

Articles

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How Hope and Mercy Shape Our Lives



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Introduction

There is a sense of heartache at the center of each person. In every facet of life, we will encounter some form of personal struggle — pain on the scale of our individual capacity. We cannot evade suffering, but we can relieve it — the remedy simply lies in a glimmer of hope and reliance through mercy from Allah ﷻ.

Hanging on to Hope

Finding hope necessitates patience. Hope doesn't mean denying the painful realities; it means facing them and responding to them in a manner that is pleasing to Allah ﷻ. The

patron of pain first and foremost are the prophets — and their endurance throughout severe tests, demonstrates to us the most important resolve; never to lose hope in Allah جلّ جلاله.

Allah جلّ جلاله conferred upon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم the greatest mu'jizah, the Qur'an. And to console His beloved who underwent extreme pain in the Year of Sorrow, He bestowed the most profound gift, Surah Yusuf — an inspirational journey filled with highs and lows. At the helm of the Surah is a love story which unfolds the inseparable bond between a father, Yaqub AS and his son, Yusuf AS.

Not a day went by that Yaqub did not mourn the loss of his beloved son, Yusuf — up until a point that his family members dubbed him 'senile'. Yaqub's heart was significantly tested but his faith never wavered. Thus, Allah جلّ جلاله highlights the beauty of his patience in these intense moments of sorrow — a servant's testament of true love to his Master.

For a long time, Yaqub suppressed his yearnings for Yusuf in the depths of his heart. Yet, Allah جلّ جلاله discloses how he resigned to his profound sadness in private by profusely prostrating to his Lord — the only one that truly understood him. And in his grief-stricken state, his cry displayed underlying hope. He was hopeful and certain that help will come from the One capable of changing his fate. In his emotional du'ā', he said:

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

"I complain of my anguish and sorrow only to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know."(12:86)

Mercy for the Faithful

Yaqub's exemplary fortitude at the pinnacle of his pain, shows us that in times of distress, our īmān is what allows us to make profound mindset shifts. A true believer turns to Allah جلّ جلاله and trusts that there will always be openings from Him that brings about ease in times of hardship, as He has promised:

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

So, surely with hardship comes ease (94:5)

Indeed, tragedy can help us begin to foster closeness to our Creator. It is part of Allah's mercy — it is His way of offering opportunities to converse with him. He wants to soften our hearts, He wants to hear our voice, and He wants to offload our heavy burden. After all, who else can offer us mercy, if not Allah ﷻ?

Yaqub's example teaches us we must never despair of Allah's mercy — His doors are always open for us. At our lowest point, our eyes may weep, our hearts may be aggrieved, but our tongues should only utter that which is pleasing to Allah ﷻ — this is the Prophetic method.

In our Deen, we are taught to wait in order to attain the best outcome — a delayed reward in the Hereafter, upstages instant gratification in this world. Nevertheless, in Allah's boundless mercy, the father-son pair were rewarded with an epic reunion in this world after enduring long-term agony. Through their account, the Prophet ﷺ was guided by hope and mercy, and so are we. That is why Allah ﷻ deemed it His best story until the end of time.