if that was not enough to exhaust the tears that came from her patient eyes, her 2nd eldest son who had just completed his degree and was going to begin a new job suddenly passed away only a year or so after his father. To understand how suddenly this young man was taken, picture a healthy youth of 23 years, a recent graduate from college, a whole future ahead of him, so many plans up his sleeve, and within three days, his health drops and leaves him. Three days. SubhaanAllah (glory be to God)! May Allah ﷻ grant them all peace and His light in their graves.

After all this, it was as if Allah ﷻ (exalted is He) had created this prayer and sent it especially for her. Even though she had experienced so much loss in her life, after reading this dua, she felt as though what she used to consider suffering and hardship may actually not have been. Rather, the losses she experienced gave her space and time to fill those voids with something

better—Allah ﷻ.

If her children had not been taken from her, if her husband had not gone through what he had with her, the patience she had experienced might not be with her today. Instead of spending her time in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ and studying His deen (religion) and guidance, she might never have fully turned to Him ﷻ as she has. Instead, she might have been encompassed by her dunya (life)—of a husband, of children and (Allah ﷻ knows best) even of grandchildren. She may have had all of this, she says, but she would not have had Allah ﷻ like she does now. She would not have drawn closer to Him as she has.

And this is exactly what I only began to scratch the surface of when I recited this prayer with tears in my eyes. "O Allah! Whatever You have held back from me from that which I love, then make that void a means of preoccupying me in that which You love."

Sometimes we cling to things because we think that they are the source of our happiness, they are what will make us happy and bring us closer to something blissful in this world. And when we feel like those things and those people are leaving us, we cling harder, we fight harder. But I am slowly starting to realize the blessing that comes when a void in my heart is created, when a void in space is present.

It can be filled with something more beautiful and more fulfilling than what we had before. Maybe this is the meaning of the losses we experience in this world.

Only Allah ﷻ is everything to us and only He can truly fulfil and complete everything we are.

3. Allah ﷻ grants us this opportunity to fill up the gaps of our heart with

His Divine love

Maulana In'aamul Hasan ﷺ said to Haaji Abdul-Wahhab ﷺ at the death of Maulana Muhammad Yusuf ﷺ: When we love someone, it is as if we have given him a portion or reserved for him a section of our heart (in which his love resides). When Allah ﷻ takes this person away (by death), wouldn't it be wonderful if we could now grant that portion or section of our heart to Allah ﷻ (so that His Divine love could reside in it)."[5]

One of the close associates of Maulana In'aamul Hasan ﷺ lost his mother. Maulana wrote a letter of condolence to him.[6] The gist of his message was as follows: "Every person inevitably becomes attached to and feels love for those people whom he associates with. That person's love occupies a space in his heart. When any such person passes away, there is now a vacuum left in the heart. The vacuum comes about by the Divine Will of Allah ﷻ. However, this vacuum slowly starts to be filled with the love of others, as time goes on. This is the reason that the sadness and grief which we experience on the first day gradually subsides a little after a week and even more after a month or a year. This attachment and love is actually being filled up and transferred to other people, things or hobbies. Some people fill this vacuum with love and attachment for their children, others to their siblings, and others to even their hobbies or pets. Allah ﷻ has made human beings like this so that their lives can go on normally. **Now that your mother has passed away, fill up that space and vacuum in your heart with the love of Allah ﷻ.** This attachment and love is the only one

5 This was narrated to me by one of our reliable senior Elders involved in the effort of Da'wah and Tabligh, who heard it directly from Haaji Abdul-Wahhab ﷺ. May Allah ﷻ reward him with the best of rewards for sharing this valuable advice with me.

6 I learnt of the above from Mufti Bilal Saber, who heard this from a companion of Maulana In'aamul Hasan. May Allah ﷻ reward him with the best of rewards for sharing this valuable advice with me. I have here explained Maulana's message in my own words according to my deficient understanding, which may not be the exact words of Maulana, but which Insha-Allah conveys the same sentiments.

which will last permanently, even in our graves and into Qiyaamah. **Before anything else fills this void and vacuum, make sure you hand it over to Allah ﷻ.**"

Rasulullah ﷺ specifically made dua for the family of Abu Salamah ؓ after he had passed away: "(O Allah), You be his replacement in his family who are left behind." One possible meaning of this could be that Allah ﷻ should fill in the void of his love in their hearts by replacing it with His Divine love, as well as the void in their lives by seeing to all their affairs.

We too should make dua to Allah ﷻ, begging Him to fill the void in our hearts with His love.

Allah ﷻ never takes anything from us without granting us a better substitute. What better substitute can there be than the love of Allah ﷻ and His Ma'iyyah (being with Him). Allah ﷻ says: "I am with those whose hearts are broken."

Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ, a great Aarif (one who had recognized Allah ﷻ), wrote in a letter of condolence: 'The special servants of Allah ﷻ, or those whom Allah ﷻ wishes to select as His special ones, are normally made to undergo conditions whereby their hearts are afflicted with temporary grief. This leads to them being granted the true everlasting love of Allah ﷻ. Spiritual states which are acquired after years of efforts and (nafl) ibaadah are traversed and acquired in moments through such difficulties.'[7]

4. Tafweedh (resigning ourselves) to Taqdeer (the will of Allah ﷻ)

Realise that what has befallen you had to happen and it could not have been avoided. It is a matter that was written thousands of years before

7 This letter will Insha-Allah be quoted in full later in the book.

the very creation of the heavens and earth, so allow your heart to rest. Allah ﷻ 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 Allah!" (Surah Hadeed v.22)

In fact, the first creation of Allah ﷻ was the pen and then He commanded it to write. When it enquired as to what is should write, it was told: "Write down the decrees of everything until the day of Qiyaamah." (Abu Daud, Tirmizi)

Therefore, whether we panic or relax, are displeased or submit, the decree of Allah ﷻ will come to pass. Don't add to your life another loss; the loss of the reward which you could earn by being patient. Ali ؓ said: "If you show patience, the decree of Allah will come to pass and you will be rewarded, but if you show impatience, the decree of Allah will still come to pass but you will be sinful." (Adabud-Dunya Wad Deen – Al Maawardi)

Our only solution to resolving our pain is Tafweedh –to at all times resign ourselves to the decision of Allah ﷻ without questioning. We need to hand our affairs over to Allah ﷻ and be pleased with whatever Allah ﷻ has decreed for us. Thus, Islam recognizes radhaa bil qadhaa (being pleased with the decree of Allah ﷻ) to be amongst the greatest of actions.

Submitting to Allah ﷻ as Muslims is simple. It is when we are faced with the most difficult of situations and yet still place our trust in Allah ﷻ, turning to Him and responding in the manner He has asked of us, that we actively show our submission to Him and our belief in Him. It is very hard. Yet Allah ﷻ knows we are capable of it. Allah ﷻ says: "We shall test you to see which of you strive your hardest and are steadfast; We shall test the sincerity of your assertions. (Surah Muhammad v.31)

5. Allah ﷻ does as He wills, yet His doings are always full of wisdom

Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ 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 repercussions 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 Allah. If the following names of Allah are kept strongly in mind, Insha-Allah, our worries and depression will significantly decrease. Just as a person takes full benefit from 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. Allah 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-Raheem – 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 Allah. If one keeps only the last two names of Allah in mind, Insha-Allah,

then that too will be sufficient.[8]

1. Allah ﷻ is Al-Haakim (The Controller and Maker of all decisions). 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 connot move without His permission.

2. Allah ﷻ is Al-Hakeem (The Most Wise). 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 can come to mind at the opportune occasions, and when one wishes to bring it to mind. When one is faced with any difficult situation, he should immediately bring to mind the fact that it has happened by the will and decision of Allah ﷻ, and that there will definitely be some benefit in it, even though we may not know it. Insha-Allah, 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 dua, as this is very effective.[9]

Mufti Muhammad Hasan Amritsari ﷺ, the founder of Jamiah Ashrafiyyah

8 Ma'ariful Abraar pg.372

9 Ma'ariful Abraar pg.376

Lahore, was a scholar who was an expert in logic. He once visited Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ in Thanabawan to benefit from his company. 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 Maulana of this, to which Maulana responded by saying, "Since a mu'min (believer) believes that whatever occurs is 'muqaddar' (destined and decided by Allah ﷻ), what is the need for him to ever become 'mukaddar' (upset, worried, miserable and distressed)." Maulana 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 that afflict any believer:

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

2. Allah ﷻ benefits 50%, while His servant benefits 50%. This is also impossible, since this too would necessitate that Allah ﷻ needs His servants to acquire benefit, from which Allah ﷻ is pure. (Allah ﷻ is not in need of anyone in the least, not a little and not a lot. The entire creation is dependent on Him.)

3. Allah ﷻ 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 Allah ﷻ, the Wise, to do something which is futile.

4. Allah ﷻ 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 fully from every sort of difficulty he experiences. Allah ﷻ Himself declares in the Qur'aan: "Say (to the Muslims, o Rasulullah ﷺ), "Under no circumstances does any difficulty ever afflict any of us except that Allah has decreed it for **our benefit**. He is our Maula (Friend and Helper)." (Surah Taubah v.51)

Imam Ghazaali ؒ has written: A person should understand that there are amazing secrets and workings of Allah ﷻ in every occurrence. 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 ؑ to Khidhr ؑ after staying in his company, as explained in Surah Kahf. Whilst sitting in a boat of poor people, Khidhr ؑ damaged it by removing a board from it. Moosa ؑ in surprise asked him why he committed such an act of excess. Thereafter, Khidhr ؑ killed an immature youngster. Again, Moosa ؑ, in astonishment, over the blood of an innocent youngster which had been shed. 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 ؑ repaired this wall. Moosa ؑ 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 ؑ was surprised with these incidents was that he was not aware of the underlying secrets and wisdoms

of these incidents. Thereafter Khidhr ﷺ informed Moosa ﷺ 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 astray his believing parents. They would not be able to resist his demands due to their parental love for him. 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 down, the wealth would have been usurped by others. After these explanations, the amazement of Moosa ﷺ was eradicated.

In summary, whoever believes in these wisdoms and deeper secrets will not be in the least bit surprised at the actions of Allah ﷻ. In fact, he will be surprised at his own naivety. He will not question divine decisions by using words like, 'why' and 'how'. He will be pleased with the decisions which Allah ﷻ has determined...[10]

6. Acknowledge the Source of the Trial

There is nothing that happens to us without the knowledge of Allah ﷻ. Not a leaf falls, except that He is aware of it and it has happened by His command and decree. We should remember this whenever we are going through a painful trial. We are human and therefore our understanding of the world, knowledge and wisdom is limited by human constraints. Allah ﷻ alone knows why this particular test is ours.

10 Al-Arbaeen, Tablighud-Deen

Many times, humans find comfort in rationalizing their situations. We say things like, "oh, maybe this happened because I did this, or because this person doesn't like me", etc. While it is good to try to understand what happened to you and how it could have been prevented, also remember that the One who created you has decreed this trial to be so. Also, try to avoid blaming other people or causes for the difficulty you have undergone. It will only upset you further and cause greater complications in your life.

Don't blame yourself or feel guilty. It is not your fault. A common feeling experienced after the death of a beloved person is guilt. People find themselves going over in their minds all the things they would like to have said or done. They may even consider what they could have done differently that might have prevented the death. They think or even say, "This is all my fault."

Islam makes us understand that the death of our beloved was not our fault. Rather, it was Allah's will. Even before a person is born, it is already ordained by Allah ﷻ at what time, on what date and where they will pass away. Even if a person were to make every effort to avoid that cause of death, they would still pass away on the same time and in the same place. That is unavoidable.

Ubaadah ibnus Saamit ؓ said to his son: Son! You will not taste the reality of Imaan until you know that what has come to you could not miss you and that what has missed you could not have come to you. I heard Rasulullah ﷺ say: The first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it: "Write." It asked: "What should I write, my Lord?" He said: "Write what was decreed about everything till the Last Hour comes." Son! I heard Rasulullah ﷺ say, "He who dies on some belief other than this does not belong to me." (Sunan Abi Dawud, 4700)

Abdullah ibn Abbas ؓ said: One day I was seated behind Rasulullah ﷺ (on

the same mount) and he said, "O young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]: Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, then ask Allah (alone); and if you seek help, then seek help from Allah (alone). And know that if all people were to gather together to benefit you with anything, they would not be able to benefit you except to the extent that Allah had already decreed for you. And if they were to gather together to harm you with anything, they would not be able to harm you except to the extent that Allah had already decreed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried." (Tirmizi no.2516)

Negative self-talk is a common technique of Shaytaan. Shaytaan uses self-blame to demoralize people and push them to the brink of questioning the qadr (decree) of Allah. While it's very normal to ask why certain things happened, Shaytaan sometimes leads us to forget that when something is destined to happen, no amount of preparation can deter the inevitable. Abu Hurairah ﷺ narrated that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "A strong believer is better and more beloved in the sight of Allah than a weak believer, although both are good.. Strive to carry out (such deeds) that will benefit you, seek the help of Allah and do not feel helpless. If anything befalls you, do not say 'If only I had done such and such'. Rather say, 'QaddarAllahu Wa Maa Shaa'a Fa'ala - Allah has decreed this and whatever He wills, He does. For (saying the words) 'if only' opens (the door) to the workings of Shaytan." (Sahih Muslim no.2664)

When you acknowledge the source of your trial, you know where to seek answers and relief, and this is important in the steps to dealing with pain and grief. Losing someone you love is tough, but when you accept that it is from Allah, as all conditions are, it makes it so much more manageable.

7. The reality of the matter

Once, when the grandchild of Rasulullah ﷺ was in the throes of death, he said,

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا أَخَذَ، وَلَهُ مَا أَعْطَى، وَكُلٌّ عِنْدَهُ بِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى، فَلْتَصْبِرْ، وَلْتَحْتَسِبْ

Whatever Allah takes belongs to Him, and whatever he grants belongs to Him, and there is an appointed time chosen by Him for everything; therefore exercise patience and hope for reward (over your difficulty). (Bukhari)

'Whatever Allah takes belongs to Him' - Every person is the sole property of Allah ﷻ alone. If, for instance, an individual places something in your possession as a trust for a period of time, you will not be grieved by its separation when he decides to take it back. The reason we become so overly grieved at the departure of a near and dear one is because we regard them as belonging to us. In fact, they do not belong to us, but they were merely a trust placed with us by Allah ﷻ.

'And whatever He grants us belongs to Him.' - Therefore, whichever of Allah's ﷻ bounties we may enjoy, we should be grateful for it.

'There is an appointed time chosen by Him for everything.' - The period for which it is granted, the exact time of granting it, the exact time of taking it back, all these are fixed by Allah ﷻ. What we need to do is express gratitude for every gift granted and sabr for every gift taken back. Thus, in both situations, we stand to gain immense reward from Allah ﷻ, for which we must at all times be hopeful.[11]

A Muslim businessman, one day, as he was leaving his home, didn't realize his baby girl had strayed onto the driveway, and rolled over her with his

11 Sabr aur Maqaame Siddiqeen

van, killing her instantly. He calmly said to someone who asked about the incident, "She was only meant to live for the time that she was with us. Allah ﷻ gives and Allah ﷻ takes away. Moving on will be a great challenge."

8. Allah ﷻ loves sabr and those who make sabr. Therefore He wants to make us His beloveds

See the section on sabr, its virtues and what will aid us to acquire sabr.

9. Look at those going through really tough conditions. Then make shukr for what we have

Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ said, "One method of lightening the pain and grief one feels when someone passes away is to ponder: Allah has placed this person as a trust by us, and He has taken back that trust. It is because of this that we feel this pain and grief. However, Allah has granted us so many favours, bounties and trusts which are still with us. Turn your gaze towards the number of associates and close family members who are still alive. If one person has passed away, (in most cases) 50 are still living. Think about that as well... 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 Allah's numerous favours upon us, Insha-Allah, our burden of grief will become lighter."[12]

How sad it is when we become blind to the countless blessings we have been showered with and can only see the *one* blessing that has left us. Is this fair?

We should also look at those who have less than us. We probably have clean tap water and food on our plates every day. We have clean clothes washed regularly and shelter from the harsh weather. There are those

12 Tareequs-Sabr pg.18, 19

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 for days without proper food. When they do eat, they consume scraps and end up being malnourished. There are those who have no shelter and are exposed to terrible diseases. Some have little or no money to buy even basic things, not even medication for their sick family members. Rasulullah ﷺ always told us to look at those who have less than us.

Sometimes, when we go through great trials, we get deceived into thinking that other people that we see around us must be living a life happy and content. We may be incorrect in our assumptions. We do not really know what goes on in other people's lives. There are many examples of those who seemed as though they have so much and seemed so happy, but when realities were revealed, it became clear that those people were living miserable lives full of torment! We may look at a person with a smile on his face, but he may be going through trials we can never imagine.

Therefore, when we are going through difficult times and trials, then we should not look at others and think they are happy and living fulfilled lives for we do not know what any person on the street is going through on a day to day basis.

Inspiring incident of Umm Muhammad in Syria

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 resting on his face and the softness of his face resembled that of a child. She fed him soup. He barely moved, swallowing 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. Coincidently, I found myself at her house a 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 of the 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. She had now lost her home, her wealth and is a refugee 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.

"SubhaanAllah, sister, how did you manage all these years?" "I chose the Qur'an, the words of Allah to accompany me. I read Qur'an every single day, each day increasing in the amount I read. I found a teacher to teach me tajweed. And subhaanAllah by the time my husband was released, I had memorised the whole Qur'an 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'an 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 Allah 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 Allah, her love for the Qur'an and her struggle and sacrifice in the path of Allah was inspiring.

"There is one time though, that 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.)

A mother who had lost her daughter wrote: This is the only constructive way to bear this great test Allah ﷻ has given you. It is an immensely powerful prescription. As difficult as it is, try and focus on your many blessings. Write them out. On tough days when your heart struggles to list your many blessings, think of your sight, the sense of smell and hearing, your health, each individual family member, your bed, your home, your food and water, etc. Think of specific things we take for granted such as the beauty of the sky, the warmth of the sun on your skin, the rest in your sleep, the rain when it falls. Make the intention of expressing your gratitude to Allah ﷻ through zikr (remembrance). With every 'Alhamdulillah' (All praise is due to Allah ﷻ), think of a blessing, however small it may be. Shukr (Gratitude) will seem difficult at times, but a life without the child you have lost will always be better than a life where you never had them in the first place. Alhamdulillah.

I would not erase this lifetime of pain, grief and struggle, if it meant not having had the blessing of my daughter. I am grateful for her; for my pregnancy and her birth and her very short life. I am grateful for my memories. I am grateful for the immense love and joy she brought with her. Of course, I wish that my daughter was still with me. I cry for her today, years after she has passed away. I will probably continue to cry for her until I die. But I am so very grateful she was given to me in the first place, even if it was for just a short time in this world. I try and focus on my immense gratitude for her blessing in my life when I am having a difficult time... I found that the more I thanked Allah ﷻ for my blessings, the more sabr (patient perseverance) He bestowed on me.

Another parent said: People kept asking me how I was doing. I hated that question. I wanted to scream and cry and yell in response, "How do you think I am doing? I lost my child". I snapped at a good friend when she asked me that very question and asked her "What should I say? I have nothing to say that anyone wants to hear." She said, "Say 'Alhamdulillah'." I started saying that every time I was asked how I was. It helped immensely. It helped me to practice and internalize gratitude for the blessing of my daughter a little more every day. **Alhamdulillah, always, 'Praise for and Gratitude to Allah'. Even when I didn't feel it, it helped to say it, even though I didn't realize it at the time.**[13]

There was a sister who had a miscarriage in the early stages of a pregnancy. One thing she would say whenever anyone tried to console her was simply "Alhamdulillah". Everyone who visited found her calm, not crying, and not acting like she had just lost a child. Eventually, someone asked, "Aren't you sad about losing the baby?" The sister replied: "Allah ﷻ gave me two beautiful daughters before taking this pregnancy away from me. Shouldn't I be grateful for the ones He already gave me?"[14]

SubhaanAllah, this is a great way to look at your trial. Find something else to be grateful for in your life, that reminds you that Allah ﷻ has been generous towards you, and you will Inshaa-Allah find that your grief reduces. No mother prays to lose a pregnancy, but even with the pain of a miscarriage, this sister reminds herself of the two daughters that Allah ﷻ has already given her. No matter how difficult the trial, how deep the pain, how consuming the grief feels, we can find something, anything, to be grateful for in our lives. To be honest, expressing gratitude during pain is not the easiest thing to do. It may not come naturally to many of us, but you will find that it is one of the best ways to lessen the pain on the heart.[15]

13 mercyinloss.org

14 Practical ways to deal with pain and grief in Islam by quranacademy.io

15 From: Qur'anacademy.io

10. Ponder over the great rewards

If one had to be approached by a person and told, "I will give you one punch, but promise to give you in return one million rands." Would you consent or not? If you would, then understand that Allah ﷻ is testing you, while saying to you, "I promise to give you Jannah in return for this difficulty you are undergoing." The thought of such great rewards will help you to come to terms with your grief and calamity. To help you understand what really is the Jannah which you are being promised, read an authentic book or listen to a lecture of a reliable scholar regarding the bounties which Allah ﷻ has prepared for us in Jannah.

Imam Ghazaali ؒ has written the following: "Be pleased with Allah's ﷻ decision, even if one feels difficulty, and dislikes it naturally. However since his intellect informs him of a great result i.e. the 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?

In short, whoever believes from the bottom of his heart that he will receive such a great reward from Allah ﷻ for every difficulty he bore; that this

difficulty will bear no comparison to the reward, will find himself happy and pleased even in difficulties.[16]

11. Take inspiration from the lives of the Ambiyaa, Ulama and the pious

Read and study the incidents of great people who underwent far greater tests than ours, yet remained patient and grateful. It will help greatly to motivate you and inspire you. Some such incidents will be quoted later on in this book Insha-Allah.

12. Use the Pain to Make Dua

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 Allah ﷻ is closer to you than the veins in your neck. When you feel alone, remember that Allah ﷻ is with you. You may feel that no one knows the extent of the pain you are experiencing and the sadness you are feeling. Remember that Allah ﷻ knows of your pain, grief and sadness more than we know of 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 relate, pour our hearts 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 Allah ﷻ and begging Him for help and assistance.

Sorrows and grief inculcate feelings of weakness and humility in the heart, and cause one to cry and weep. At such times, Allah's ﷻ special communion and togetherness is experienced. Make the most out of that, cry your heart out to Allah ﷻ and beg Allah ﷻ for your needs, as it is certainly a great opportunity of acceptance. You will notice His special help and assistance

16 Al-Arbaeen, Tablighud-Deen

descending upon you. Allah ﷻ declares in the Noble Qur'an: Make dua to me, I will respond." (Surah Mu'min, v60)

All Allah ﷻ wants from us is to humbly turn towards Him in prayer and dua. Picture that fact that Allah ﷻ loves it when His servant is in desperate need, crying to Him for help. Allah ﷻ tends to those who cry and sob to Him immediately, just as a mother tends to her baby promptly when it is crying.

13. Seek the help of Allah ﷻ through Salaah

Allah ﷻ states in the Qur'an: "Seek help (from Allah) through sabr and salaah. Verily salaah is difficult, except upon the humble ones." (Surah Baqarah v.45)

Whenever your chest feels heavy and tight due to your grief, perform salaah. After completing it, you will suddenly feel lighter and relieved? This is a side effect of the power of prayer. This was the method of our pious predecessors.

Humaid ibn Abdir-Rahman ibn Auf narrates regarding his mother, Ummu Kulthum ibn Uqbah ؓ, who was one of the early immigrants (from Makkah to Madinah): (My father) Abdur-Rahman ibn Auf ؓ fell unconscious. The people thought that he had passed away. His wife (my mother), Ummu Kulthum ؓ, immediately set off to the masjid to seek the help of Allah ﷻ, as she was commanded to do so through sabr and salaah... (Musannaf Abdir-Razzaaq, Shu'abul Imaan no.9235)

Abdullah ibn Abbaas ؓ was informed of the demise of his brother Qutham, whilst he was on a journey. He recited the duaa 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)

When Ubaadah ibnus Saamit ﷺ was on the verge of death, he said to those around him, "As for what I require (from you), then remember my final advices; I warn every person from amongst you to not cry. When my soul is extracted, make wudhu, and perform it properly. Then every one of you should enter the masjid and perform salaah. Then ask Allah to forgive Ubaadah and yourself. This is because Allah ﷻ said, "And seek help (from Allah ﷻ) through sabr and salaah."..." (Shu'abul Imaan no.9234)

14. Seek solace from the Qur'an and in zikr

Make the recital of Qur'an and the remembrance of Allah ﷻ a fort that you retreat to. Every believer will testify to the paramount importance of this in combating anxiety.

The Noble Qur'an is a guidebook of life for all Muslims. Within its pages are countless verses that speak to the human heart. There is no better time to connect with the Qur'an than during times of anxiety, stress and grief. You will find comfort as you read each page. If you are able to ponder over its verses, or read the Qur'an in Arabic with the translation and explanation at the same time, this will provide answers to your questions, while deepening your understanding of Allah Almighty's Final Revelation to mankind.

Further, make an effort to present yourself in the gatherings of ilm and zikr - knowledge and remembrance of Allah ﷻ. When we feel down, we have a tendency to isolate ourselves from the people and places of goodness, which only ends up widening our injuries. The tranquillity (sakeenah) that you complain of having lost is found in the Masjid, gatherings of Qur'an recital or explanation, gatherings of zikr or in gatherings of the pious and learned.

15. Ponder over what your loved one is hopefully enjoying in the Aakhirah.

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ explained: Allah says in the Qur'aan: Whatever is with you will be exhausted and whatever is with Allah will remain. (Surah Nahl) This verse contains the cure for grief...Understand that when a person dies, he also becomes included in that which is by Allah ﷻ. Originally he was classified under – whatever is with you. Now he has become immortal, for there is no death after death. After death, he has entered a better life. The first life was temporal and the second life is eternal. We should be more pleased with our loved one being with Allah ﷻ (after death) than being with us. A Bedouin understood this well and consoled Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abbaas ﷺ on the demise of his father Sayyidina Abbaas ﷺ with the following words: "O son of Abbaas! For making sabr on the loss of the temporal, you have received eternal reward. Abbaas was mortal and now has become immortal (he has entered into a superior realm). When neither you nor he has been harmed, then why do you grieve?"

Generally, people think that when a person dies and he is placed in the Qabr (grave), he remains alone in that fearful place and that life there is 'lifeless'. Friends! This is not so! There is great comfort for a Muslim there.

It is mentioned in the Hadith Sharif that the Arwaah (souls) come to meet and welcome him (the newly deceased). Also, relatives and family who passed away before him come to meet him. They ask him questions regarding their relatives (who they think are still living). If this newly deceased answers that so and so has already passed away, they express their grief and say that that person has entered Jahannam, otherwise he would have definitely met us. The Arwaah become saddened at that person's entry into Jahannam. Anyway, the Arwaah meet each other and become happy. People think that, after death, one will just lie lifeless and useless! Laa Haula wa Laa Quwwata illaa Billaah! Listen! The Qabr is not merely that hole. The hole is the external and visible form. In reality, the

Qabr is the name of Aalamul Barzakh – the realm of Barzakh. There, they meet each other and it is a meeting of the pure.

People get separated in the world. A worker obtains leave and returns home to stay with his family. On completion of his leave he returns to his place of employment and gets separated again. On the other hand, in the Aalamul Barzakh, the togetherness and companionship doesn't come to an end. There is comfort upon comfort there. The problem arises due to people being unaware of the reality of death, resulting in an unwarranted fear, whereas Maut (death) is a bridge by which one meets the Beloved i.e. Allah ﷻ! What can be better than meeting Allah ﷻ? For this very reason do the Ahlullah (friends of Allah) long for death. A Hadith says: "Death is a gift unto a believer."

This world compared to the Aakhirah is like the womb of the mother. For as long as the baby remains in the womb, it considers the womb to be everything. Even if the baby is told to leave the narrow confines of the womb and enter the spacious world, it will not believe and will still consider the womb to be everything. Eventually, when the baby does emerge from the womb, it now sees the world and realizes that the womb is insignificant compared to the world. If the baby is told to re-enter the womb it will refuse and never accept to go back. In the same way, this world compared to the Aakhirah is absolutely narrow and confined. When a person departs from this world, he or she will express Shukr (gratitude) and never wish to return. When the time draws near to meet Allah ﷻ (the time of death), the bounties of the hereafter are revealed to the dying person. If, at that time, the dying person is offered a life prolonging substance and is told that if you consume this, you will live longer, he will angrily reject it and will wish that he dies immediately.

There was a foreign student who was affected by the plague. To pacify him, people would tell him not to worry and grieve, for he will be cured. He

would say in reply: "Don't say that, for now I desire to meet Allah ﷻ. At this very moment, I am receiving the following glad tidings from Allah ﷻ: "On them, angels will descend (at the time of death), (saying): Do not fear, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Jannah, which you have been promised." (Surah Fussilat)

Another example is when a ruler sends a proposal of ambassadorship to someone. When this person departs from his home his family will be grieved by his separation, but he himself will be happy, eager and excited. Even if the ruler tells him that he may delay his departure by a few days, he will not be happy and will wish to depart immediately. In the same manner, a person is not only informed of the bounties of the hereafter (at the time of death), but also sees it. He will never be pleased to remain in this world even if he is told to do so.

Friends! Desire that which is by Allah! It is because of this desire that the Ahlullah always remain in high spirits, they constantly desire the various boons of the Aakhirah. They are never grieved. We should also adopt this attitude and condition. Instead of grief we should experience the desire for death. An easy way to develop this desire is to ponder over these points I have mentioned. Insha Allah it will be a cure for grief and simultaneously the desire for the Aakhirah will be developed.

So, in the verse, Allah ﷻ has given us this cure. SubhaanAllah! What an amazing cure! Meditate frequently that the pleasures and comforts of the Aakhirah are far more superior and much more than worldly comforts. Remember also that the deceased have reached Allah ﷻ. Meditate that it is better for the deceased to stay with Allah ﷻ than to stay with us, for Allah ﷻ loves him more than we can ever love him. It is mentioned in a Hadith that the love of Allah ﷻ for His servant is much more than the combined love and affection expressed by animals and mothers towards their offspring.

Although there is a possibility of the deceased receiving punishment in the Aakhirah, why should we think ill of our deceased and believe that they are receiving the punishment meted out to sinners? In accordance with this Hadith: "My mercy has overtaken my wrath", think well of the deceased. For him (the deceased) to receive this mercy make Du'aa for him and also Isaaluth Thawaab (by giving charity, making Tilaawat, etc.) and sending the Thawaab to him. This is more beneficial to the deceased than merely expressing our grief and sadness.[17]

Baraa ibn 'Aazib ﷺ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "When a Mu-min is about to leave this world and approach the hereafter, Malaa'ikah (angels) from the sky come to him, whose faces are white and shine like the sun. They have with them kafan (shrouds) of Jannah (paradise) and fragrance of Jannah. They seat themselves around him as far as the eye can see. Then Malakul Maut (the angel of death) comes and sits at his head side and says, "O pure soul, emerge to the forgiveness and pleasure of Allah." (In this message, he conveys glad tidings of removal of punishment and of perfect rewards.) It (the soul) comes out (with ease) like water drops flow out of a water bag (i.e. very easily, even though it might seem to be the contrary. The body may be in difficulty, but the soul comes out easily.). He (the angel of death) takes it, but the other angels do not leave it in his hand for an instant (out of respect for him or due to desire for the soul). They take it quickly and put it in that shroud and that perfume. A fragrance similar to the sweetest musk found on the surface of the earth (from its inception till the termination of the world) emerges from it (the soul)."

They go up with it. Whichever group of Malaa'ikah they pass, they (those Malaa'ikah) enquire, "Who is this good and pleasant soul." They reply, "So-and-so, son of so-and-so", and they mention him with the best names (and qualities) which the inhabitants of the earth had referred to him with in

17 Irshaadaat Hazrat Thanwi – translated by Ml Yusuf Laher

the world. (With such honour,) They take him to the lowest heaven (samaa-ud dunyaa), and request for its door to be opened for it. The door is opened for them and (from then on) at every heaven, its chief angels lead it to the next heaven and so on until the seventh heaven is reached (i.e. the end of the seventh heaven, close to the Arsh which is referred to as Sidratul-Muntaha). Allah ﷻ commands, "Record his name in the register of the Illiyeen (souls of Jannah), and return him to the earth (for questioning in the grave), since I have created mankind from it and I shall return them to it and I shall raise them again from it."

His soul is restored to his body. Two angels come to him, make him sit up and ask him, 'Who is your Sustainer?' He answers, 'My Sustainer is Allah.' They ask, 'What is your deen (religion)?' He answers, 'My religion is Islam.' They ask, 'Who is this man who was been sent to you?' He answers, 'He is the messenger of Allah (Muhammad ﷺ)!' They ask him, 'How did you know?' He replies, 'I read the Book of Allah, believed in it and accepted it as the truth (in my heart).' A caller (from Allah ﷻ) will then call out from the heavens, "My slave has spoken the truth. Spread out for him bedding from Jannah, clothe him with the clothing of Jannah and open a door for him into Jannah."

Its breeze and sweet fragrance blows towards him. His grave is widened for him as far as his eye can see. Then, a well-dressed person with a beautiful face and a sweet smelling fragrance will come and say to him, "Enjoy a life which will forever please you (that which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard and which has not crossed the mind of any person). This is the day that you had been promised." He will ask, "Who are you? Your face seems to be a face which conveys only goodness." The person will say to him, "I am your good deeds."

He (the deceased person) will then repeat, "O Rabb, let Qiyaamah (the day of reckoning) come (quickly), O Rabb, let Qiyaamah (the day of reckoning)

come (quickly), so that I may return to my family and possessions (which will be attained in the hereafter).""[18]

From various Ahaadith, we learn that the deceased ones who were righteous in this world live a contented and luxurious life after death till the day of Qiyaamah. The dead people do not just lie helplessly in their graves, as is commonly understood. Rather, they enjoy a better life and superior comforts and luxuries compared to those who are still in this world. Only a few enjoyments that are found in this world will not be available there, like marriage. The following is a summary of the blessings they will be bestowed with:

1. Safety from trials and tribulations, as well as from calamities and losses.
2. A spacious luxurious home. It will be well-ventilated and cool, enjoying a breeze from Jannah.
3. High quality furnishing and decor.
4. High quality clothing and apparel.
5. Protection by true friends.
6. Enjoying the acceptance and love of The King, who is Most Kind and Merciful.
7. Company of companions like the Qur'an, salaah and good deeds who give comfort and will not allow one to be lonely.
8. Darkness of the grave will be lit up with bright light.
9. The chance to visit and meet relatives and friends.
10. Abundance of food and drink in Jannah, which they will visit in the stomachs of green birds.
11. Gardens for recreation
12. Seeing one's abode in Jannah with one's own eyes and eagerly anticipating Qiyaamah.

Readers are requested to study Desire for the Aakhirah by Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ for more details. A summary of the enjoyments which a

18 Musnad Ahmed, Mishkat no.1630

believer will experience immediately after death is found on page in this kitab.

Sabr (Patience) - the exam of Allah's lovers:

A test is given upon a claim. When a person claims to have completed a course, he is tested. When a person claims to have completed the medicine course, he will be tested for competency. Likewise, we claim to be believers in Allah ﷻ, lovers of Allah ﷻ and worshippers of Allah ﷻ. Hence, our claim cannot go without a test.

Allah ﷻ says: "*Do people think that they will be left (at ease), saying, 'We believe', and will not be put to any test?" (Surah Ankaboot v.2)*

When we undergo any hardship, difficulty or test, especially the loss of someone beloved to us, Allah ﷻ instructs us to adopt sabr (patience). This is the greatest and most proven prescription to lessen and lighten our grief. It is a heavenly prescription, and is the only means of drawing Allah's ﷻ help, assistance and aid. Rasulullah ﷺ said, "No person has been bestowed with a gift that is better and more far-reaching (comprehensive) than patience." (Bukhari, Muslim)

What is sabr?

Habbaan ibn Abi Habalah ﷺ (a Tabi'i) narrates: Rasulullah ﷺ was asked to explain 'sabr jameel' - 'beautiful patience'. He ﷺ said, "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."[19]

Mujaahid ﷺ explains sabr jameel (beautiful sabr) to mean 'that sabr which has no intolerance and anxiety (jaza')'.[20]

19 Tafsir Tabari no.18872, Ad-Durrul Manthur, Tafsir Ibn Kathir
صبر لا شكوى فيه. قال: من بثّ فلم يصبر

20 Tafsir Tabari no.18873, Ad-Durrul Manthur, Tafsir Ibn Kathir)
ليس فيه جزع.

Sufyan Thawri ﷺ quoted the following from one of his companions: "It was said (by our predecessors): Three qualities constitute sabr (patience); Do not discuss your misfortune, do not discuss your pain, and do not praise yourself."[21]

However, if one complains to Allah ﷻ 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 ﷺ. [22]

How to acquire sabr and make the most out of our test

1. Ihtisaab - Ponder over the great rewards of sabr

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

Ibn Juzayy ﷺ states: **A point of benefit**: Patience has been mentioned in the Qur'an in more than seventy places, because of its tremendous 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. Allah ﷻ states, **"The patient shall be granted their reward without measure."**

For the one who exercises sabr (patience), Allah ﷻ has promised the following in the Qur'an:

a. **Allah ﷻ loves you**. (Surah Aal-Imraan v.146) Allah ﷻ loves sabr (patience) and those who make sabr. Therefore He wants to make you His be-

21 Tafsir Abdir-Razzaaq San'ani no.1243, Tafsir Tabari no.18873, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Hilyatul-Awliya, vol. 6 pg. 389
عبد الرزاق قال ، أخبرنا الثوري ، عن بعض أصحابه قال: يقال: ثلاث من الصبر: أن لا تحدث بوجعك ، ولا بمصيبتك ، ولا تزكي نفسك

٢٢ وأخرج ابن أبي حاتم عن الحسن رضي الله عنه قال : الصبر الجميل الذي ليس فيه شكوى إلا إلى الله (الدر المنثوراً روح المعاني)

loved.

b. **Allah ﷻ is with you** (and He will therefore help and assist you). (Surah Baqarah v.153, v.249, Surah Anfaal v.46,66)

c. **Allah ﷻ will guide your heart to yaqeen** (conviction that the only doer is Allah ﷻ). Allah ﷻ states: No difficulty afflicts one except by the permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah, He will guide his heart." (Surah Taghaabun v.11)

Elaborating on this, 'Alqama ؒ said, "This aayah is in reference to a person who is struck with a calamity, but realises that it is from Allah and so he surrenders to it and is pleased." (Tafseer At-Tabari)

d. **You will acquire the special mercies of Allah ﷻ** (special exclusive mercies which He will shower down upon you in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty you experience and which is known to none other but yourself) **and the general mercies of Allah ﷻ** (His general mercies which is granted to all the saabireen-patient ones and to his beloved servants) **and hidaayah** (which is the object of our lives- to walk the straight path till we reach our destination i.e. Allah's ﷻ love, recognition, ma'iyyah and His pleasure). (Surah Baqarah v.157)

e. **You will have no reckoning.** Allah ﷻ states: The patient ones will be granted their rewards without having to undergo any reckoning.[23] (Surah Zumar v.10)

For those who exercise patience, the following rewards have been promised by Rasulullah ﷺ:

a. **You will be the envy of all on the day of Qiyaamah and will undergo no reckoning**: Rasulullah ﷺ 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

23 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)'.

his reckoning will take place. Then, those who were afflicted with great difficulties in this world will be brought front. No scales will be erected for them, nor will their records of deeds be opened. Rewards 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, on seeing the great rewards set aside for these difficulties." (Tabaraani in Al-Mu'jamul Kabir)

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 we will see the reward of being patient through great tests and the reward of turning towards Allah ﷻ in humility, we would want Allah ﷻ to have tested us even more so that we could have reaped the rewards of being patient and turning towards Allah ﷻ. It is only on the day of Qiyaamah that we will truly realise how much we have missed out on.

b. **You are a true believer**: Once, Rasulullah ﷺ asked a group of Sahaabah, "Who are you?" They replied that they were believers. Rasulullah 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." Rasulullah ﷺ remarked, "You are (true) believers, by the Lord of the Ka'bah." (Al-Mu'jamul-Awsat)

Ali ؓ 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)." (Kanzul Ummaal)

c. Your sins will be wiped away: Rasulullah 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 Allah (on the day of Qiyaamah) with no sin on themselves." (Tirmizi)

Allah ﷻ is indeed the Most Wise. He knows what type of trials He puts us

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

Ibn Qudaama ﷺ 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. This is not because it does not hurt, but because of the outcome which he aspires for, even if the hits become painful." (Minhaajul-Qaasideen)

d. **Your reward is Jannah**: The reward for patience is Jannah. Rasulullah ﷺ said, "The reward for sabr is Jannah." (Sahih Ibn Khuzaimah no.1887)
Abu Hurairah ﷺ reports that Nabi ﷺ said: Allah ﷻ says: "When I take away a beloved (be it a child, parent, brother, spouse or any person that is beloved) of My believing servant, and he remains **patient** with a strong expectation of reward, then there is no reward for him except Paradise." (Sahih Bukhari no. 6424)

e. **Allah ﷻ wants to raise you to a high and lofty position in Aakhirah**, which you cannot reach through your good deeds: Muhammad ibn Khalid as-Sulami narrated from his father (Khalid) from his grandfather (Lajlaaj

ﷺ) that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "If a rank (in Jannah) is decreed by Allah for his slave which he fails to attain through his deeds, then Allah 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 Allah." (Ahmad, Abu Daud)

Therefore, patience in the face of trial enables one to attain the station that deeds cannot take one to.

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 Allah ﷻ or go away from Him. Therefore we should realise that being tested with trials and tests will NEVER go unrewarded. Allah ﷻ 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 Allah ﷻ.

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? But patience is what Allah requires from us.

The conditions to earn great rewards at the loss of our beloveds

1. Sabr and hoping for reward, as is mentioned in a Hadith quoted above.
2. One should be patient and not lose control of oneself from the very onset and beginning of this tragedy, when one is normally jolted and shocked at the sudden news of the demise of one's beloved. One should not wail, scream, become hysterical and hit oneself, nor should one tear one's

clothes or shave one's hair in grief.

Anas ﷺ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ passed by a woman who was crying at a grave (over the loss of her baby child). He ﷺ said, "Abstain from disobeying Allah and be patient." She said, "Leave me alone. You have not been afflicted by a calamity like mine." She did not recognize Rasulullah ﷺ. When someone informed her: "That was Nabi ﷺ", she came to the door of Nabi ﷺ and found no guards there. She then said to him: "I did not recognize you." He said: "True patience is to be patient at the sudden onset of a calamity." (Bukhari no.1223, Muslim no.2179)

Imam Qurtubi ﷺ says that this woman was probably crying aloud and wailing, hence Rasulullah ﷺ commanded her to abstain from disobeying Allah ﷻ, and to be patient so that she could be rewarded.

The 'onset of the calamity' refers to the period immediately after a person is afflicted with a difficulty. If one is patient at this time, one will be abundantly rewarded for one's patience and will be written amongst the Saabireen (The Patient Ones). The patience that is most praiseworthy is the one shown at the onset of sudden calamity.

May Allah ﷻ make us patient through adversity, trials and hardships. Ameen.

Is it a problem to cry?

The perfect example of Rasulullah ﷺ

a. Usaamah ﷺ, the son of Zayd ibn Haarithah ﷺ who was the beloved and the son of the beloved of Rasulullah ﷺ narrates: The daughter of Rasulullah ﷺ [Zaynab ﷺ] sent a message to him saying: "My child is on the verge of death. Please come." He ﷺ sent a message conveying his greetings and said: "Whatever Allah takes belongs to Him, and whatever he grants belongs to Him, and there is an appointed time chosen by Him for everything;

therefore exercise patience and hope for reward (over your difficulty)." She then sent a message, imploring him ﷺ by oath that he must come to her. Rasulullah ﷺ left with Sa'd ibn Ubaadah ؓ, Mu'aaz ibn Jabal ؓ, Ubayy ibn Ka'b ؓ, Zayd ibn Thaabit ؓ and other Companions ؓ. [On reaching there] the child was given to Rasulullah ﷺ. He placed the child in his lap. The child was struggling for its life. The eyes of Rasulullah ﷺ began flowing with tears. Sa'd ؓ asked, "What is this, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "This is mercy which Allah places in the hearts of His servants." Another narration states: "This is mercy which Allah places in whichever of His servants He wills. Allah only shows mercy to those servants of His who are themselves merciful."[24]

According to many narrations, this child was Umaamah ؓ, the granddaughter of Rasulullah ﷺ. She was on the verge of death. However, she did not pass away at this occasion. She later even married Sayyiduna Ali ؓ after Sayyidah Faatimah ؓ passed away and she outlived him as well. Haafiz Ibn Hajar ؒ has written: It seems as if Allah ﷻ honoured His Nabi ﷺ on account of his submission to the will of Allah and on account of the patience of his daughter Zaynab ؓ by curing his granddaughter immediately. She was freed from the throes of death and she lived for a long time thereafter. This incident should actually be recorded as one of the proofs and miracles of Nubuwwah.[25]

Crying is referred to here as a mercy of Allah ﷻ which Allah ﷻ places in our hearts. One is encouraged to have mercy and affection for the creation of Allah ﷻ. Therefore this Hadith informs us that those who cry as a result of this mercy and affection will receive the mercy of Allah ﷻ.

b. Ibn Umar ؓ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ went to visit Sa'd ibn Ubaadah ؓ. Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Auf ؓ, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas ؓ and 'Abdullah ibn

24 Bukhari: 1224, 5331, 6279, 6942, 7010, Muslim: 2174

25 Fathul Baari v.3 pg.157

Mas'ud ﷺ accompanied him. Rasulullah ﷺ began crying (on seeing his condition). When the people saw Rasulullah ﷺ crying, they also began crying. He ﷺ said: "Are you listening? Allah ﷻ does not punish for tears shed by the eyes, nor for the grief which afflicts the heart. However, He punishes or shows mercy on account of this," and he ﷺ pointed to his tongue.[26]

c. Ibrahim ﷺ was the son of Rasulullah ﷺ from his concubine Maariyah Qibtiyyah ﷺ. When he was approximately 18 months old, he fell very sick. Rasulullah ﷺ visited him when he was in this condition. Anas ﷺ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ visited his son Ibrahim ﷺ while he was parting with his soul. On seeing this, the eyes of Rasulullah ﷺ began flowing with tears. Abdur-Rahman ibn Auf ﷺ asked him: "Even you (are crying), o Messenger of Allah?!" He ﷺ replied, "O Ibn Auf! These tears are out of compassion." And he began crying again. He ﷺ then said, "The eyes shed tears and the heart grieves. But we will only say that which pleases our Sustainer. O Ibrahim! We are most certainly grieved at your separation."[27]

The example of the great Taabi'i Hasan Basri ﷺ

Mubaarak ibn Fudaalah ﷺ said: I was present with Hasan Basri ﷺ in the Jaami' Masjid of Basra. A man from Persia entered and said, "I have only come here after Sa'eed, the brother of Hasan, passed away." We said, "Don't tell Hasan now." It seems as if we had said the opposite (for the man did exactly the opposite of what we told him to do). He did not even let Hasan reach home before he broke the news to him. Hasan could not control himself, so he placed his hand on a wall (to support himself and ensure that he does not fall). When we entered his house a while later, he had not yet recovered from the shock and was still crying. With us was Bakr ibn Abdillah Muzani. He said, "O Abu Sa'eed (referring to Hasan), you know this city and the love that people here have for you. Whatever they see

26 Bukhari: 1242, Muslim: 2176

27 Bukhari: 1241. Muslim:6167

you doing today, they will take back to their families and their tribes (and they will do the same when afflicted by any calamity, on the basis that they had seen Hasan doing so)." Hasan ﷺ spoke and said, "All praise is due to Allah who has placed this compassion in the hearts of the believers. It is through this that some show compassion for others. The eyes tear and the heart grieves, but this is not impatience. Impatience is demonstrated by (complaining with) the tongue and (striking the body with) the hands. All praise is due to Allah Who did not consider the grief of Ya'qub عليه السلام as a sin, for Allah has said: "and his eyes turned blind out of grief while he was suppressing (his emotions and sadness)." (Surah Yusuf v.84) May Allah have mercy on Sa'eed, forgive his sins and include him amongst the inhabitants of Jannah, in fulfillment of a true promise which was made to them (by Allah)..."[28]

It is a common belief that it is not acceptable to outwardly express grief. Some may even have been advised against crying or showing their emotion, preventing you from sharing your heartbreak with others. Allah ﷻ created us with feelings and emotions. It is only human to feel a variety of difficult emotions; grief, despair, sadness, hopelessness, anger. Try to not feel guilty about how you are feeling, you cannot control how you feel. Our beautiful Deen (religion/faith) does not require that. **We may not be able to control how we feel, but we can try to control what we say and how we act.** Our Deen requires us to refrain from saying or doing anything displeasing to Allah ﷻ, and to put our faith and trust in Him. We are, however, allowed to be human and to feel emotion. Crying over the loss of a close family member is therefore totally permitted in Islam. Actually, it is encouraged, as can be seen from the above Ahaadith and as is borne out by the action of Rasulullah ﷺ. It is only natural for tears to flow from the eyes and for the heart to grieve. Tears are a mercy from Allah ﷻ. However, such crying is prohibited wherein a person complains against the decision of Allah ﷻ and utters statements of ingratitude and impatience. Similarly,

28 Shu'abul Imaan no.9687

wailing, screaming, slapping the face and pulling the hair are all practices which are prohibited.

But what if I can't cry?

Cry if you need to. Do not cry if you cannot. But do not feel guilty about your tears either way. It is not wrong to cry, nor is it a sign of being impatient or not accepting the decision of Allah ﷻ. But what if you cannot bring yourself to cry?

One parent who lost her child writes: If you find you cannot cry, don't be harsh on yourself. The loss of a child is a massive shock to your physical, emotional and psychological self. It rips your sense of security into pieces and shakes your worldview like nothing else can. I found I could not cry for weeks after my daughter passed away. My husband could not cry for months after. Our minds could not comprehend what had happened. We were in shock for a very long time. We functioned to get through our days but we felt frozen. We thought something was wrong with us because we could not cry. We wondered what kind of parents could not cry for their daughter. But we understand now that even that reaction was a mercy from Allah ﷻ. It was our body and mind's self defence mechanism, to allow us to process what had happened, to allow the tears to come in their own time. Sometimes it can take days, weeks, months and even years for tears to come. Many times, they will come at unexpected times or places. Be kind to yourself. If you cannot cry right now, trust that there is Allah's ﷻ wisdom in that as well.

Is it a form of impatience and complaint to express my feelings and talk to others about my pain?

Telling another person about the situation, whether to ask for help and advice, to find a way to relieve the problem, or to just get it off your chest

and lighten your grief, does not mean that you do not have patience.[29]

What is important, however is that one should never use such words or expressions which entail objections or complaints against Allah's ﷻ decision. Beware of negative and sceptical statements which Shaytan may put in your mind, and be cautious to not say anything which may displease Allah ﷻ. One's speech should instead be filled with words of Imaan, resigning oneself to Taqdir, praising Allah ﷻ and reminders of the reward which is in store for the patient.

Maulana Hakeem Muahmmad Akhtar ؒ, a great scholar and sufi of the last century, wrote in response to a letter: There is a great difference between objecting (to Allah's ﷻ decision) and having thoughts (wasaawis) which contain such objections... Expressing your grief and worries to sympathisers and well-wishers, for the purpose of lightening and relieving your heart, is not included in complaining (about Allah's ﷻ decision). What is important is to abstain from objecting against Allah ﷻ and to remain pleased with His decree.[30]

Abdur-Rahman at-Tabeeb narrates: Ahmad ibn Hambal ؒ and Bishr ibnul Haarith (al-Haafi) ؒ were once both sick. Whenever I visited Bishr ؒ, I would ask him "How are you feeling?" He would praise Allah and then inform me of his condition, saying, "I praise Allah. I am feeling this pain or that pain." Whenever I visited Ahmad ؒ, I would ask him "How are you feeling, o Abu Abdillah?" He would say, "In a good condition." One day, I said to him, "Your brother Bishr is also sick. Whenever I ask him about his condition, he first praises Allah and then informs me of the details of his sickness." Ahmad ؒ said, "Ask him from who he learnt this." I said, "I feel too overawed to ask him." He said, "Tell him that his brother Abu Abdillah (Ahmad) is asking from who he learnt this." When I visited him,

29 See 'Uddat al-Saabireen by Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim, 323

30 Tarbiyat Aashiqaan-e-Khuda v.2 pg.359

I informed him of what Ahmad ﷺ had said. He said, "Abu Abdillah (Imam Ahmad) wants everything with its isnaad (chain of narration). Ibn Awn ﷺ narrated to me that (Muhammad) Ibn Sirin ﷺ said, "When a servant praises Allah before complaining (i.e. expressing his sorrow or heartache), it is not a complaint." I only tell you of the pain I am feeling to explain Allah's qudrah (power and control) over me." I left his house and went straight to Abu Abdillah (Imam Ahmad) ﷺ. I informed him of the reply. After that, whenever I visited him, he would say, "I praise Allah" and he would then mention the pain he was experiencing.[31]

2. The great practice of istirjaa' - 'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'

Allah ﷻ has mentioned in the Qur'an that He will definitely test us with some loss in our wealth, lives, etc. However, Allah ﷻ then gives glad tidings to those of us who are patient. In difficulty we are encouraged to recite:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we will return.

By reciting this whenever the sorrow is felt, Allah ﷻ promises to send down upon you three great gifts: salawaat, rahmah and hidaayah.

Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ delivered an amazing lecture on the abovementioned verse of Surah Baqarah, shortly after the demise of his wife. This lecture was full of pearls, gems of inspiration and amazing aspects of ma'rifah (recognition of Allah ﷻ). Extracts of that lecture are presented hereunder:

The Object of Testing the Lovers of Allah ﷻ

By means of tests, Allah ﷻ wishes to record in history the loyalty of His lovers to show the rest of humanity what patience, determination

31 Manaaqib al Imaam Ahmad ibn Hambal by Ibnul Jawzi pg.245

and steadfastness means. He is, through such servants of His, teaching mankind the lessons of love and He is establishing their worthiness. He is revealing to us the true meaning of the concepts of sabr (patience). These servants not only display a forced acceptance of a situation which they cannot change, but rather happily and totally submit to His decree in every difficulty which He puts them through. Allah ﷻ does not need to test His servants to determine their capabilities, as He is fully aware of our every state and our innermost secrets. (He tests them to prove their love to Him and to reward them.)

The Examination Paper Set By Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ (١٥٥) الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ (١٥٦) أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ (١٥٧)

"Without doubt, most assuredly, will We test you with a bit of fear, hunger, loss in wealth, lives, and the fruits (of your efforts). And give glad tidings to those who are patient. Those who say, when an affliction afflicts them: Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we will return. They are those upon whom descend salawaat - the special mercies of Allah (special exclusive mercies which He will shower down upon them in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty they experience and which is known to none other but themselves) and rahmah - the general mercies of Allah (His general mercies which is granted to all the saabireen-patient ones and to his beloved servants). And they are the rightly guided ones (who walk the straight path of hidaayah till they reach their destination i.e. Allah's love, recognition, ma'iyyah and His pleasure). (Surah Baqarah v.155-157)

The exam will be made easy by the one who sets it

'With a bit of' - Through the word 'shay', its tanween (for taqleel) and the

baa prefixed to it', Allah ﷻ is informing us that there is no need to be anxious and to be terrified, for the test will be extremely easy. Allah ﷻ will only test us with 'a bit'.

The exam questions were leaked to allow us to prepare

Not only did Allah ﷻ make the test easy, but He went a step further and handed over to us the imminent paper on which one and all will be tested. This is because the Mercy of Allah ﷻ could not tolerate that His beloved servants should be besides themselves with worry. The above is explained by Allamah Aalusi ؒ in Ruhul Ma'aani.

A sudden calamity is far more difficult to bear than one which is expected. If one has prior knowledge of an impending disaster or a forthcoming calamity, one has the opportunity of preparing for it. Patience is greatly facilitated. Therefore, Allah ﷻ has, in advance, informed us that the following difficulties and the following trials will approach us. The test, due to us being informed of it from before, has been greatly simplified. Take the case of one's near and dear ones who are in a state of prolonged illness. The family members are gradually being prepared for the inevitable. On witnessing the lengthy period during which they become bedridden, during which they have no work but to urinate and defecate, eat and sleep in the same bed, the very close family members who were dreading the arrival of death now begin to beseech Allah ﷻ to be Merciful to their ill relatives and remove them from the world, so that thereby they will be saved from further suffering.

By leaking the paper, Allah ﷻ has made it evident that these exams should not be an unexpected occurrence, for you have been foretold to expect it to happen. You have already been informed that you will be tested thereby.

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)'.*

Death too is a mercy

Those that die are happy while those that survive are grieved. We should realize that this is the Divine system. If death were not to overcome us, there would be no place left on earth, let along in our homes. Suppose one has a plot measuring two hundred square meters and all one's maternal and paternal parents and grandparents are living with one, all in a state of ill health, all bedridden, what will the condition of such a home be? Will any place remain at home to accommodate them all? Our response under those circumstances would be to make dua to Allah ﷻ to lift them. From this, we learn that death too is a bounty and a mercy from Allah ﷻ.

Congratulations and Glad-tidings

'And give glad tidings to those who are patient.' If one were to congratulate a person experiencing difficulty, it will only add to his grief. But in this instance, it is none other than Allah ﷻ who is declaring, "O My beloved Muhammad, whenever anyone is afflicted by any of these forms of difficulties, give them glad tidings." To whom are glad tidings going to be given? To those who 'are patient'. From this we learn that if difficulties were bad for a believer, Allah ﷻ 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 Arhamur Raahimeen (The Most Merciful of those who show mercy), and it is being given through Rahmatul lil Aalameen (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 may undergo, it is not punishment, but rather a means of mercy. It heralds imminent great good fortune. 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 or a misfortune? In short, trials and tribulations for a believer are not bad, because in lieu of patience, Allah ﷻ is attained!

What is required from those who wish to be patient?

The people of sabr are those who recite the following: *'Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we will return'.*

The meaning of these great words

'Verily we belong to Allah and to Him we will return.'

The first part reminds us that we are, in every conceivable way, the creation, the subjects, the property and the possessions of Allah ﷻ. He ﷻ has every right to do as He pleases with His possessions. Just as it is unbecoming of one's slave to question his master as to why he has placed a certain item upstairs after it was kept downstairs for some time, it is unbecoming of us as the slaves of Allah ﷻ to question Him as to why He ﷻ has taken one of His servants from this lowly world to a higher world (i.e. the hereafter). This is condolence for one's logic.

The second sentence takes our nature into consideration. It reminds us that this separation is temporary, and that we too will soon be proceeding to the same destination as those who have passed on, where we will meet again. An example of this is of a person who has become president of a foreign country. He therefore moves there and is living in great comfort. His son is grief-stricken over the separation, but is consoled with the following words, "Don't worry. Your father is in great comfort and enjoyments. Soon you too will be called over there."

What is the difference between salawaat and rahmah which are promised to the patient ones?

'They are those upon whom descend salawaat - the special mercies of Allah ﷻ - and rahmah - the general mercies of Allah ﷻ. And they are the rightly guided ones.'

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ has explained the difference between salaawaat and rahmah in an amazing manner: Since those who adopt patience are all involved in the same action of sabr, therefore the reward

too is general. But since each individual's condition regarding the extent, the quantity and the nature of his patience varies, the resultant reward too will be specific and vary from one individual to another. Proportionate to the degree of sabr one resorts to, he will be granted **'salawaat'** - special mercies and bounties. And this descent of mercy will be directly from Allah ﷻ, not through the agency of the Angels. Therefore "From your Rabb" has been mentioned in the verse. Consider the case of receiving a gift directly from a friend, as opposed to receiving it through a third party. Can the two forms of receiving be equal? Thus, by informing us that it is directly from Him, Allah ﷻ has intensified the pleasure of the recipient and sweetened the share of sabr in one's lot. Know fully well that you will receive the special and the unadulterated mercy of your Lord directly from Him, along with the **'rahmah'** - general mercy that will come to you through the agency of the Angels.

A beautiful example to illustrate the meaning of this dua

Hakeemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ had given a beautiful example to facilitate our understanding of the above concept. (The example hereunder is adapted by the compiler from his explanation):[32] A person has a house with two floors. On the lower floor, there are a few parrots that are kept together in a cage. After two years, the owner instructs his servant to remove one parrot from the bottom floor and keep it on the upper floor. One parrot complains and questions the master, "Why are you placing my companion on the upper floor? We have been in each other's company for the past two years." The master replies, "What right do you have to question my command and ask 'why'?' The house is mine, the floors are mine and the parrots are mine. I am in full control

32 The example given by Maulana was originally that of a person who had two shelves, one above the other. Some glasses which were kept in the lower shelf are moved by the owner to the upper shelf. The servant questions the master regarding that... This useless compiler had adapted the above example to one of parrots, just to simplify the concept to the reader. This example was quoted by Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ in his lecture entitled 'Sabr aur Maqaame Siddiqeen'.

of my possessions and have the choice of dealing with my possessions as I please." The parrot then says, "Fine, I have understood and comply with your command. But, we who are left on the lower floor are grieved by the separation of that parrot. Yes, you are our owner, and you have the complete choice of dealing with your possessions as you deem fit, but what is the remedy to cure this unendurable grief with which the other parrots are undergoing?" To this question, the master replies, "Dear parrot, none of the parrots will remain on the bottom floor forever. They will, one after the other, be transferred to the upper floor at my discretion." This world and the hereafter are like the two floors of Allah ﷻ's house. The one floor is below the heavens and is termed Dunya, while the other is above the heavens and is called Aakhirah. As long as Allah ﷻ deems it fit, we will be kept on the lower floor, in the world. Then we will all finally be transferred to the upper floor, the Aakhirah.[33]

Recite this due with the heart and tongue

Recite this dua with the tongue and ponder over its meaning with the heart Allamah Aalusi ﷺ writes in Tafseer Ruhul Ma'ani, "Sabr is not the mere recitation of this dua by tongue."[34] The Sunnah of istirjaa' will truly be fulfilled when the heart accompanies the tongue in this recitation and when the realization dawns and becomes entrenched in the depths of the heart that we are the subjects, the property, the possessions of Allah ﷻ and that the Sovereign, the King has the total choice to do as He chooses with His subjects."[35]

Mulla Ali Qaari ﷺ has written: The meaning of these words must be comprehended completely and patience must be observed at the time of the test. If this is done, every difficulty will become easy. If this verse is

33 Condensed and adapted from 'Sabr aur Maqaame Siddiqeen'

٣٤ وليس الصبر بالإسترجاع باللسان بل الصبر باللسان وبالقلب بأن يخطر بباله ما خلق لأجله من معرفة الله تعالى وتكميل نفسه وأنه راجع إلى ربه وعائد إليه بالبقاء السرمدي ومرتحل عن هذه الدنيا الفانية وتارك لها على علاتها ويتذكر نعم الله تعالى عليه ليرى ما أعطاه أضعاف ما أخذ منه فيهون على نفسه ويستسلم له (روح المعاني 23/2)

35 Sabr aur Maqaame Siddiqeen

given only lip service, coupled with complaints and anxiety, then that is evil and a show that one is displeased with the decision of Allah.[36]

The value of these two sentences

1. Ibn Juraij ﷺ said, "What prevents a person from securing a guarantee from Allah of three such things, every one of them being better than the world and whatever it contains: a.) salawaat (special mercies of Allah ﷻ) b.) rahmah (the general mercies of Allah ﷻ) c.) guidance." (These are the virtues mentioned in the Qur'aan for a person who recites this duaa at the time of calamity.)[37]

2. Abu Umar ﷺ says, "It is only correct for every person afflicted with any calamity to hasten to recite this, following the Book of Allah and the sunnah of His Rasool ﷺ.[38]

3. Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ said: These two sentences are incomparable. There is nothing in the scope of the universe which can match these two words of sabr. No one can present a more precious pearl which pleases the heart, a more beneficial remedy to establish contentment and joy.[39]

4. Mansur Ali Khan ﷺ says, "I was once in the company of Aarif Billah Dr Abdul-Hayy Aarifi ﷺ. There was no one else with us. He began reading out a letter which had been sent to him. The writer was requesting some advice. It was from a young girl who had been on holiday with her father in the northern areas of Pakistan. One day, while travelling by bus, the time of Fajr entered. Her father requested the bus driver to stop for salaah, to which he agreed. Whilst disembarking from the bus, her father was run over by a speeding car from behind. The family rushed to help him. He was badly injured and passed away in front of them. They were devastated. The

36 Mirqaat vol. 4 page 84

37 Sharh of Zurqani on Al-Muwatta, 2 /109

38 Ibid

39 Sabr aur Maqaame Siddiqeen

daughter was now requesting for dua and consolation.

Dr Aarifi ﷺ looked at me and asked, "What should I write to her?" I had no clue at all. He closed his eyes for a while and contemplated for a few seconds. He then wrote, "**Inna lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon**. Recital of this dua is the soothing treatment for a bereaved heart. It is prescribed by Allah ﷻ and is an established practice of our Noble Master, Nabi Muhammad ﷺ. Recite this repeatedly, in abundance. I make dua that Allah ﷻ forgives him and grants sabr-jameel (beautiful patience) to the entire family. Aameen."[40]

The virtues of reciting 'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'

1. Abdullah ibn Abbaas ﷺ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "My ummah has been granted something which has not been granted to any other ummah; and that is to recite **'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'** at the time of calamity.[41]

2. Saeed ibn Jubair ﷺ said, "This ummah has been granted at the time of calamity such a gift which the past Ambiyaa were not granted. If the Ambiyaa were granted this, Ya'qoob ﷺ would have been granted it when he said, "O my sorrow over Yusuf." (Surah Yusuf v.84)[42]

3. Abu Sinaan said: I buried my son Sinaan. Abu Talhah Khawlani was sitting at the edge of the grave. As I climbed out, he caught hold of my hand and said, "Should I give you some glad tidings, Abu Sinaan?" I replied, "Please do." He said, "Dahhaak ﷺ narrated to me from Abu Musa Ash'ari ﷺ that Rasulullah ﷺ said: When any person's child passes away, Allah says to His angels, "Have you taken the life of my servant's child?" They reply, "Yes."

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40 Adapted from Consolement for a Grieving Heart

41 Al-Mu'jamul-Kabeer no. 12411, Majma'uz Zawaaid no. 3943
قال الهيثمى فيه محمد بن خالد الطحان وهو ضعيف

42 Shuabul-Imaan no. 9242

Allah says, "Have you taken away from him the joy of his heart (the apple of his eye)?" They reply, "Yes." Allah then asks, "What did my servant say?" They reply, "He praised you and recited **Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon** (Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him we will return)." Allah says, "Build for my servant a palace in Jannah and name that palace 'Baytul-Hamd (the palace of praise)."[43]

4. Rasulullah ﷺ said, "A calamity afflicted a person. Whenever he remembers it thereafter and recites **'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'**, Allah ﷻ will stipulate for him a reward similar to that which he received when he was afflicted."[44]

5. Abdullah ibn Abbaas ﷺ mentioned regarding the verse, "Allah ﷻ informed the believer that when he accepts the decision of Allah and recites **'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'**, then Allah ﷻ writes down for him three types of goodness: special mercy from Allah, mercy, and finding the path of guidance. And Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Whoever recites **'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'**, Allah ﷻ will remove his sins, grant him a good end result and will grant him a better replacement which will please him."[45]

6. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Maryam said that he heard his elders saying that Rasulullah ﷺ 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."[46]

7. Abdullah ibn Amr ibnul Aas ﷺ said: Whoever has four traits, Allah will

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43 Tirmizi no.1021, Ibn Hibbaan no.2948, Musnad Ahmad no.19567

44 Shuabul-Imaan no. 9246

45 Al-Mu'jamul-Kabeer no. 13027, Shuabul-Imaan no. 9240

من استرجع عند المصيبة جبر الله مصيبته وأحسن عقباه وجعل له خلفا صالحا يرضاه

46 Az-Zuhd War-Riqaaq of Ibnul Mubaarak vol. 1 page 28 no.110

build for him a magnificent palace for him in Jannah; a) His protection and support is from **'Laa ilaah illAllah'**. 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**'.[47]

Incidents of those who took solace and inspiration from these beautiful sentences

a. Abdullah ibn Abbaas ﷺ was informed of the demise of his brother Qutham, whilst he was on a journey. He recited the duaa 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 (from Allah) through patience and salaah....."[48] 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 (from Allah) through patience and salaah."[49]

b. Asma'ee ﷺ narrates: A friend and I were travelling in the desert. We lost the road. We saw a tent on the side of the road, so we approached it. We made salaam. A woman replied to our salaam. She asked who we were. We explained that we had lost the road, so we had come to them, as we were looking for some human company. She said, "Turn your faces the other way, so that I can fulfil some of the rights which are due to you (as guests and visitors)." We did so. She (came out of the tent and) laid down a carpet for us and said, "Sit here until my son returns." She would every now and again lift up the bottom edge of the tent (to peep through) and then lower it. This continued until we heard her saying, 'I ask Allah to grant barakah (blessings) in the coming of this man who is approaching us. The camel

47 Shu'abul Imaan no.9242

48 Shuabul-Imaan no. 9233

49 Shuabul-Imaan no. 9232

belongs to my son, but the rider is not my son." The rider stopped by her and said, "O Ummu Aqeel, may Allah grant you great rewards with regards to Aqeel." She exclaimed, "What! Has my son passed away?" He replied in the affirmative. She asked about the cause of his death. The man replied, "The camels crowded around him, and pushed him into the well." She said, "Please alight from the camel and fulfil the rights of these visitors (i.e. feed the guests)." She gave him a sheep, which he slaughtered and prepared. He then presented this meal to us. We ate, struck with amazement at her patience.

When we had finished our meal, she came out of the tent, with her face fully covered. She said, 'Listen! Is there any one of you who is well-versed in the book of Allah." I replied that I was. She said, "Recite to me such verses of the book of Allah by which I may find consolation." I recited, "And give glad-tidings to the patient. Those who are such that when any difficulty afflicts them, they say **'Innaa Lillahi wa Innaa Ilayi Raaji'oon'** (We belong to Allah and to Him will we return). They will receive salawaat (special exclusive mercies which Allah will shower down upon them in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty they experience and which is known to none other but themselves) and rahmah (Allah's ﷻ general mercies which are granted to his beloved servants). And they will be rightly guided (they will receive hidaayah which is the object of our lives- to walk the straight path till we reach our destination i.e. Allah's love, recognition, ma'iyyah and His pleasure)." (Surah Baqarah v.155-157) She said, "By Allah, is it like this in the book of Allah?" I replied, "By Allah, it is like this in the book of Allah." She said, Assalaamu alaikum", stood with her feet together and began performing salaah. After performing a few rak'aat, she said thrice, "Innaa Lillahi wa Innaa Ilayi Raaji'oon. I hope to receive the reward for the loss of Aqeel in the court of Allah. O Allah, I did what you instructed me to do, so do for me that which You had promised me that You will do."[50]

50 Abul-Faraj Ibnul Jawzi ﷺ has mentioned the above incident in Uyoonul Hikaayaat. Condensed from Suwar min Hayaatil Ambiyaa was Sahaabah wat Taabi'een pg.330

c. Abdullah, the son of Mutarrif, had reached a high worldly position and was finally appointed as governor over a certain area. Then, he suddenly passed away. Mutarrif ﷺ, his father, attended the janaazah wearing the finest clothing he possessed. The people commented, "Abdullah has just died and you dress in this type of clothing." He replied, "Should I be overwhelmed by this calamity, whereas Allah has promised me 3 rewards which are more beloved to me than (to own) the entire world. Allah ﷻ says: "Those who are such that when any difficulty afflicts them, they say **'Innaa Lillahi wa Innaa Ilayi Raaji'oon'** (We belong to Allah and to Him will we return). They will receive salawaat (special exclusive mercies which Allah will shower down upon them in lieu of the exclusive pain and difficulty they experience and which is known to none other but themselves) and rahmah (Allah's ﷻ general mercies which are granted to his beloved servants). And they will be rightly guided (they will receive hidaayah which is the object of our lives- to walk the straight path till we reach our destination i.e. Allah's ﷻ love, recognition, ma'iyyah and His pleasure)." (Surah Baqarah v.157) I have already recited **'Innaa Lillahi wa Innaa Ilayi Raaji'oon'** as my Allah has commanded me. Every one of these 3 rewards is more beloved to me than (to own) the entire world and whatever it contains. Any small thing for which I will be rewarded in the Aakhirah, to the extent of even a small jug of water, I wish that it be taken away from me in this world."[51]

3. Get something better in replacement, by just adding a few extra words

(Our mother) Ummu Salamah ﷺ narrates, "I heard Rasulullah ﷺ saying, "Whenever a Muslim is afflicted by some loss or calamity, and he says (the dua hereunder) which Allah has ordered him to say, Allah will grant him in replacement something better."

51 Kitaabuz Zuhd of Imaam Ahmad and Shu'abul Imaan of Bayhaqi no.9691

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْنَ اَللّٰهُمَّ أْجُرْنِيْ فِيْ مُصِيْبَتِيْ وَأَخْلِفْ لِيْ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا

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

She ﷺ 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 (with his family due) to (the instruction of) Rasulullah ﷺ (to Madinah Munawwarah)." Inspite of this thought, I recited it, due to which Allah granted me Rasulullah ﷺ as a replacement. (Sahih Muslim)

This is the complete sunnah dua for one who has suffered any loss or difficulty. If the above additional part is recited, Allah ﷻ will definitely give something even better in replacement (either in the world, or in the Hereafter in the form of reward).

A sister who had lost her child and was greatly grieved writes: The hadith above resonated deeply when I was searching for comfort after my daughter's passing. I thought that if Allah could give Umm Salamah ﷺ what she couldn't even imagine, then He could help me in ways that I could not understand. I would recite this dua repeatedly through the day and especially when the grief was intense and the pain was debilitating. I would recite it like a mantra that I clung to with all my life, focusing on what the words meant- that my daughter belonged to Allah and she had returned to Him and only He could help me. Every single time, as I repeated this dua with sincerity borne out of desperation, the pain would soften just enough to allow me to breathe again. It was, very literally, a miracle dua.[52]

4. Make dua to Allah ﷻ to grant you sabr

When someone close to us dies, we feel hopeless or depressed at times. At such times, we should turn to Allah ﷻ and beg Him to grant us patience.

52 Mercyinloss.org

Only He can give us patience and ease our hardship. Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Whoever begs Allah for patience, Allah will grant him patience (over his difficulty)." (Bukhari, Muslim)[53]

5. Ponder over the greatest loss ever faced, the death of Rasulullah ﷺ

During his final illness, Rasulullah ﷺ opened the curtain (towards the masjid) and saw the people performing salaah behind Abu Bakr ؓ. He praised Allah ﷻ on seeing their wonderful condition and hoping that Allah ﷻ will appoint the one he saw leading them as his Khalifah. He said, "O people! Whichever person – or - Whichever believer is afflicted with any loss, he should seek consolation in this loss of another by (pondering over) the difficulty of losing me. For no person can ever undergo after me a greater loss than my loss."[54]

Rasulullah ﷺ was the one who taught us who is Allah ﷻ and how to recognize Him. He was our father, our link to revelation, our exemplary teacher who taught us whatever we required for success, our spiritual guide who led us through the pitfalls of life, our guide to Jannah and our protection from all fitnah. He was a source of nur (spiritual light) to the world. He was the one who we could confide in. His knowledge and intellect surpassed all others in the world. He possessed the best of character. All of this was lifted from us the day he left this world. He is truly irreplaceable, as he was the greatest man to ever walk on the surface of the earth. [55]

By remembering the greatest loss ever faced by mankind, and the greatest loss which each and every Ummati of Rasulullah ﷺ faced, all other losses

٥٣ (ومن يتصبر يصبره الله) وقال القاري: أي يطلب توفيق الصبر من الله لأنه قال تعالى: {واصبر وما صبرك إلا بالله [النحل:127]... (مرقاة المفاتيح)

54 Sunan Ibn Majah no.1599, Shu'abul Imaan no.9678

55 See: Lataaiful Ma'aarif of Ibn Rajab pg.120. He has discussed this Hadith in a very beautiful and emotional manner. Also see: Seeratul-Mustafa v3 to understand what the Sahaabah experienced at that trying time.

will pale into oblivion and will seem light and small. For a true lover of Rasulullah ﷺ, there can never be a sadder memory and more grievous occurrence than his demise.

Don'ts for those who have lost a loved one

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

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ 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. Through this grief, the condition of abdiyyah (servitude to Allah ﷻ) becomes manifest. If man does not experience grief, he will become a pharoah (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 Allah ﷻ. (Wa'z Faza'il Sabr wa Shukr, adapted from Consolement for a Grieving Heart)

2. Do not bottle up your feelings

When we talk about pain and grief, the default human nature is that we do not want to experience it. No one likes things that hurt them to happen to them.

But the reality of life is that these things happen. We lose loved ones, children, parents, spouses and women suffer miscarriages etc. All of these life events bring with them pain and grief. But how do we deal with them as Muslims? Islam is a religion of balance. We were never told not to grieve or feel pain. Rather, through the Qur'an and Sunnah, we have guidance on how to deal with our pain.

One thing many people get wrong is having the perception that it's a sign of strong Imaan to bottle up your feelings and put up a brave face no matter how much something hurts.

Yes, Islam teaches us not to wail, beat ourselves and tear our clothing, but that doesn't mean that we cannot express our pain. When he lost his son Ibrahim ﷺ, the Rasulullah ﷺ expressed his pain. Even years after the death of Khadijah ؓ, Rasulullah ﷺ would express his love for her and the fact that he missed her. It is not bad to talk about something or someone you loved and lost. It is natural to feel sad that you no longer have them. It is normal to feel the pain. Where we draw the line as Muslims is that we do not curse ourselves, blame ourselves, believe we are wretched and unlucky, wail uncontrollably, or say things that are disrespectful to Allah ﷻ. Even though we express our pain and grieve, we do this in a way that is befitting for a Muslim

3. Do not dwell in isolation

A lonely Muslim sends a personal invitation to Shaytan to come and visit

him, sit on his bed and become misery's company. Therefore, keep yourself busy and occupied. Never be idle and allow your mind to wander. It will only serve to increase your grief. **Seek one spiritual guide or trusted friend who has deep attachment to Islam and who you know will be understanding and positive. Seek counsel from such a person.**

4. Do not become insecure or aggressive over insensitive comments

People will most certainly make insensitive comments. What matters most is how you choose to deal with it. You could take it personally and add to your grief. Alternatively, you could become snappy, aggressive and harsh, which will negatively impact on your patience, your mental frame of mind and your relationships in the future. The best route is to take what people say graciously, but with a pinch of salt.

A mother who had lost her daughter says: Most people mean well. Try to forgive them for the upsetting things they say by focusing on their intention. And if it is really upsetting, then speak to them and explain how they can be helpful.

People do not know what to say or do for you. They want to help but they do not know how. They are scared of saying something that will make it worse. Despite that, many people will unintentionally make unhelpful or hurtful remarks. I struggled for a couple of years with things people said or did that reignited my pain and grief. Some people would become silent when I spoke about my daughter and try to change the topic. Others would give advice, despite not having gone through what I was going through. Some would make comments that were meant to help, but had the opposite impact. It is hard. It is an unfortunate consequence of a society where, Alhamdulillah, a child's death is unusual and people are not equipped to handle it. I was able to speak to some close family and friends and ask them not to say certain things as they upset me. Others I chose to ignore. It was

not easy. I tried to focus on the fact that people meant well and that before I had lost my daughter, I too would not have known what to say or do. Try to give people the benefit of the doubt. If you need to tell someone that you do not wish to speak about your child or that what they are saying is making your grief worse, go ahead and (politely) tell them. Family and close friends will want to help and they will understand.[56]

5. Do not deprive yourself of the great reward by being impatient and complaining

Your beloved has returned to Allah ﷻ because Allah ﷻ has decreed that for you. Comfort your heart with the knowledge that Allah ﷻ knows your pain and grief, will reward you immensely and will wipe away your sins out of His Mercy. Whether this is a test or a punishment lies in how you choose to react to Allah's ﷻ decree. Accept it with as much patience as you can muster, despite all the pain, instead of responding with constant anger and bitterness, which is admittedly the easier but more destructive path?"

Golden stories of people who were patient

The sabr of Rasulullah ﷺ

Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ said, "Nabi ﷺ has been made the perfect example for us in the sense that those who were elder than him passed away during his lifetime, and so did those who were younger. He lost his father and mother, and then his grandfather. Later he lost (two of) his uncles. That person who loses any of his seniors (parents, grand-parents, uncles, elder brothers etc.) should ponder over the fact that Rasulullah ﷺ also underwent the same. Sometimes, it happens that while an elder is still living, those who are younger pass away before him. For such situations too, we can find a model and a precedent in the life of Rasulullah ﷺ, for his daughters and sons (besides Fatimah ؓ) passed away in his blessed lifetime. If one loses her husband, she too has an example to follow, as the

56 Mercyinloss.org

pure wives of Rasulullah ﷺ were alive when Rasulullah ﷺ left this world. And if a person loses his wife, then the blessed being of Rasulullah ﷺ is a perfect example for him, during whose lifetime Khadijah ؓ (and Zaynab bint Khuzaimah ؓ) passed away. Ponder over these points when faced by such occurrences, as it will help to lessen and lighten your grief. (Ma'ariful Abraar pg.373)

Rasulullah ﷺ suffered many losses in his lifetime, including six of his seven children and some of his beloved grandchildren too. Rasulullah ﷺ experienced constant loss, starting from the age of six when his mother passed away. He lost sons who were young and daughters who were adults. Many such ahadith have already passed.

Rasulullah ﷺ cried when his son Ibrahim died as an infant, as well as on the death of many of his close and beloved companions.

The greatest man to ever walk the earth grieved for his children and grandchildren, so it is okay for us to do the same. He was sent to us as a mercy. His life is both an example for us to follow, as well as reassurance that we are not alone. We are not singled out for this difficult test. We share this test with our beloved Rasul ﷺ. "How did Rasulullah ﷺ do it? How did he feel when he wept at his mother's grave? What was it like to have never known his father? How did he feel about losing his grandfather so young, and his father-figure uncle when he so badly needed him and so deeply loved him? What was it like to have watched his best friend, his beloved wife, get so weak and sick and pass on? How did he bury his sons Qaasim ؓ and Abdullah ؓ when they were so young? How did he handle the grief of the death of his daughter Ruqayyah ؓ in the prime of her life at the very time when he and his companions had just tasted the sweetness of success at Badr? How did he cope with his daughters Zaynab ؓ and Umm Kulthum ؓ both passing away before he did? How did he hold back from complaining when he was losing Ibrahim ؓ in the midst of his child's

adorable beauty?

Therefore, we should take inspiration from the example of Rasulullah ﷺ, always remember Allah ﷻ in our grief and refrain from saying anything that would displease Him. We need to be patient and seek reward in our hardship. Allah, the Almighty, knows of our pain and will reward us greatly for exercising patience. Indeed, He promises Paradise for those who adopt sabr.

Sabr over the loss of a child

The sabr of Ummu Sulaym ؓ

Abu Talhah ؓ had a step-son by the name of Zayd, who he loved very dearly. One day, this son of Abu Talhah ؓ fell ill. Abu Talhah ؓ was very saddened at this. Sometime later, Abu Talhah ؓ had to leave home for some work. He was fasting on that day. While he was out, the child passed away. Umm Sulaym ؓ, who was the real mother of the child, said to her family members, "Do not inform Abu Talhah about his son. I should be the first one who will break this news to him." Abu Talhah ؓ happened to return home late that day. When he arrived, he asked, "How is my son?" Umm Sulaym ؓ replied: "He is much more relaxed and comfortable than before." She brought his supper, which he ate. After supper, she adorned herself so beautifully for him better than she had ever adorned herself previously. He then engaged in intercourse with her. When he had finished and she noticed his satisfaction, she said, "O Abu Talhah! Tell me, if someone lends an item to a particular family and later asks them to return it, does that family have a right to refuse to return that item?" He replied, "No." She said, "So anticipate the reward (from Allah ﷻ) for losing your son. They have already buried the child." Abu Talhah ؓ became angry and said, "You left me to become impure and then only informed me about my son?!"

The next morning, Abu Talhah ؓ went to Rasulullah ﷺ and informed him of what had happened. Rasulullah ﷺ asked, "Were you intimate with one

another last night?" He replied, "Yes." Rasulullah ﷺ said, "O Allah! Grant them blessings and goodness as a result of last night." She fell pregnant from that night and finally she gave birth to a boy. She said to Anas ؓ: 'O Anas! None should breast-feed him till you take him to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the morning.'

Abu Talhah ؓ said to Anas ؓ in the morning, "Carry him and take him to Nabi ﷺ." He also sent some dates. On reaching Rasulullah ﷺ, he ﷺ asked: "Is there anything with him?" Anas ؓ replied: "Yes, some dates." Rasulullah ﷺ took it, softened it in his mouth and placed it in the child's mouth. He then named the child Abdullah.

A man from the Ansaar said, "I saw nine children all of whom had learnt the Qur'an." What he meant was that Abdullah the baby later had nine children who all became Huffaaz and Qurra'.[57]

Look at her complete conviction and the strength of her patience. Instead of sobbing or grieving, which is normal human nature, she fed her husband, made him happy and satisfied him. In fact, she encouraged her husband, although vaguely, to hope for reward from Allah ﷻ over the loss of his step-child. The patience she showed even outweighs that of many men. When Umm Sulaym ؓ was sincere in her intention, Allah ﷻ fulfilled her hopes and granted her pious offspring.

This hadith teaches us that one should be soft, delicate and composed when conveying the news of the demise of someone. It is part of the Sunnah for each spouse to console and lighten each other during a calamity.

It also teaches us that a woman should be considerate of her husband even when suffering from her own grief at the loss of a child or a close family member.

57 Bukhari, Muslim and Commentary of Riyad al-Saaliheen

Urwah Ibn Zubair ﷺ

Urwah Ibn Zubair ﷺ, the nephew of A'ishah ﷺ and the 'jurist' of his time, once set out with his most beloved and extremely handsome son Muhammad to visit the Khalifah Waleed 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 this guest was going to be very soon tested by Allah ﷻ with such a test which only hearts filled with imaan and trust in Allah ﷻ can withstand.

During Urwah's ﷺ journey towards the palace, Urwah ﷺ felt a pain in his left leg, and noticed a sore on it. On reaching the palace, he showed it to Waleed, 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 ﷺ dug his face in the pillow underneath him, and began perspiring profusely. The third saw finally severed the bone. Urwah ﷺ 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. Waleed 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 Allah, 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."

(وأيمك لئن أخذت لقد أبقيت ولئن ابتليت لقد عافيت)

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 ﷺ 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 Allah ﷻ have mercy on him). All who were present felt uncomfortable to break the news to Urwah ﷺ. They approached Majishoon ﷺ and requested him to convey this bitter message. Majishoon ﷺ visited Urwah ﷺ and found him performing salaah. After entering, Majishoon ﷺ 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 ﷺ 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, "Allah has just taken Muhammad back to Him." Urwah ﷺ instantaneously responded, "Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raji'oon. (To Allah do we belong, and to Him we will return.) I anticipate great rewards by Allah over (the loss of) Muhammad. O Allah, O Allah, 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.

(وأيمك لئن أخذت لقد أبقيت ولئن ابتليت لقد عافيت)"

Not a word of complaint was heard emerging from his lips.

The Khalifah Waleed 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 ﷺ, a group of travellers happened to arrive, amongst whom was a blind man. When the Khalifah questioned him concerning the loss of his eyesight, he replied, "O Ameerul 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, Waleed ordered his doorkeeper, "Take this man to Urwah and let him narrate his story once again, so that Urwah 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 ﷺ finally returned home, he met his family and friends, saying, "O Allah, You have taken from us only a little, while You have left us with plenty. O Allah, You very rarely test us with difficulties, while You keep us protected from calamities time and time again. O Allah, 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."

May Allah ﷻ bless us with the ability to see things in the manner our illustrious ancestors would see them. Aamin.[58]

Hafsah bint Seereen ﷺ

Hafsah bint Seereen ﷺ had a son named Huzail. He was very obedient to her and would serve her with great care and love. The extent to which he went in ensuring her comfort can be gauged from the fact that he would not bring ordinary firewood to her home. Instead, he would break cane during the summer and leave it to dry until winter. When winter set in, he would burn the dried cane in her home to warm her. The reason for burning dried cane is that it produced very little smoke. Huzail did not want the smoke of the fire to disturb his mother, and so he 'went the extra mile' to try and bring his mother comfort.

Additionally, he would not simply milk the camel and give her the milk to drink. Rather, he would leave the milk in the udders of the camel overnight, only milking it the following morning. After milking the camel, he would present the milk to his mother saying, "Drink, O my mother, as the best milk is that which remains in the udders overnight."

When Huzail passed away, his demise was not only the loss of a son, but was also the loss of the love and care that he would show her. Allah ﷻ blessed Hafsah ﷺ with sabr (patience), and so she had no complaint or objection against the decision of Allah ﷻ. Nevertheless, being a mother, there was a continuous pain in her heart.

58 Al-Maradh wal Kaffaaraat of Ibn Abid Dunya and Suwarum-min-Hayaatit-Taabi'in

One night, while Hafsah bint Seereen ﷺ was reciting the Qur'an Majeed, she came to the following verse:

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٩٦)

What is with you must perish, and what is with Allah will remain. We will certainly recompense those who patiently persevere with their reward, according to the best of their actions. (Surah Nahl v96)

Hafsah ﷺ repeated this verse (pondering over the meaning), and her sorrow and sadness was soothed.[59]

Everything of this world is temporary and must certainly perish. When losing something that is near, dear and beloved, it is natural and expected for one to feel grief. However, we should never be upset over the decision of Allah ﷻ. Pondering over the above verse will assist one to overcome his grief.

No calamity is unbearable – Abu Qilaabah ﷺ

Imam Awzaa'i ﷺ 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 Allah, 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 Allah, I will go to this man and I shall ask him about this dua. Did it come to his mind, did he learn it (from someone) or has he been inspired with it?"

59 Al-Muntazam vol. 7, pg. 172, translated by UswatulMuslimah

So I approached the man, greeted him and said to him, "I heard you saying: '*O Allah, 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 Allah upon you are you praising Him for? And in what way did He grant you preference over others that you are thanking Him for it?" He said, "Don't you see what my Lord has done for me? By Allah, 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 Allah, 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 became 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 Allah have mercy on you." I said, "By Allah, no being could fulfill the need of another which is greater in reward by Allah 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 by 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' ('Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raji'oon') and said to myself, "How am I going to face this man?!" As I was heading towards him, I remembered Ayyub ﷺ. So when I reached him, I greeted him and he responded. He enquired, "Are you not my companion?" I said "Yes!" He said: "Did you do me that favour?" I asked: 'Are you more honourable in the sight of Allah or was Ayyub, the Nabi?" He replied, "Of course, Ayyub the Nabi." I said: "Do you know what His Lord did with him? Did He not test him regarding his wealth, family and children?" He said, "Yes." I said: "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 said: "How did His Lord find him?" He answered: "He found him patient, grateful and thankful. Cut the story short! May Allah 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 Allah increase for you your reward and may He inspire you with patience."

The man said, "Praise be to Allah 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 Allah we belong and to Him we will 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 Allah, 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 Allah. May our father be sacrificed for him; for how long has this body prostrated before Allah, while the people were sleeping."I asked: "Who is this, may Allah have mercy on you?" They said, 'This is Abu Qilabah Jurmi, the companion of Ibn 'Abbas ﷺ. He had tremendous love for Allah 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 Paradise wearing two garments from the garments of Paradise, while reciting the revelation (which means): ***"Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. And excellent is the final abode."*** (al-Ra'ad: v.24).

I asked: "Aren't you my companion?" He replied, "Yes." I enquired, "How did you receive this?!" He said, "Verily, by Allah 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 Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, in private and in public."[60]

Sabr over the loss of one's partner

Maulana Siddeeq Ahmad Baandwi ﷺ

His wife was born in May 1931 in a place called Baroli. She spent 48 years of her life in the service of her husband and displayed her loyalty, compassion and sacrifice for him. She was brought up in a very wealthy home with lots of comforts and luxuries, but lived in poverty and hardships with her husband. She would sew clothes and sell them to cover the home expenses. She was very simple in her food. She never demanded anything and never complained about anything. For years, with happiness and joy, she fed the the students of the Madrasah, preparing the food with her own hands. She was very hospitable to guests and would prepare for them potato curry, as it was difficult to obtain anything else to cook. She was not spoilt and fussy, and she would even plaster the walls in the house with her own hands.

During her free time, she would always have a tasbeeh in her hand. She would speak to her visitors if any were present, otherwise she would remain busy in zikr. Allah ﷻ granted her such generosity that she would spend on others most of the money given to her for household expenses. She would lend money for sewing or she would give it to some poor person for themselves or their children. Sometimes she would spend it on medication for others. But she spent very little on herself. She spent her entire life in

60 Ath-Thiqaat of Ibn Hibban

the obedience of her husband. She would never do anything that would displease him. Once, she was dressed and ready to leave for a wedding in Baroli, when she found out that he was unhappy about her going. She immediately cancelled her plans and did not attend the wedding. What a sad occasion it was when this pious servant of Deen left this world forever.

After Maghrib Salaah, while Maulana was teaching Sahih Bukhari, he suddenly received the news that her condition had deteriorated and it seemed quite serious. This sudden change was not at all expected, as she seemed quite well just before that.

Whilst the Isha adhaan was being called, another message was sent that her condition is critical. At that time, Maulana was teaching the chapter of Janaazah in Sahih Bukhari. The moment he received this message, he stopped the lesson and went home.

When he arrived, she had only her last few breaths left. He made salaam to her. She recognised him. Immediately he took hold of her legs and made an indication with his hands to please forgive him for his wrongdoings. The signs of death became apparent on her. From her mouth the words "Allah, Allah" could be heard. This beloved servant of Allah ﷻ then entered into the mercy of Allah ﷻ.

The news of her demise spread like lightning to the nearby villages as well as the towns far away. Family and friends immediately came to the house. The entire house was filled with women. The sounds of crying, wailing and screaming emanated from the entire house. Maulana controlled his grief, ensuring that he would never break the laws of the shari'ah. With complete control over himself, he tried to make those who were screaming and shouting understand that what they were doing was wrong. He removed them from the room of the deceased and explained to them that everyone must be pleased with Allah's decision, be patient and make dua to Allah ﷻ.

After the Isha salaah, for a long time, Maulana remained engaged in nafl salaah and dua. He then took a bath and lied down on his bed. It seemed as though he was resting in great peace. But in actual fact, a heart which had just been afflicted with such a great loss could not have any rest. Such a loyal life-companion had just left this world forever, a companion who remained at his side through difficult and hard times. It seemed that Maulana lied down on his bed to get some rest, but in reality, it was to allow time for the visitors to get some rest. Those who slept near him mentioned that he was extremely restless for the entire night and kept on tossing and turning from side to side. Sometimes he would sit up and sometimes he would cover himself and lie down. Sometimes, in a very faint tone, he would also begin to cry. This continued until three o'clock when, according to his habit, he woke up for Tahajjud Salaah.

After making wudhu, he engaged himself in nafl salaah and zikr for a long time. Thereafter, as normal, he began studying Jalaalain and Ma'aariful Qur'aan in preparation of his lessons. After Fajr Salaah, as normal, he taught lessons on Sharh Jaami. During the lesson, the signs of grief were definitely evident on his face. But he continued teaching calmly. He did not even miss one lesson. However, the content matter of the lesson was a little less than usual.

Once again, as was his habit, he performed the Ishraaq Salaah in the break. However, on this occasion, he lengthened his salaah. He was alone in the room. After he performed his salaah, a student noticed him weeping very softly. His eyes were red and moist. With utmost humility he made dua to Allah. He then came outside and met all the guests that had arrived. There was absolutely no change in his administration of the Madrasah. It seemed as if nothing had happened. Outwardly, there seemed to be no sign of sorrow or grief, whereas a great tragedy had befallen him. He was a mountain of patience, courage and steadfastness. It seemed as though he

was totally at ease, but his heart was in tears.

How long can a person hold back his tears? Even Rasulullah ﷺ, the leader of the Messengers, cried at the death of his son Ibrahim ؓ. Crying is not a sign of intolerance and weakness in a person. To cry is natural and is a sign of the softness of the heart. Therefore, eventually, he cried over the loss of his wife. But the condition of his crying was such that no sound emanated, nor did he begin screaming. He would cry in a very soft tone. Then too, he would not cry in front of everyone. Whenever he went to the bathroom or the toilet, he would cry there. When he would come out, we would see his eyes red and moist. From his face, we could make out the signs of grief. When he used to come outside, he would meet with the people. Whenever the thought of this loss crossed his mind, his eyes would moisten. Despite all of this, there was no change at all in his ibaadah, as well as his work and responsibilities. He taught some of his lessons a bit earlier so that he would not miss out any lesson due to the janaazah salaah.

It was a unique occureance that, in those days, the lessons that were being taught in all the kitaabs were on the topic of death, burial, shrouding the deceased, sabr (patience) and inheritance. In Sahih Bukhari, the chapter on Janaazah and the ahaadith regarding the importance of exercising patience at the time of a funeral were being explained. In the tafseer of Jalaalain, the verses of inheritance were being discussed. In Mutanabbi, the lesson was about the lament of Khaulah at the death of her brother. At night, the ahaadith regarding sabr (patience) and condolences were discussed in the lesson on Sahih Bukhari.

Related to the situation, he would explain each lesson in a very unique fashion whereby the hearts of the listeners were very deeply affected. Whilst delivering the lessons, his mind would at times go towards the tragedy that he had just been afflicted with and he would stop speaking for some time. His eyes would get moist, but very quickly, he would get a

hold of himself and continue with the lessons.

Before the janaazah salaah, family members called Maulana to view the face of his beloved wife for the last time. He refused and was not prepared to go. In fact, from the time she had passed away, he did not go back into the house. A scholar later asked him to explain the reason behind his refusal, as it is not against the Shari'ah. The Fuqaha (Jurists) have written that there is no harm in looking at the face of one's wife after she passes away. He replied, "The reason I did not go was because of fitnah (evil)." It seems as if there was a large group of women present there. If he entered, all the women would look at him. At such a time, there was the fear that, in emotion, the laws of hijaab would be violated. He was also a human being. There was the desire in his heart to see his life-partner for one last time, but a perfect human being is he who gives preference to his intelligence over his sentiments and gives preference to the Shari'ah over his intelligence. One should not allow one's sentiments to break the barriers of the Shari'ah. This is a sign of perfection.

In the lessons of Bukhari on that day, the following Ahaadith were discussed: Anas ﷺ narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "True patience is to be patient at the sudden onset of a calamity." (Bukhari no.1223, Muslim no.2179)

He explained: "This means that at that initial moment when one feels the grief of the calamity and the first effects of the grief strikes one, then, at that time, one should exercise sabr. During that entire time, one should be careful. Afterwards, sabr comes on its own. After a month or two, one automatically feels at ease. However, if a person makes sabr after a few months, then that is not true sabr? Real sabr is when a person experiences patience at the time the calamity befalls him. The meaning of sabr is that a person should not scream and cry and he should not utter anything which constitutes a complaint against Allah ﷻ. This is called jaza' qaali (verbal intolerance). He should also not express his intolerance through

his actions, whereby his complaint becomes apparent. It should also not be that he stops his work and sits down idly, stops teaching his lessons, etc. This is called jaza' haali (physical intolerance). This is also against the dictates of sabr."

When explaining the narration when Rasulullah ﷺ cried at the death of his beloved son Ibrahim ؑ, he said, "This is also my condition. Tears are flowing from my eyes and my heart is grieved. But I will not say anything that will displease Allah ﷻ. Naturally a person will feel grieved. But we must be pleased with every decision of Allah ﷻ. Whoever wants to cry should cry in front of Allah ﷻ. Express one's grief to Allah ﷻ, as Yaqoob had said, "I complain and express my grief only to Allah ﷻ".

He also said, "Who will not feel grieved? This tragedy has had a great impact on me. Only I know the extent of grief I've experienced. Her favours upon me were very great. She remained with me through poverty and difficult times. She used to sew clothes and sell them to earn a living. Her passing away has had a great impact on me. However, this does not mean that a person should stop all work and just sit down and grieve for the entire day."

Once, whilst teaching a lesson in Sahih Bukhari, his sons entered the classroom and sat down. Maulana imparted such advice during this lesson which gave them great consolation. He turned to his sons and said, "Everyone has to leave this world. If anyone was to live in it forever, then it would certainly have been the Ambiyaa (Messengers) who are most worthy of this. Yet, they too did not remain in this would forever. We all belong to Allah ﷻ and we all will return to Allah. Death will claim a person today, while tomorrow it will claim someone else. We all have to journey to one destination. Just as the case when many people gather at an airport with their passports to catch one flight or another, some have a turn to board the first flight, whilst others have their turn later. When their turn arrives,

they will also depart. When we have all left this world, we will meet in one place. It is as though we are prepared and everyone's luggage is ready. It's only a matter of which plane we will take.

This is the meaning of "Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon." "We all are the servants of Allah ﷻ. We are happy with the decision of Allah ﷻ. Whatever He wishes will transpire. We are going to return to Him. What we need to check is whether we are ready for this journey or not! You have come to the airport. The announcement has been made and you are still drinking tea. You are so engrossed in feasting that your luggage for the journey is not yet ready. We should keep our luggage ready ahead of time and should be awaiting the arrival of the plane. We should not concern ourselves with what is happening around us. Instead, we should ask ourselves what preparations have we made for death? It is an imminent journey. We do not know when our turn will come. If we have not yet prepared for this journey, then we should start now. "

With regards to his wife's death, he mentioned, "Indeed, her death was a great lesson. No one imagined that she will pass away. Like a golden bird she just flew away. Death comes suddenly. It does not inform anyone of its arrival. This tragedy was a great lesson for me. Every person should be ready at all times. Our dealings should all be correct. We must not have any arguments and fights with anyone."

After her demise, he once said "I was very concerned and wanted to know about her condition after she had passed away. One night, I saw in a dream a grand palace with beautiful rooms. There were servants there as well. The rooms were also very unique. There was a bed, the like of which I had never seen in my life before and bedding was already placed on the bed. My wife was seated on the bed and looked like a young beautiful bride. Her clothes were made of the finest cloth and her scarf was of such magnificence that I cannot explain. My eyes had never seen such beauty and splendour. Next

to her was another bed over which she was laying out the bedding. I can still picture her posture and her position as she was leaning over the bed whilst neatening it. She called me to come immediately, but I informed her that there is still work for me to do and that I will come after some time. After I had this dream I felt at ease. Worry and concern for her disappeared from me."[61]

Sabr on the loss of a few family members at once

Umar ibn Abdil-Aziz ﵀, the righteous Khalif

Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz ﵀ lost three of his most beloved supporters in a short span of time. His brother Sahl, his son Abdul-Malik and his slave Muzaahim all passed away. They were the ones who gave him courage to carry out what he did, bore many of his responsibilities and never shied away from advising him with the best of advice and reminding him of accountability in the court of Allah. Rabi' ibn Saburah visited Umar ﵀ shortly thereafter to console him and said, "May Allah reward you greatly, o Ameerul-Mu'mineen. I have never seen another person who went through greater losses than yours in just a few days. By Allah, I have never seen a son equal to your son, a brother equal to your brother and a slave equal to your slave." Umar ﵀ lowered his head. The man sitting next to me commented, "You have upset him." When Umar ﵀ lifted his head, he asked me to repeat what I had said. I repeated it. He responded, "No. I take an oath on that Being who decided death for them, I do not wish that these losses had not occurred."[62]

Umar ﵀ here did not claim that he wasn't saddened by the loss of his dear ones. That is just natural. Umar ﵀ instead is saying that the loss did not make me resent You, o Allah. It only increased me in love towards You and only increased my desire for the hereafter where I will meet with You. So take back my soul in the way that You took back the souls of my dear ones.

61 Hayat-e-Siddiq. Translated by Taalimi Board KZN

62 Hilyatul Awliyaa v.5 pg.330

But let me not come back to you negligent or in a way that's displeasing to You.

While suffering the pangs of death, Umar ibn Abdil Aziz ﵀ asked his son how he was feeling. He replied, "I find myself about to confront the reality (of death)." He said, "My son, if you are in my scale of good deeds (by passing away before me), that is more beloved to me than if I am in your scale of good deeds (if I pass away before you and you bear that patiently)."[63]

When Abdul-Malik, the son of Umar ibn Abdil-Aziz ﵀, passed away at the age of just nineteen, Umar ﵀ removed the cloth which was covering his face and said, "May Allah have mercy on you, my dear child. I was happy with you on the day I was informed of your birth. You passed your entire life in such a condition that I was happy with you. But there was no moment in my life in which I was happier than these moments (when I have just lost you). By Allah, you are certainly calling your father to Jannah."[64]

After burying his son, he spoke at the graveside: "May Allah have mercy on you, my son. You were truly obedient to you father. Since the day that Allah granted you to me as a gift, I have always been happy (with you). But, by Allah, I was never happier and never more hopeful of earning rewards from Allah through you than at the time when I placed you in the place which Allah has destined for you to be (i.e. in the grave). May Allah have mercy on you, forgive your sins, reward you for your good actions and forgive your evils. May Allah have mercy on every person, present or absent, who makes a good dua for you. We are pleased with the decision of Allah, and we submit to His command. And all praise is due to Allah alone who is the Rabb of the worlds." Then he left.[65]

63 Al-Azkaar pg.152

64 Al-Azkaar pg.152

65 Umar ibn Abdil Aziz v.3 pg.472

He wrote a letter to his governor in Kufah in which he wrote: "Abdul-Malik was just a servant from amongst the servants of Allah. Allah favoured him with wonderful qualities and Allah favoured his father through him. Allah allowed him to live as long as Allah wished him to live. Then Allah took him away when Allah wished to take him away. I knew that his life was interlinked with death. We have hope in Allah that we will receive a wonderful reward through him. I seek refuge in Allah from wishing for anything which is against what He wishes. Opposing what Allah wishes is not befitting for me, considering His bounties which I enjoy, His kindness to me and His favour upon me."[66]

He made this beautiful and profound dua to Allah after making a perfect wudhu and performing 2 rak'ats of salaah. He said, "O Allah, you have taken back the souls of Sahl, Abdul Malik, and Muzaahim. They were my greatest supporters in all those affairs which You have full knowledge of. All of that has only increased my love for You and my desire to have the reward which is with You. So take back my soul without me being negligent or careless."[67]

Maulana Ismail Bayat (daamat barakaatuhu)

In 1437 / 2016 Maulana was returning to Durban with his family after visiting his in-laws house, when heavy rain began to fall. They were involved in a serious accident on their way home. Sadly, his 4 year old son was thrown out of the car and passed away on impact. This was his youngest child and his only son, who Allah had granted to him after 3 daughters.

The first Muslim on scene narrated what he had witnessed: A Muslim man who saw this ran out of his car and crossed the freeway to the scene of the accident. He saw a child lying there motionless. When we ran to check,

66 Umar ibn Abdil Aziz v.3 pg.472

67 Seerah Umar ibn Abdil Aziz pg.100

the child was lifeless, already returned to Allah to enjoy the life of the Aakhirah. Maulana and his wife were trapped in the vehicle. Emergency workers had to work hard and fast to free them, using the Jaws of Life to extricate the roof, as his wife was in a critical condition. On one side of the car, his daughter was being freed from the wreck, her arm completely ripped off and her leg hanging by threads. The 2 young daughters came out unscathed and in shock watched the scene unfold in front of them.

As Maulana was freed, he ran to the body of his lifeless 4 year old son and kept on repeating, "O Allah, my Muhammad is gone' and reciting the following dua:

اللَّهُمَّ أَسْلَمْتُ نَفْسِي إِلَيْكَ، وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَيْكَ، وَوَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِي إِلَيْكَ،
وَأَلْجَأْتُ ظَهْرِي إِلَيْكَ، رَغْبَةً وَرَهْبَةً إِلَيْكَ، لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنْجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ،
آمَنْتُ بِكِتَابِكَ الَّذِي انْزَلْتَ وَبِنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ

O Allah, I submit myself to You, I entrust my affairs to You, I turn my attention to You, and I place myself in Your protection, hoping in You and fearing You . There is no refuge and no escape except to You. I believe in Your Book (the Qur'an) that You revealed and Your Nabi whom You sent.

His wife was rushed to the hospital for medical care. She too soon breathed her last, returning to Allah.

His sister had narrated that the love the couple shared was unmatched. Every Saturday he would give her off from the kitchen and even cook a meal for the family on that day. Their love on earth extended to their last moments together. The daughter spent many hours in theatre and the father refused to leave the hospital until her surgery was over. The next morning, despite this tragedy and pain, he arrived in class to teach his lessons and said to his students, "Now, my queen is waiting for me in

Jannah." His students remarked that they have never seen anyone with more sabr than him.

Sabr over the loss of the entire family

A lover of Allah ﷻ and her patience

Abul Hasan Siraaj ﷺ 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 Allah, 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." 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 father slaughtered the goat." The younger son 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."[68]

Reflections by those who lost a dear one

On the Loss of a husband

A part of me died four months and ten days ago. But, alhamdulillah, it wasn't hope. It wasn't courage. And it definitely wasn't faith and trust in my Lord's perfect plan.

The call that changed everything: The call woke me before Fajr. My heart stopped as I tried to recognize the number on the screen. A blank. But when I answered the phone and heard the familiar voice of the doctor on the other side, I prepared myself for the worst. And the worst came: heart stopped beating, CPR attempted for 30 minutes, no hope. 'JazaakAllahu khairan,' I whispered hoarsely before cutting off the call. Then I immediately rose

68 Rawdhur-Rayaaheen, Fadha'il Haj pg.200

from the bed and fell into sujood of shukr. *Alhamdulillah.*

It was the moment I had dreaded, but also a moment I had been preparing myself for, ever since a sister who had come to visit me at the hospital had told me the story of a husband and wife whose daughter was desperately ill. Every time they came to the hospital, the doctors would tell them more reasons why she was not going to make it. And, at every visit, the father would turn to his wife and said, 'Don't forget.' This continued for several days, the doctors predicting the worst, and the husband reminding his wife not to forget, until the day they arrived and they were given the news that would break any parent's heart: their daughter had died. Upon hearing the news, the husband turned to his wife and said to her, 'Now,' and they both fell into sujood of shukr. The hospital staff were amazed, some of them even horrified. Surely this was a terribly sad event, one to be wept over, to be mourned, not to be celebrated with sujood? They asked the couple why, why had they done this? And the couple told the staff at that hospital how they had taken the decision to give thanks for their daughter's life, for the joy she had brought them, for the love they had shared with her. Allah ﷻ had allowed them to love and care for her for all those years: should they not give thanks for this?

And, when I heard this story, I decided that that was what I was going to do, if it ever came to that. Because, you see, I had no right to bemoan losing my husband, after being gifted with more happiness in 16 years than many taste in several lifetimes. Alhamdulillah, Allah ﷻ guided us both to Islam and, a few short years later, to each other. My husband's understanding and patient attitude brought out the best in me, in deen and dunya. His way was not to command or force, but rather guide and, even, let me make my own mistakes and learn from them. As with those he worked with, his aim was always to support me in fulfilling my potential, because it was that quality that had drawn him to me in the first place (his words, not mine!). Quite simply, we understood each other, we supported each other, we were

best friends and allies, as well as husband and wife. It is no exaggeration to say that, without him, I would not be the woman I am today... I always prayed that any good I had done would be counted in the scale of his good deeds.

As it was, Allah ﷻ took him after a bout of illness, after completing the Hajj twice (the last time, with me) and having recently taken all his children for 'Umrah. He died a Muslim, on tawheed, in the land of the Muslims, well-loved by his family, friends and colleagues. Alhamdulillah, some things are indeed a comfort.

A deep and terrible loss: In the days that followed his passing, I was on autopilot. There is no time for breaking down when you are a foreign national, trying to complete paperwork for a burial... I observed the Janazah salah from the steps of the masjid and I said my last salaam to him in the courtyard before they took him on the long drive to the graveyard. Surrounded by my children, my family, my in-laws, sisters, brothers, colleagues and well-wishers on every side, I felt like I was watching a scene in a play. I played my part well: I was the gracious widow, receiving condolences, comforting others, maintaining my composure, but, in truth, my heart was aching. And yet, through it all, my faith in Allah ﷻ was undaunted, Alhamdulillah.

I wrote at the time: *I feel so incredibly blessed. Even in the midst of the trial, as the tears fall, I am surrounded by His Mercy. The du'as, the support, the love, the sense of strength and serenity, are all signs of His Mercy. Alhamdulillah, I accept. Alhamdulillah, I am at peace. Alhamdulillah, Alhamdulillah, Alhamdulillah is the balm for my aching heart.*

The next challenge, after burying him, would be mourning him, observing the 'iddah.

Observing the 'iddah: There is a delicate tension in the state of iddah, the mourning period for a widow. On the one hand, life continues, particularly if you have children or have to work to support your family... The pressures, demands and responsibilities of the world are real and they won't wait for four months and ten days to be over. Some widows find that family members take over these tasks but, in many cases, you are forced to plan, to look forward, to move on, to face the world. It can be an exquisite distraction from the pain that lies buried deep under various activities, bedtime stories and endless paperwork and deadlines. But it is still a distraction.

On the other hand, your state of 'iddah restricts you; you cannot fully embrace life, even if you want to. You are not supposed to wear beautiful clothes or adorn yourself in any way. Although you may have visitors and spend time with family and friends, you are expected to shun social gatherings. You are not to entertain proposals. You should observe your period of mourning in your marital home. All this means that you must pause. You must reflect. You must withdraw. You must face the reality, brave the darkness: the ache, the loneliness and the fear. You must face it because it will break you down, bring you to your knees, make you feel once again that vulnerability of his last days when you would have given anything for one last apology, one last kiss, one last promise. You must face the reality that this is Allah's plan for you. And that, if this is so, there must be *khair* (goodness) in it for you. It's there. It's there in the chance to ask for forgiveness (from Allah ﷻ), to pour your heart out, to cleanse, to rectify your soul, to purify your habits, to be ready to emerge from your 'iddah like a butterfly from a chrysalis: reborn, refashioned, beautiful.

The gift of 'iddah

For me, my 'iddah has been a time of discovery, full of challenges, but, equally, full of triumphs... Alhamdulillah. During my 'iddah, I have tasted grief, a grief unlike any I have felt before. At times, I have felt a crushing

and desperate loneliness, a longing for my love that threatens to suffocate me. But then I breathe, one beat, two beats, and it is soothed: Allah ﷻ sends me relief in the form of an ayah, or a poem, or a phone call or a sister dropping by out of the blue to listen and hold my hand and let me know that it is ok to feel.

I have also felt, as many widows do, the weight of new responsibilities, too numerous to name. The realisation that it is all down to you now, that you are a single parent, that there is no escape from the responsibility, is a terrifying one. I have also felt the confusion and the sadness that all widows must feel. But, equally, with every test, Allah ﷻ has shown me the truth of His words: 'Verily with every difficulty, there is ease.' I have held onto those words; they have kept me from drowning many, many times.

By His grace, I have felt the love of so many kind and goodhearted souls who have been there for me, sometimes travelling great distances, to take the kids, to make me a cup of tea, to listen to me, to let me cry and to let me sleep for two days straight. May Allah ﷻ reward them with Jannat-ul-Firdaws; they have taught me the true meaning of sisterhood. I have felt the love that radiates from my children, my family and from those I do not know a thousand miles away; I have felt the thrill of strength and determination as I continue to walk forward and achieve the goals I have set for myself, for our family; and I have felt the healing balm of gratitude that continues to sustain me.

If it is not improper to say so, I would say that I eventually found my 'iddah period empowering. By Allah's grace, I have been able to come to terms with and accept that my husband is no longer with us. I have come to accept and embrace the challenges that this new journey will bring. I am at peace with the decree of Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ promises that He will never burden a soul more than it can bear – that alone gives me the courage and confidence I need to meet the numerous challenges head-on. I know in my heart of

hearts, with full *yaqeen*, that He did not test us with this to break us, but rather, to purify us, to lift us up. Allah ﷻ has been my solace throughout this test and I have never once despaired of His Mercy. Alhamdulillah, He has never failed to come to my aid in my time of need. He has never failed to 'catch me'. And He never will, bi'idhnillah. Alhamdulillah 'ala kulli haal. (All praise is due to Allah in every condition)[69]

Wise words of consolation uttered by great people

We are all on the road towards Aakhirah

Abud-Dardaa ﷺ narrates: A son of Nabi Sulayman ibn Daud ﷺ passed away. He was extremely sad and distressed, to the extent that it could be noticed from his appearance and even while he was in the court passing decisions. One day, two angels came to him in human form to resolve a dispute (which was actually to teach him a lesson). One of them said, "I had planted some seeds. When they were fully grown and ready to be harvested, this man passed by and destroyed them." Sulayman ﷺ asked the other person to explain his version. He said, "He speaks the truth. I was walking down a pathway. I passed by some crops which were growing on the pathway. I looked right and left, and I saw that the road crossed over these crops (i.e. the pathway was being blocked by these crops). So I pulled them out (in consideration of those people who will later walk down the path and will find it difficult to proceed due to the crops on the way)." Sulayman ﷺ said to the complainant, "Why did you plant the seeds on the pathway? Don't you know that the people will certainly pull out what they find on any pathway?" The angel in human form replied, "O Sulayman! Why then are you so grieved at the loss of your son? You know that you are soon going to pass away and you also know that the pathway of all mankind is towards the Aakhirah (i.e. your son was also on the path towards Aakhirah. You should expect that whoever is found on the path will inevitably be pulled out and will meet his end. And you should also keep in mind that you too are on the pathway, and that you will also inevitably be pulled out of the

69 Condensed and adapted from an article by: Na'ima B. Robert – muslimmatters.org

world and your life will come to an end.)"[70]

Our beloveds are a trust which Allah ﷻ had kept by us for a period of time

Qaasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr narrates, "My wife passed away. Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazi visited me to pay his condolences. He said, "There was a Faqeeh, Aalim (scholar) and great worshipper from the Bani Israil. He had a wife who he was very fond of and who he loved a lot. She passed away. He was overcome by extreme grief and sadness over her loss, to the extent that he would remain in seclusion in his house, lock the door and avoid meeting people. No one was allowed to visit him. A woman heard about his situation. She came to his house and said, "I need to ask him for a fatwa regarding a certain situation. I will have to mention it directly in front of him." The people left and she remained at his door. She insisted, "I have to speak to him (directly)." A person (close family member or a servant etc.) came to him and said, "There is a woman here who wants to ask you a question. She insists that she must ask you this question directly. The people have gone, but she refuses to move from the door." He said, 'Give her permission to enter."

She entered and said, "I have come to ask you for a fatwa regarding an important matter." He said, "What is it?" She explained, "I borrowed from my neighbour some golden jewellery, which I used to wear and lend to others. It has been by me for a long time. The neighbours have now sent a message, asking for it back. Do I have to return it to them?" He said, 'Of course." She pleaded, "But it stayed with me for a long time?" He replied, "That's all the more reason why you have to return it to them, since they (so kindly) let you use it for such a long time." She said, "May Allah have mercy on you. But why then are you so sad over that (wife) which Allah lent to you for a period of time and then took it back from you? He has more right to take her back than you have to keep her." He understood

70 Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah no.35413

what she was saying, and Allah benefitted him by these wise words of this woman.[71]

Whether you are patient or not, Allah's ﷻ decree will come to pass

When As'ath ibnul Qays lost his son, Ali ؓ gave him the following advice: If you are grieved, then that is what is expected due to your blood-ties. And if you are patient, then Allah (i.e. Allah's ﷻ pleasure, friendship and love) will be the replacement for your son. If you are patient, taqdeer will come to pass and you will be rewarded. And if you impatient, taqdeer will come to pass and you will be sinful."[72]

The deceased ones are on a holiday to a foreign destination

A man lost his son and was overcome with grief. He complained about this to Hasan Basri ؒ. Hasan ؒ asked, "Was your son ever away from home?" He replied, "Yes." He asked, "Was he more often away from home than at home?" He replied, "Yes." Hasan ؒ advised, "Then just understand that he is away from home (on a trip to a foreign destination called Aakhirah). There was never an occasion when his absence from home was better for you and more beneficial than this time." The man commented, "O Abu Sa'eed, you have lightened my grief over my son."[73]

Four favours in every difficulty

Shurayh ؒ said, "Whenever I am afflicted with any difficulty, I praise Allah and thank Him over that condition 4 times; I praise Him because the difficulty could have been worse than what it is. I praise Him because He is the One who granted me the patience to bear it. 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. I praise Him

71 Muwatta Imaam Maalik no.561

72 Tarikh Ibn Asaakir 9/139, Kanzul Ummaal

73 Tasliyatu Ahlil Masaa'ib pg107; Al-Adhkaar pg152

because He did not make me suffer a calamity regarding my Deen."[74]

Being deprived of reward or earning sin is the greatest calamity

Abdur-Rahman ibn Mahdi lost his son and was so overtaken with grief that he stopped eating and drinking. Imaam Shafi'ee ﵀ wrote the following letter of condolence to him: Understand well that the greatest calamity which could befall you is that you lose your happiness and you are deprived of reward. And it would be even worse if these 2 losses are combined with the calamity of committing a sin (of complaining regarding Allah's decision and being unhappy with His command).[75]

The deceased ones are in a world free of sorrows and worries

The Khalifah Harun ar-Rashid lost a son. Fudhail ibn Iyaadh ﵀ wrote the following letter of condolence to him: O Ameerul-Mu'mineen. You should try to be more grateful to Allah now that He has taken your son away from you, compared to the time when He granted him to you. O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, Allah ﷻ is the one who granted him as a gift to you, and now He has just taken that gift back. Had he been allowed to remain in this world for your sake, you would never have been saved from many fitnahs (trials, tests and difficulties) related to him. Do you not see how distressed you have become over his death and how grief-stricken you are over his separation? Are you pleased to live in a world like this for yourself? And do you desire such a world (which is full of grief and sorrows) for your son as well? Understand well. He is now safe from all worries, while you remain in danger.[76]

74 Shu'abul Imaan no.9507

75 Shu'abul Imaan no.9712

76 Shu'abul Imaan no.9709

The deceased ones have been released from a jail

A person who had lost his child was greatly grieved. Many Ulama like Sufyan ibn Uyainah ﵀, Muslim ibn Khaalid ﵀ and others tried to console him, but to no avail. Finally, Fudhail ibn Iyaadh ﵀ arrived, to visit him. He said, "Listen! Tell me, had you and your son both been in jail, and your son was released before you, wouldn't you be happy?!" "Of course" he responded. Fudhail ﵀ said, "So your son has just left this jail called the world before you. (Therefore, you ought to rejoice over his freedom.)" The man was pleased, and said, "I am greatly consoled (by these words)."[77]

Allah ﷻ takes care of our beloveds better than we can

Al-Fadhl ibn Sahl (an Abbasi ruler) had a son by the name of Abbas who passed away. He was overcome with grief over the loss of his son. Ibrahim ibn Musa al-Alawi visited him and uttered the following couplets:

اصبر نكن بك صابرين فإنما ... صبر الرعية عند صبر الراس

وخير من العباس أجرك بعده ... و الله خير منك للعباس

Adopt sabr (patience), we too will be patient (following in your footsteps). The public can only exercise patience when the leader is patient. The reward you will receive on the departure of Abbas is better for you (than Abbas), and Allah is far better for Abbas than you (as he is now hopefully in the company of Allah and under His care).[78] [79]

77 Tasliyatu Ahlil Masaa'ib pg.115

78 Mufti Abdur-Raheem Lachpori ﵀ has attributed these words to a Bedouin who consoled Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Abbas ﵁ with these words after the death of his respected father, Sayyiduna Abbaas ﵁. (Fataawa Rahimiyyah v.7 pg.85) However, I was unable to trace its source from the books of history.

79 Tasliyatu Ahlil Masaa'ib, Wafayaatul-A'yaan 4/44

They are in the presence of Allah ﷻ and the reward for losing them is everlasting

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ explained: To exceed the limits in grieving is a sin and it is such a sin that is completely without pleasure. It is Waajib (compulsory) to cure this malady... What I am referring to here is deliberate and intentional grief and not natural and uncontrollable grief which occurs at the time of separation. There is no harm in natural grief. Allah says in the Qur'aan: Whatever is with you will be exhausted and whatever is with Allah will remain. (Surah Nahl) This verse contains the cure for grief. This discussion is based on that instance when the grief is because of the loss of a beloved thing (or person). If the grieving person comes to know of a replacement to the lost object with conviction, a replacement that is thousands of times superior to the lost one, he will not grieve. For example, a person has one rand in his hand. Another person comes and grabs it from him, but replaces it with a 10 rand note. Obviously he will not grieve for the one rand (because the replacement is superior). In fact, if the person wishes to return the one rand and retrieve the 10 rand note, he will become displeased! This is the lesson taught to us in this verse i.e. although we love the things in our possession, but they are all of a temporal nature. Thus, we are instructed to focus our gaze on that which is better and eternal and not on the temporal things, so that love for the temporal can be subdued. The actual cure for grief is to keep the gaze on the beloved things of the Aakhirah and not concentrate on the beloved things of the world. If this is done, then the grief will dissipate.

So a wonderful method of alleviating grief is to understand that the things by Allah ﷻ (in the hereafter) are eternal and only they are worthy of our love and attachment.[80]

80 Irshaadaat Hazrat Thanwi – translated by Ml Yusuf Laher

Love of Allah and His zikr will bring peace to the heart

Maulana Ahmad Husain ﷺ had lost his son, Maulana Muhammad Ameen ﷺ, in the prime of his youth at the age of 20. He was the only boy within the entire family. He recited the name 'Allah' thrice and passed away. There was chaos in the house. But his parents were so patient and grateful that it seemed as if nothing had occurred. His mother lifted her hands in dua and said, "O Allah. This trust of Yours was with me for 20 years. If there have been any deficiencies from me (towards this child), please forgive me." She then busied herself in recitation of the Qur'an. Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani ﷺ visited them in Laharpur, where he delivered a discourse for 45 minutes on the topic of sabr and shukr.

After receiving a letter from them in which they explained the condition of their grief, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani ﷺ wrote the following letter to the wife of Maulana Ahmad Husain: Assalaamu alaikum. Your letter reached me... From your letter, I understand that, due to the passing away of Marhoom Muhammad Ameen, your condition is just as it was. You should spend the remaining days of your life in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ. His remembrance and His love will bring about peace and contentment to the heart in this world and the Hereafter. To attach your heart so much to a temporary being, to the extent that one loses focus on the Ever-Existing Being (Allah ﷻ), is harmful to one. The pleasure of Allah ﷻ is superior and more important compared to anything else. Keep this in mind. Only remember the deceased so much that you remember to send for him rewards (Isaalus-Thawaab) as much as possible. Sending rewards for the deceased is such an action from which both parties (the sender and the one it is being sent to) benefit. (Excessive) Grief and sorrow are such states from which neither party benefits. Rather, one's life and health are ruined as a result. I hope that you will keep this in mind from now on, and will spend your precious time in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ. I make dua that Allah allows you to do such actions which please Him, and gives you

the strength to be patient and tolerant. Aameen.[81]

Seven priceless advices

A friend of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ who was residing in England lost his only son. Maulana wrote to him a letter to console him after learning of his overwhelming grief. The summary of the letter was as follows:

a. It is only by the special mercies of Allah ﷻ and through the support of His ta'alluq (relationship with us) that one can maintain his mental state after his mind and heart were laden with such a mountain's weight of grief.

b. The special servants of Allah ﷻ, or those whom Allah ﷻ wishes to select as His special ones, are normally made to undergo conditions whereby their hearts are afflicted with temporary grief. This leads to them being granted the true everlasting love of Allah ﷻ. Spiritual states which are acquired after years of efforts and (nafl) ibaadah are traversed and acquired in moments through such difficulties.

c. It is only a true connection with Allah ﷻ which contains such strength and pleasure that lightens and eases every grief.

d. Allah ﷻ states, "I am with those whose hearts are broken."[82] Consider Whom you have gained on your loss.

e. The separation is temporary. In Aakhirah, we will reunite (with those who are deceased), and will be together forever thereafter.

f. Recite

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْم

in abundance. Ponder over its meaning: 'O The Ever-living and the Maintainer of all the creation. What is it difficult for you to take care of my small little heart. By Your mercy, take care of it.'

Sometimes recite the entire dua:

81 Maktoobaat Shaykhul-Islam v.4 pg.228

82 Discussion on these words has passed in the beginning of this booklet

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْم بِرَحْمَتِكَ أَسْتَغِيْث .

The last part means: 'I beseech You for Your help through Your mercy.' Rasulullah ﷺ would beseech Allah ﷻ for His help through the above words whenever he faced any difficulty, distress or worry.[83] Considering that you are a humble servant of that great Nabi, recite it in abundance. Insha-Allah, by the blessings of following Nabi ﷺ, a special form of blessings will descend on your heart from the direction of Madinah Munawwarah which will heal the wounds of your heart.

g. Never be alone, as far as possible. Spend time in the company of your close friends, to occupy your heart. If it is possible to spend time in the company of friends who are Ahlullah (men of Allah ﷻ), then that will work wonders and will be extremely beneficial for you.[84]

Summary of the entire book

The psychology of Imaan is as follows:

1. Remember that Allah ﷻ is testing us because He loves us and He wants good for us
2. Allah ﷻ uses such tests as an excuse to draw us closer to Him
3. Allah ﷻ grants us this opportunity to fill up the gaps of our heart with His Divine love
4. Make Tafweedh (resign ourselves) to Taqdeer (the will of Allah ﷻ)
5. Allah ﷻ does as He wills, yet His doings are always full of wisdom
6. Acknowledge the source of the trial - Allah
7. The reality of the matter is that our loved ones belong to Allah ﷻ and had come with a fixed time period
8. Allah ﷻ loves sabr and those who make sabr. Therefore He wants to make us His beloveds
9. Look at those going through really tough conditions. Then make shukr

83 Sunan Tirmizi no.3524 from Anas ؓ, Mustadrak Haakim no.1875 from Ibn Mas'ud ؓ

84 Dated 25 Rabi'ul Awwal 1392, from Tarbiyat-e-Aashiqaan-e-Khuda v.2 pg.87

for what we have
10. Ponder over the great rewards
11. Take inspiration from the lives of the Ambiyaa, Ulama and the pious
12. Use the pain to make Dua
13. Seek the help of Allah ﷻ through Salaah
14. Seek solace from the Qur'an and in zikr
15. Ponder over what your loved one is hopefully enjoying in the Aakhirah.

Sabr (Patience) is the exam of Allah's ﷻ lovers. How can we acquire sabr and make the most out of our test?

1. Ihtisaab - Ponder over the great rewards of sabr
2. The great practice of istirjaa' - 'Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon'
3. Get something better in replacement, by just adding a few extra words – the dua of Ummu Salamah g
4. Make dua to Allah to grant you sabr
5. Ponder over the greatest loss ever faced, the death of Rasulullah ﷺ

Don'ts for those who have lost a loved one:

1. Do not become obsessed with the tragedy and don't continue to brood over it
2. Do not bottle up your feelings
3. Do not dwell in isolation
4. Do not become insecure or aggressive over insensitive comments
5. Do not deprive yourself of the great reward by being impatient and complaining

Is it a problem to cry? The answer is 'no'

Ponder over the many incidents of great people who were patient and their wise words of consolation