

WHAT TO DO AT THE TIME OF ADVERSITY

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at-tazkīyah

Our world is full of turmoil; wherever we look, we find people undergoing difficulties, facing problems, fearing for their lives and that of their families. Many people follow the news and discuss these situations in their friend circles, but if asked about their contribution to improve these conditions, their answer would reveal no contribution, based on the belief that a common person is incapable of bringing about change.

In the apparent it seems true that an individual is unable to resolve such big issues, but one must remember that Allāh ﷻ has granted His servants such tools through which they can alleviate any problem, big or small. In this regard there are seven points detailed below which each and every person can act upon whether rich or poor, young or old, man or woman or influential or non-influential. Through them one can attract the Help of Allāh ﷻ:

1) Tawbah and Istighfār (Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness)

Each and every sin committed has a negative effect associated with it. These negative effects not only lead to failure in the Hereafter, but also to problems and difficulties in this world. Allāh ﷻ mentions in the Glorious Qur'ān,

*Calamities have appeared on the land and the sea
because of what the hands of people have earned.
(30:41)*

If a person was to sincerely repent and ask Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness, then not only will Allāh ﷻ erase the sins from

his book of deeds, but He will also remove the negative effects that these sins have caused in this world. Nabī ﷺ has mentioned,

Whoever holds fast to istighfār, Allāh creates a way out for him from every difficulty, grants him relief from every worry and provides for him from sources he does not even imagine. (Abū Dāwūd)

2) Taqwā (Obedience to Allāh ﷻ)

After tawbah and istighfār, a person needs to remain free from sin by holding fast to taqwā. Taqwā, in brief, means to carry out the Commands of Allāh ﷻ and to refrain from those things which have been prohibited by Him. If one does commit a sin, he should not allow any opportunity for the negative effects to appear. Rather, he should immediately carry out tawbah and once again tread the path of taqwā. Allāh ﷻ has mentioned,

Whoever adopts taqwā, He brings forth a way out for him and provides for him from where he does not even imagine. (65:2-3)

Indeed, Allāh is with those who adopt taqwā and who carry out good deeds. (16:128)

3) Du‘ā (Supplication)

Allāh ﷻ is the Almighty and All-Knowing. Each and everything is in His control and nothing occurs without His knowledge or will. He has the power to remove the greatest difficulty. Therefore, it is imperative that we turn towards Him and ask for His Help.

There are endless examples which display the Power and Help of Allāh ﷻ towards His servants where He made the impossible, possible. It was Allāh ﷻ who rescued Sayyidunā Yūnus ؑ when he was swallowed by a fish. When Sayyidunā Mūsā ؑ and the Banū Isrā'īl were stuck at the shore of the Red Sea with Fir'awn and his army in pursuit, it was Allāh ﷻ who made the water collect on opposite sides like two mountains, leaving a dry path in between for them to cross. It was Allāh ﷻ who exchanged Sayyidunā Ismā'īl ؑ for a ram just as Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ was about to sacrifice him. It was Allāh ﷻ who granted 313 ill-equipped Ṣaḥābah ؓ victory over 1,000 well equipped soldiers in Badr. It was Allāh ﷻ who liberated Makkah Al-Mukarramah at the hands of Nabī ﷺ in the short span of 8 years after migration.

Hence, in times of distress and difficulty, one should supplicate to Allāh ﷻ, the Most-Powerful and ask for His Help. Allāh ﷻ has mentioned,

Supplicate to me, I will respond to you. (40:60)

I respond to the call of one when he supplicates to Me. (2:186)

If a person implements the first two points; tawbah and taqwā, and then makes du'ā, Allāh ﷻ will most definitely accept his du'ā and fulfill his needs. This is the greatest weapon granted by Allāh ﷻ which each and every person can use in all circumstances to overcome any problem. Nabī ﷺ has stated,

Du'ā is the weapon of a believer. (Al-Hākīm)

It is such a powerful weapon that not only does it remove

existing problems, but it also prevents future difficulties from arising. Nabī ﷺ has mentioned in a ḥadīth,

Indeed, du‘ā benefits (a person) with regards to what has already befallen and with regards to what has not yet befallen. So hold fast, o servants of Allāh, to du‘ā. (At-Tirmidhī)

4) Ṣadaqah (Charity)

Ṣadaqah is an effective method of removing the Anger of Allāh ﷻ and acquiring His pleasure. If Allāh ﷻ is pleased, we will remain free of afflictions throughout our lives and we can hope for a peaceful and pleasant death. This is why Nabī ﷺ has mentioned,

Indeed, ṣadaqah extinguishes the Anger of the Rabb and prevents an evil death. (At-Tirmidhī)

Ṣadaqah is similar to du‘ā in that it also leads to existing problems being solved and prevents future problems from occurring. Nabī ﷺ has mentioned,

Treat your sick through ṣadaqah. (Aṭ-Ṭabarānī)

Hasten in giving ṣadaqah, for tribulations cannot get past ṣadaqah. (Aṭ-Ṭabarānī)

5) Ṣabr (Patience)

At times of distress and difficulty, it is also very important to exercise patience. One should not become impatient and begin complaining about Allāh ﷻ and questioning His Decree. Exercising patience shows submission to the Will of Allah ﷻ which consequently leads to the uplifting of difficulties. In the Glorious Qur’ān, there is mention of when

Nabī ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ were going through difficult times. In such situations, Allāh ﷻ encouraged ṣabr,

If you exercise patience and adopt taqwā, their conspiracies shall not harm you at all. Allah is encompassing of what they do. (3:120)

6) Ṣalāh

Although a believer should carry out all the Commands of Allāh ﷻ at all times, ṣalāh becomes even more important at times of distress and difficulty. Therefore, we should become punctual with our daily farḍ ṣalāh and perform them according to the sunnah method. Furthermore, any farḍ ṣalāh missed previously should be performed.

Along with farḍ ṣalāh, one should aim to perform all the sunan mu'akkadah (emphasised sunan), sunan ghayr mu'akkadah (non-emphasised sunan) and nafl (optional) forms of ṣalāh too. Allāh ﷻ has mentioned,

Seek help through patience and ṣalāh. (2:45)

7) Dhikr (Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ)

We are always in need of the Help and Mercy of Allāh ﷻ and the Dhikr of Allāh ﷻ attracts His Help and Mercy like a magnet. Firstly, the Dhikr of Allāh ﷻ attracts His attention. Allāh ﷻ mentions in the Glorious Qur'ān,

So remember Me, I will remember you... (2:152)

Once the attention of Allāh ﷻ is gained, the Help and Mercy of Allāh ﷻ comes in abundance. Allāh ﷻ says,

'I am with my servant wherever he remembers Me and his lips move with My remembrance.' (Al-Bukhārī)

Certain adhkār come to mind which should be recited abundantly during testing times:

a) لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ، إِيَّيْكَ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

There is no deity but You, You are pure (from all imperfections). Indeed, I was from amongst the wrongdoers.

When Sayyidunā Yūnus ؑ was trapped in the stomach of the fish and had lost every possibility of survival, he remembered Allāh ﷻ with the above mentioned words which attracted His Help.

b) حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Allāh is sufficient for us and He is the best One to entrust.

This dhikr has also proven to be very effective in times of difficulty. It is what Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ recited when being thrown into the fire and as a result Allāh ﷻ prevented the fire from burning him

c) Reciting durūd (salutations upon Nabī ﷺ) also brings the Help and Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. ‘Allāmah Sakhāwī ؒ has quoted a narration from Imām Aḥmad ؒ that someone once asked, “O Rasūlullāh, how will it be if I dedicated all my time to confer durūd upon you?” Nabī ﷺ replied, “In that case, Allāh shall take care of all your worries in this world and the Hereafter.” Therefore, one should bring the recitation of durūd into one’s daily practices.

There are many forms of durūd, the shortest being صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the best being Durūd-e-Ibrāhīm. One

may recite any formula of durūd which one is accustomed to. One formula which is especially helpful at times of adversity is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ، وَصَلِّ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ

O Allāh! Send Your Special Mercy upon Muḥammad, who is Your Servant and Your Messenger, and send Your Special Mercy upon the believing men and women and Muslim men and women.

These seven points: tawbah; taqwā; du‘ā; ṣadaqah; ṣabr; ṣalāh; and dhikr are tasks which each and every one is able to carry out in every circumstance. Difference of gender, age, influence, health and busy schedules are not preventing factors in this matter. Individuals who carry out these points will experience peace and tranquillity in their individual lives and if the Ummah collectively was to carry out these points, it will experience peace and tranquility collectively.

I urge all my dear readers to endeavour to act upon these points and share them with others so they may also practice, and together bring a change in the difficult condition they are facing, inshā’allāh.

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