

## When Sufferings Are Blessings

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A Muslim recovered from a serious illness and said “Alhamdu Lillah, the Merciful Allah has given me full recovery”. The atheist friend taunted “if your Allah is Merciful, then why did He give you the illness in the first place?” (The over intelligent Taslima Nasrin has raised the question.)

Now come to think of it, is it an intelligent question? The atheist says, if Allah is Merciful, He should not give His beloved servant any illness. But Allah is not only Merciful, He is All Merciful. He does not discriminate between friend and foe, so He should not give any illness to any individual ever. So, the world should be free of all illnesses. A splendid world it will be, but not the world we know.

Again come to think of a matter, more serious than illness, and should not Allah be Merciful and Just in this respect? Some people die in childhood, some die in the prime of life, and some attain a life of nearly hundred years or even more. According to the atheist’s reasoning, everybody born on earth should live the same age, disease free, say a hundred years. To ensure equal longevity to all, all accidents must be eliminated, even minor ones, to eliminate sufferings. A splendid world, but not the one that we know. Have you noticed, a class of people have been eliminated, the doctors. If there is no disease, no accidents, no sufferings, there is not any place for the doctor, or for the hospital. A splendid world, but not the one we know. Besides, when everybody knows when he is going to die, old people meeting each other, instead of greeting “how do you do?” will ask “aren’t you going to die tomorrow, or the day after?” What pleasant greetings!

Just as the Merciful Allah cannot cause bodily sufferings, He cannot allow mental sufferings too. You know mental suffering is often more distressing than physical pain. So the Merciful Allah cannot make a girl ugly. To ensure happiness to all, equal happiness, all girls and all young men have to be equally beautiful. The differences of white, black, brown and yellow cannot remain any more, all will have to be the same color, same shade, to make them equally happy. Now, is physical beauty the only means of happiness?

Come to think of a world where every- body is equally beautiful, equally healthy, equally wealthy and equally happy. What a world it will be! But equally wealthy! How can it possibly be? People earn their living by diverse means, and the possibility of earnings is never equal, unless it is regulated. Now, a regulated and regimented human society, can it ever be happy?

Mental happiness is not dependent on bodily charms and health alone. Economic condition of every individual and society plays a major role in determining the physical wellbeing and mental

condition of the individuals. The poor cannot afford the food the rich people eat, and cannot dream of using the luxury items the affluent people use. So to make all people equally happy, the Merciful Allah will have to make everybody equally rich by His command. He cannot leave the matter in the hands of the competitors. You see, some of them may be more efficient than the others, with more ingenious ideas, and some may even be dishonest. Now, can you call it justice, if the more efficient one is cut down to size, for the sake of the less efficient ones? And what about the dishonest ones, will they not be punished? When wealth is distributed equally by divine decree, and all competition is eliminated, how will the agricultural and industrial production keep on boosting? Rather will not all production flop instantly? Most people will think, if I am not going to earn more than the others, why should I exert? Why not go on a vacation? So, inevitably there will be famine. People will starve and die. So you see, the idea of equal distribution of wealth by divine decree, in a world where production depends on human effort, is absurd and foolish.

The question of the Merciful Allah not giving illness to His beloved servant in this world is also equally foolish.

There are people who believe in Allah and there are others who do not. In giving wealth and health in this world, Allah does not discriminate between the two. Allah does not punish the unbelievers for their sins in this world; the punishment is in the eternal life of the hereafter. The reward of the believers also will be given in the hereafter.

In this life of this world there is equal opportunity for all, in earning a livelihood and in acquiring the comforts and luxuries of this world. The believer besides earning all these, has to try earnestly to gain the rewards of the hereafter. So he has to refrain from many a temptation, such as the temptation of gaining wealth by unfair means. In business he will not adopt fraudulent means. He will refrain from usury and bribery. Moreover the well to do Muslim has to calculate his wealth and pay Zakat every year. Over and above, he has to be charitable towards his poor neighbors, relatives and the beggars. So, it is not very easy for a Muslim to become wealthy overnight.

Illnesses and accidents occur at random, indiscriminately of believers and unbelievers. The incidence is often determined by the failure of maintenance of personal and social hygiene and safety measures.

A Muslim when afflicted with pain or injury will often say it is a test from Allah. Even when suffering he will say "Alhamdu lillah". He will praise Allah for giving him the illness. How strange! Is it not strange mannerism that a person should praise Allah for giving him pain? A Muslim believes his sins drop out, if he perseveres, goes on being a good Muslim in spite of the pain. So, for a Muslim the sufferings are blessings.

In the battle-field when a Muslim sustains mortal injuries, he is rather elated. He knows if he dies, Allah will forgive all his sins and grant him martyrdom and Paradise in the eternal life of the hereafter. So the companions of the Prophet(SAS) were never afraid. As they were never afraid, a handful of three hundred and thirteen stalwarts triumphed over a thousand unbelievers. The Muslims kept up their triumph for over a thousand years, over three continents.

So you see, for true happiness in this world, good health, good looks and wealth are not the all necessary things. In spite of getting all these, one may be frustrated and unhappy, may even commit suicide. The thing that is most necessary is faith in Allah and in the hereafter.