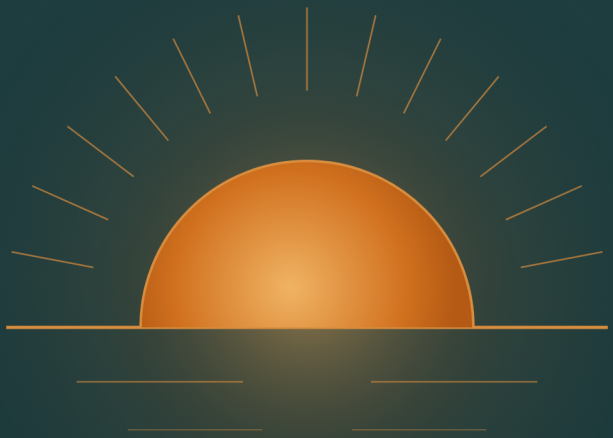

لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ

Light After Darkness

The Islamic Way Out of Sadness

SAKEENA PRESS

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Light After Darkness: The Islamic Way Out of Sadness

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INTRODUCTION

When the Light Feels Far

Some seasons of life are heavy in a way that is hard to explain. The colour drains out of things you used to love. Mornings feel like mountains. You smile where smiling is expected, and underneath it something in you is tired in a way that sleep does not fix. If that is where you are, this book was written for you, slowly and gently, the way one speaks to a tired heart.

Begin with the truth that everything else in this book stands on. Feeling sad, heavy, or low does not mean your faith is weak.

Sadness visited the best people who ever lived. The Qur'an names the grief of the prophets without a word of blame. Yaqub, peace be upon him, wept over Yusuf for years. Our own Prophet ﷺ lived through a year so painful that history remembers it as the Year of Sorrow. Allah saw all of that grief, recorded it in His Book and in the Sunnah, and honoured the grievers. So whatever voice tells you that a real believer would not feel what you are feeling, that voice did not come from this religion.

What Islam forbids is not sadness. It is despair, the belief that the door of Allah's mercy has shut in your face. And even that prohibition is

itself a mercy, because it is Allah's way of saying: whatever you are carrying, do not let go of Me, because I have not let go of you.

۞ قُلْ يَٰعِبَادِيَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ

Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

SURAH AZ-ZUMAR 39:53

The scholars call this the widest verse of hope in the Qur'an. Look at who it addresses: those who have gone against their own souls. Look at what it forbids them: despair. And look at what it promises: all sins, forgiven. If that door is open to a person at their very worst, it is open to you.

What this book is

This is a companion for the sad and heavy heart, built from the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah. We will sit with the prophets in their sorrows and learn how revelation met them. We will draw the line our religion draws between sadness, which is human, and despair, which the Qur'an forbids because hope is our right. Then we will walk, one small chapter at a time, through what lifts the heart: the Qur'an itself, salah, du'a, care of the body, the help of people, small steady deeds, making peace with Allah's decree, and hope.

Every verse in this book is given in Arabic with its English meaning, and every hadith is cited from its source with its grading where it is outside the two Sahihs. Nothing here rests on feelings alone.

What this book is not

This book is not a medical manual, and it does not replace professional care. Sadness and depression are not the same thing. Depression can be an illness of the brain and body, just as diabetes is an illness of the pancreas, and it can need a qualified doctor or therapist. Seeking that help is fully Islamic, and a whole chapter of this book says so plainly. If your heaviness has lasted for weeks, or it is taking away your sleep, your food, your work, or your will to live, please speak to a professional now, today if you can, and let someone close to you know how you are feeling. Take this book along as a companion on that road, not as a substitute for it.

May Allah make these pages a ladder of light for you, and may He write for your heart what He wrote for the hearts of His messengers after their hardest nights: ease, relief, and hope.

CHAPTER ONE

What Sadness Is, and What It Is Not

Sadness is part of the design of this world. Allah did not create the dunya as a garden of unbroken ease; He created it as a test, and He said so without softening it:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَىْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَنفُسِ وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient,

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:155

ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَصَٰبَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ

Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allāh, and indeed to Him we will return."

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:156

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَٰتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُهْتَدُونَ

Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:157

Loss is in the list. Fear is in the list. And the people who pass through them are not described as weak believers; they are given blessings, mercy, and the name of the guided. From the first page of this book, let that settle the question: the test is not whether sorrow comes to you. It comes to everyone. The test is which direction your face is turned while it passes.

Sadness is not a sin

A feeling that enters without your permission is not written against you. The scholars distinguish between what washes over the heart and what the servant chooses. The heaviness you wake up with is not a choice. What you do inside it, whether you keep calling on Allah, whether you treat people gently, whether you take the means of healing, that is where your reward lives. And the feeling itself, carried with faith, is not wasted:

No fatigue, nor illness, nor worry, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, not even the prick of a thorn, except that Allah expiates some of his sins by it.

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 5641

Sadness is named in this hadith by the Prophet ﷺ himself, as something that purifies, not something that disgraces. The nights that feel useless are doing quiet work in your scale.

Sadness is not weak faith

This must be said clearly, because many sincere believers have been hurt here. A heavy heart is not a hole in your iman. Faith is where you turn; feelings are weather that passes over the one turning. Some of the most devoted worshippers in our history knew long seasons of grief, and the Prophet ﷺ said that the most severely tested people are the prophets, then the next best and the next best (Jami at-Tirmidhi 2398, graded hasan sahih). If sorrow meant distance from Allah, the closest people to Him would have been the happiest people in the world at every hour, and they were not.

And heaviness is not a punishment either. The Prophet ﷺ said:

> *Whomever Allah wills good for, He afflicts him.*
>
> SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 5645

Affliction, met with patience, is a sign of Allah's attention, not His anger.

Sadness and depression are not the same word

Ordinary sadness rises and falls with its reasons. Depression is different: a heaviness that stays for weeks, that steals sleep and appetite and energy, that drains meaning out of things you love, sometimes without any reason you can point to. Islam has room for both truths at once: the spiritual medicines in this book are real, and depression can also be an illness of the body and brain that deserves a doctor, exactly as a fever does. Chapter eight is devoted to that, because taking medicine and talking to a therapist are part of tying the camel, not a failure of trust.

However heavy the load looks today, it has already been weighed by the Most Merciful, and He does not load a soul beyond what it can carry:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا ٱكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ
رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَآ إِن نَّسِينَآ أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَآ إِصْرًا كَمَا
حَمَلْتَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦ ۖ
وَٱعْفُ عَنَّا وَٱغْفِرْ لَنَا وَٱرْحَمْنَا ۚ أَنتَ مَوْلَىٰنَا فَٱنصُرْنَا عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ
ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned. "Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people."

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:286

A GENTLE PRACTICE

Tonight, before you sleep, speak to Allah in your own language for one minute. Do not polish the words. Tell Him the heaviness exactly as it is, because He already knows it and He loves to be asked. Then say alhamdulillah once, for one small true thing from today, even if it is only that the day is over. One honest minute a night keeps the road between you and your Lord open, and an open road is everything.

CHAPTER TWO

The Prophets Knew Sorrow

If sorrow were a mark of failure, Allah would have shielded His prophets from it. Instead He recorded their griefs in His Book, in detail, forever. He wanted every heavy heart that would ever open the Qur'an to find family there.

Yaqub, peace be upon him

Yaqub lost Yusuf and grieved for him for years, until sorrow took his eyesight. The Qur'an does not hide it:

وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَـٰٓأَسَفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَٱبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ ٱلْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

And he turned away from them and said, "Oh, my sorrow over Joseph," and his eyes became white from grief, for he was [of that] a suppressor.

SURAH YUSUF 12:84

A prophet of Allah, white-eyed from weeping, suppressing a grief that would not end. And when his sons pressed him, he told them where all of it was going:

قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَشۡكُواْ بَثِّي وَحُزۡنِيٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَأَعۡلَمُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ

He said, "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allāh, and I know from Allāh that which you do not know.

SURAH YUSUF 12:86

I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah. He did not deny the sorrow and he did not parade it; he gave it an address. Then, in the same breath, he drew the one line a believer's grief never crosses:

يَٰبَنِيَّ ٱذۡهَبُواْ فَتَحَسَّسُواْ مِن يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَاْيۡـَٔسُواْ مِن رَّوۡحِ ٱللَّهِۖ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يَاْيۡـَٔسُ مِن رَّوۡحِ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّا ٱلۡقَوۡمُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرُونَ

O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from Allāh. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allāh except the disbelieving people."

SURAH YUSUF 12:87

Do not despair of relief from Allah. Grief, yes. Tears, yes. Years of them, yes. Giving up on Allah, never. That balance is the whole art of believing sorrow, and we learn it from a weeping prophet.

Ayyub, peace be upon him

Ayyub lost his health, his wealth, and his children, and remained for years in an illness that drove people away. His du'a, when it finally rose, is a masterpiece of adab with Allah:

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥٓ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ ٱلضُّرُّ وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ۞

And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the most merciful of the merciful."

SURAH AL-ANBIYA 21:83

فَٱسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُۥ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِۦ مِن ضُرٍّ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ أَهْلَهُۥ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَٰبِدِينَ

So We responded to him and removed what afflicted him of adversity. And We gave him [back] his family and the like thereof with them as mercy from Us and a reminder for the worshippers [of Allāh].

SURAH AL-ANBIYA 21:84

He did not list demands. He stated his pain and named Allah's mercy, and Allah answered, removed the harm, and returned to him more than he had lost, as a reminder for the worshippers. The Qur'an calls his response sabr, and he had wept and ached through every year of it. Patience, again, is not numbness.

Maryam, peace be upon her

Maryam faced the pains of labour alone, carrying a miracle no one would believe, and spoke words of utter exhaustion that Allah chose to preserve in His Book. The answer that came to her was not a rebuke. It was comfort, and provision placed within her reach:

فَنَادَىٰهَا مِن تَحْتِهَآ أَلَّا تَحْزَنِى قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا

But he called her from below her, "Do not grieve; your Lord has provided beneath you a stream.

SURAH MARYAM 19:24

وَهُزِّىٓ إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ ٱلنَّخْلَةِ تُسَٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا

And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates.

SURAH MARYAM 19:25

Do not grieve. Here is water. Here is food, close enough to touch. When a servant of Allah is at the very end of her strength, heaven's response in this story is gentleness and small concrete mercies. Hold on to that picture of your Lord.

The Year of Sorrow

Our Prophet ﷺ lost, in one period, the two pillars of his earthly comfort: Khadijah, may Allah be pleased with her, the wife who had believed in him when the world called him mad, and Abu Talib, the uncle whose protection had held Quraysh back. The seerah remembers that time as Am al-Huzn, the Year of Sorrow. The name itself is a mercy for us: the best of creation ﷺ had a year named after grief, and revelation kept coming, and the mission kept moving, and Allah's love for him did not waver for an instant. Sorrow and nearness to Allah lived in the same heart at the same time.