



The Journey
Hope Amidst an Epidemic

Our dear brother/sister,

Assalaamu alaykum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakatuh!

We pray that you are in the best of conditions--not just in the physical but more importantly the spiritual aspect.

Now that we are experiencing an epidemic in our country, we understand that it is not easy for our regular activities to suddenly be halted and to be separated from our loved ones and friends now that we need to undergo the required quarantine. Bi'dhnullah we can overcome this with patience, and may this lead to deeper faith in our Most Compassionate and Most Merciful Creator.

*Because it is normal during times like this to feel mixed emotions such as fear, sadness and anger, and because reading has been proven to be one effective way to avoid becoming preoccupied with troubling news and to reduce our stress levels, **The Journey** is a reading material that may help us calm down amidst this epidemic, in shaa Allah.*

The Journey is a reminder that all of us are in fact travellers in this world. Sometimes, travel is easy, and the path convenient to follow. At other times, it is confusing and tiring given the load we are carrying. Still, at other times, we are suddenly required to take a stop--either the bus we are riding broke down or the sky turned grey, and many other reasons. It may be surprising, saddening or frustrating to suddenly find ourselves needing to make a stop because of unexpected events. It may also be boring or exasperating, but this sudden and temporary break in our journey can also turn out to be an opportunity to take better care of ourselves, or to reflect and realize that hey, we've actually come a long way and we've already overcome a lot of setbacks, Alhamdulillah. It may also be that we just needed a stopover to notice countless blessings around us.

We need not read this quickly--it's not a race, after all. There are times we may also want to repeatedly read certain parts we love, commit it to

memory and more importantly etch it in our hearts. And even better, let's also share this and the lessons we learned with our loved ones, in shaa Allah.

So, while we are undergoing this quarantine:

Rest. Read. Reflect. Reconnect with Him.

So, come on! Let's start this journey!

Those who believe and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah--
verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.

Noble Qur'an, *Ar Rad* (13): 28

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْهَرَمِ
وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ

اللَّهُمَّ اتِّ نَفْسِي تَقْوَاهَا وَزَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا أَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا
وَمَوْلَاهَا

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا
تَتَّبِعُ وَمِنْ دَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا

*Allaahumma innee a`oodhu bika minal-`ajzi wal-kasali
wal-jubni wal-bukhli wal-harami wa `adhaabil-qabr.
Allaahumma Aati nafsee taqwaahaa, wa zakkihaa, Anta
khayru man zakkaahaa, Anta Waliyyuhaa wa Mawlaahaa.
Allaahummaa innee a`oodhu bika min `ilmin laa
yanfa`u, wa min qalbin laa yakh-sha`u, wa min nafsini
laa tashba`u, wa min da`watin laa yustajaabu lahaa.*

“O Allaah! I seek your refuge from weakness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, decrepit old age, and punishment of the grave. O Allaah! Grant my soul its dutifulness (taqwaa), and purify it, You are the One to purify it: You are its Guardian and its Lord. O Allaah! I seek Your refuge from knowledge that does not benefit, and from a heart that is not humble, and from a soul that is never satisfied, and from a supplication that is not answered.”

(Hadith: Muslim; Ahmad; Tirmidhi; Nasa’i)

Ameen.

Because of the sudden halt in the normal activities of most of us now that we are confined to our homes, the sadness, fear or anger that we are experiencing because of the

epidemic may intensify. We can avoid this and manage our stress levels by understanding deeply the supplication taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

Weakness, laziness, cowardice, miserliness... If we ponder on it deeply, these four are disagreeable traits that we must avoid as much as we can especially now that there is an epidemic. The hadith teaches us to sincerely seek refuge in our Almighty Creator from these traits. However, aside from supplicating, how can we avoid these as much as we can?

1. *Take care of our body.* One of the things that would be asked of us on the Day of Judgment according to one hadith¹ is how we used the body given by Allah. A big part of taking care of our body would be exercise, healthy diet, and enough sleep.

Try our best to do some stretching exercises, help out with the chores (which, if done for the sake of Allah, can be considered as *sadaqah* or charity because we are being of assistance to our loved ones, in shaa Allah), and perform the five daily prayers (which truly helps maintain our physical, mental and spiritual health). If we think of it, these are also the ways to avoid laziness, in shaa Allah. If we will be able to perform these things, we will be able to help not only our own selves, but also those in our home, in shaa Allah.

Try to maintain a healthy diet--according to one hadith², only one-third should be for food, another third for drinks, and the last third for air. This means,

we should avoid excessive eating that would also make it difficult for our heart and other organs to function properly.

2. *Converse with others about how you feel or read calming and inspiring books.* To avoid fear and unnecessary cowardice, it will be helpful to talk to our loved ones. Sometimes, what we assumed to be something only we experience turns out to be experienced by others, too. Knowing this helps us remember that it is indeed normal to go through these emotions during challenging times and that there are actually ways to relieve them, in shaa Allah. Sometimes, too, because we were able to open up about our thoughts and feelings to one another, our relationship, our family, becomes stronger. Often, what started out as a serious conversation turns into a light one and even a return to forgotten things we do together as a family. Alhamdulillah.

Reading good books is also an effective way to reduce the tension we are experiencing. Just like what we are reading right now--this may be the start for us to read books that will deepen our faith, in shaa Allah.

3. *Consider the welfare of others, unite and help one another.* During an epidemic, our readiness to help those in need is tested. Selfishness and miserliness are highly displeasing--and this covers not only material possessions. While we are praying that Allah protects us from these ugly traits, let's also do our best to avoid acts that reflect these traits as much as we can. For instance, it is selfishness to hoard items that are in need during an epidemic especially if it will make

things more difficult for others, and according to one hadith³, such acts will result in Allah's punishment.

Whatever good act that benefits others is considered as *sadaqah* on our part when done for the sake of Allah. As already mentioned, helping family members with chores and engaging in good conversations with them might be of help in making them feel better, in shaa Allah. And, if removing harmful things on the road is considered beneficial for us according to a hadith⁴, wouldn't we be more blessed if we stay home because the virus that we may possibly be already carrying might harm or even cause fatality among others whose health status makes them already at risk?

Aside from the above, this is also an opportunity for us to check on our loved ones who may just be shy to ask for help. In the same way that conversations with people at home may help calm ourselves, this may also be of big help for family members, relatives and friends who are in distant places. Alhamdulillah, we have modern technologies that make it easier to check on one another. This is an opportunity for us to call them, send an SMS or chat with them online. How are they right now, do you think? Do they seem calm or too affected by what is happening? We may share with them this pamphlet to help reduce the extreme emotions that they are experiencing, or, if already on the extremes, advise them to seek professional help for their condition.

It is very important for our community to perform these things because as what Prophet Muhammad (peace and

blessings be upon him)⁵ said, we are like one body that when one part is hurting, the whole body is affected.

May we be able to memorize this supplication which was taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), internalize and do the best we can. Ameen.

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1. Abu Barzah reported: "The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, 'The feet of a servant will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about his lifetime and how he used it, his knowledge and how he acted upon it, his wealth and from where he acquired it and how he spent it, and his body and how he exhausted it.'" (al-Tirmidhī)
 2. Miqdām bin Madikarib reported: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say: 'A human being fills no worse vessel than his stomach. It is sufficient for a human being to eat a few mouthfuls to keep his spine straight. But if he must (fill it), then one third of food, one third for drink and one third for air.'" (Ibn Majah)
 3. Umar ibn al-Khattab reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Whoever hoards food away from the Muslims, Allah will afflict him with leprosy and poverty." (Ibn Majah)
 4. Abu Barzah reported: I said, "O Prophet of Allah, teach me something that will benefit me." The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Remove harmful things from the roads of the Muslims." (Muslim)
 5. Al-Nu'man ibn Bashir reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." (al-Bukhari; Muslim)

So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.

O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.

Noble Qur'an, *Al Baqarah* (2): 152-153

Sometimes, because of the many tasks and concerns we have in our daily life--things to do at home, school or work; bills to pay; things we wish to buy or places we want to visit...there is Someone we forget to remember: our Almighty Creator.

Alhamdulillah for this unexpected halt. Alhamdulillah for the sudden change in our daily routine. Alhamdulillah because we have suddenly been given a chance to deepen our relationship with Him.

How are we and our faith?

Do we often remember Him?

Are we able to perform our duties to Him? The five daily prayers, for example, can we give it more attention from now on? Especially since they only require not even an hour to accomplish out of the twenty four hours He's giving us daily?

How can we further improve our relationship with Him even more?

SubhanAllaah. Alhamdulillah. Allaahu Akbar.

It is comforting to know that He still gave us a chance to pause and ponder. Indeed, this is an opportunity...will you remember Him?

It's also comforting to note that He also informed us of actions to take in times of challenges, Alhamdulillah. As a Teacher, He not only gave the test but also gave the answers: patience and prayer.

Patience and prayer. Two important answers that we need to internalize and implement in our lives to lighten our load in this journey. Patience and prayer.

Do we know how to be patient?

Are we able to optimistically observe patience in every challenge?

What are positive things we can do daily as an integral part of true patience?

And, when we pray, do we sincerely thank Him and ask for His help?

So many questions, indeed...but we also know that all these have corresponding answers.

At all times, and in all kinds of situation, may we be able to remember Him with gratefulness, and may we strive with true patience and sincere prayers to move closer to Him. Ameen.

Allah 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."

Noble Qur'an, *Al Baqarah* (2): 286

Sometimes, because of the weight of the load we're carrying, we can't help but ask ourselves if we can really still make it. Sometimes, doubt and despair prevail...

Alhamdulillah He sent the above verse that reminds us that our Most Merciful, Most Loving Creator will never give us something we cannot bear. It's just that sometimes it seems we can't bear anymore, but the truth is perhaps we just need to take a pause, take a deep breath, pray--cry it all out to Him if we feel the need to do so--and remember that though what we carry is heavy, nothing is impossible with Allah The All-Powerful on whom we rely. Let's rest a bit, brothers and sisters. No one said 'keep going' meant no pauses, right? Even pauses are an important part of the journey. Take a deep breath and say, "Alhamdulillah I'm still here! Alhamdulillah I'm a survivor!"

This is also our chance to memorize this supplication:

Rabbanā lā tuākhidh'nā in nasīnā aw akhtanā. Rabbanā walā tah'mil 'alaynā is'ran kamā hamaltahu 'alāalladhīna min qablinā. Rabbanā walā tuhammil'nā mā lā tāqata lanā bih, wa-u'fu 'annā wa-igh'fir lanā wa-ir'ḥamnā, Anta mawlānā fa-unsur'nā 'alā l-qawmi l-kāfirīn.

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.

May The Almighty strengthen our faith in Him and our belief that He will never ever leave us during challenging times. May He give our hearts the strength to perform the actions necessary to overcome challenges and to remain hopeful and unaffected by sad news from those around us that may even make us doubt our own capacities. And, may He bless us even more in our perseverance to come closer to Him. Ameen.

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,

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

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

Noble Qur'an, *Al Baqarah* (2): 155-157

This is another reminder for us that challenges are indeed part of life in this world. Fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and crops--all part of life. It is another reminder that patience is important in times of calamities.

We've been through so many challenges in life since we were born, right? (*Too many in fact that we've lost count of them already*) But mashaAllah, Alhamdulillah, we're still here! Just a year ago, or a month, a week, or even yesterday, perhaps we were saying we can't take it anymore and we'll be gone soon, but hey, Alhamdulillah, we were able to overcome whatever it was we were facing that time. And, here we are again, fighting and keeping the faith that we will slowly succeed, in shaa Allah!

So, may we continue our prayers and good works. A day or two, who knows, ease will be here. In shaa Allah, ameen.

For us or our loved ones who've been diagnosed with the illness and placed under quarantine:

Hearing the news for the first time that we tested positive for an illness can come as a shock. It can make everything feel surreal. And, while we are trying to deal with the many emotions happening all at the same time, not to mention the questions that run through our head, we often find ourselves having to keep ourselves calm and composed in front of health workers and our family or friends who are with us.

It is important to remember: the roller coaster of emotions and thoughts are a normal part of experiencing something unexpected. Pause. Take deep breaths, as many as needed. Take a seat. Have a glass of water. And, remember: *we do not need to process everything all at once*. One step at a time. One day at a time. In shaa Allah.

It is normal to feel relaxed one moment, then worried the next; very engaged in conversations one moment, then feel like just sleeping the whole day the next. This *is* normal. And, these mood changes can last upto two weeks or even more, depending on our conditions. What is important is while we are undergoing the needed medical procedures, we try our best to keep ourselves busy with beneficial activities that we love and that we can do in our temporary situation. It can be taking much-needed sleep, communicating with our loved ones, maintaining a journal, or reading a book. It is also very normal and even good to ask for help or express what we need to those around us.

And, in times we can't help but wonder why things like this happen to us, may we also remember that the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

“Everything has a reality, and the servant will not reach the reality of faith until he knows that what afflicted him could never miss him, and that what missed him could never have afflicted him.” (Ahmad)

“Know that if the whole community were to gather together to benefit you with anything, it would benefit you only with something that Allah had already prescribed for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with anything, they would harm you only with something Allah had already prescribed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.” (Tirmidhi)

There is divine wisdom behind every event. We must tell our hearts that there is goodness in what Allah decrees. Hence, may we take this pause with positivity and patience, in shaa Allah.

"No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that." (Bukhari)

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

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 Allah]

Noble Qur'an, Anbiya (21): 83-84

MashaAllah! Who would've thought we'd be given an opportunity to be in the situation that almost the same as that of Prophet Ayyub [Job] (peace be upon him)? Prophet Ayyub who fell ill aside from losing his livelihood and some of his family members...but in the end was granted ease and earned the pleasure of Allah The Most High because of his patience and faith.

Alhamdulillah that He sent the Qur'an to guide us. Just like this supplication of Ayyub which is good to read especially when we are experiencing distress:

“Annee massaniyaḍ-ḍurru wa anta arḥamur-raaḥimeen”

Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful.

In shaa Allah we can memorize this supplication and remember that we are neither alone nor the only one encountering challenges--even the prophets whom Allah blessed much also repeatedly went through challenges which were in fact more difficult than the ones we experience.

In shaa Allah we will be able to exhibit even just a small yet important amount of patience and faith demonstrated by Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him). In shaa Allah in remembering him and reciting his supplication, we will also be able to remember the countless times we've observed and experienced the mercy and love of our Most Merciful Creator.

In shaa Allah we will be able to remember that just like Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him), we will also experience ease. As what Allah promised and stated in Qur'an,

So verily, with every hardship comes ease.

Verily, with every hardship comes ease.

Noble Qur'an, Al Sharh (94): 5-6

Excerpts from MESSAGE FOR THE SICK by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

Be patient, indeed, offer thanks! Your illness may transform each of the minutes of your life into the equivalent of an hour's worship. For worship is of two kinds. One is positive like the well-known worship of supplication and the five daily prayers. The other are negative forms of worship like illness and calamities. By means of these, those afflicted realize their impotence and weakness; they beseech their All-Compassionate Creator and take refuge in Him; they manifest worship which is sincere and without hypocrisy.

This means that man did not come to this world to live in a fine manner and pass his life in ease and pleasure. Rather, he possesses vast capital, and he came here to work and do trade for an eternal, everlasting life. The capital given to man is his lifetime. Had there been no illness, good health and well-being would have caused heedlessness, for they show the world to be pleasant and make the hereafter forgotten.

Note carefully, what makes you exclaim "Praise and thanks be to God!" is thinking of the pains and calamities that have befallen you; they induce a sort of pleasure so that your heart offers thanks, for the passing of pain is a pleasure. With the passing of pains and calamities, a legacy of pleasure is left in the spirit, which on being aroused by thinking, pours forth from the spirit in thanks.

O, brother who thinks of the pleasures of this world and suffers distress at illness! If this world were everlasting, and if on our way there were no death, and if the winds of separation and disease did not blow, and if there were no winters of the spirit in the calamitous and stormy future, I would have pitied you together with you. But since one day the world

will bid us to leave it and will close its ears to our cries, we must forego our love of it now through the warnings of these illnesses, before it drives us out. We must try to abandon it in our hearts before it abandons us.

Yes, illness utters this warning to us: "Your body is not composed of stone and iron, but of various materials which are ever disposed to parting. Leave off your pride, perceive your impotence, recognize your Owner, know your duties, learn why you came to this world!" It declares this secretly in the heart's ear.

"Things are known through their opposites." For example, if there were no darkness, light would not be known and would produce no pleasure. If there were no cold, heat could not be comprehended. If there were no hunger, food would afford no pleasure. If there were no thirst of the stomach, there would be no pleasure in drinking water. If there were no sickness, no pleasure would be had from good health.

O sick person who thinks of the hereafter! Sickness washes away the dirt of sins like soap, and cleanses. It is established in a sound Hadith that illnesses are atonement for sins. And in another Hadith, it says: "As ripe fruits fall on their tree being shaken, so the sins of a believer fall away on his shaking with illness." (Bukhari, Marda 1, 2, 13, 16; Muslim, Birr 45; Darimi, Rikak 57; Musnad i, 371, 441; ii, 303, 335; iii, 4, 18, 38, 48, 61, 81.)

O sick person who worries unnecessarily! You worry at the severity of your illness and that worry exacerbates it. If you want your illness to be less severe, try not to worry. That is, think of the benefits of your illness, the recompense for it, and that it will pass quickly; it will remove the worry and cut the illness at the root.

In fact, worry doubles the illness, for it causes an immaterial illness of the heart underlying the physical illness; the physical illness subsists

through that and persists. If the worry ceases through submission, contentment, and comprehension of the reason for the illness, a large part of the illness is eradicated; it becomes less severe and in part disappears. Sometimes a minor physical illness increases tenfold just through anxiety. If the anxiety ceases, nine tenths of the illness disappears.

My sick brothers! If you want a most beneficial and truly pleasurable sacred cure, strengthen and develop your belief! That is, make use of belief, that sacred cure, and of the medicine which arises from belief through repentance and seeking forgiveness, and the five daily prayers and worship.

Narrated Mujahid:

`Abdullah bin `Umar said, "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took hold of my shoulder and said, 'Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler.'"

The sub-narrator added: Ibn `Umar used to say, "If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Thank you for spending some of your time reading this small pamphlet. May it help us calm down and see the wisdom and blessing behind the on-going epidemic, in shaa Allah.

We pray that we strive to do our best, with the time given to us, to travel towards Allah with deep faith, gratefulness, and patience no matter what comes our way.

A peaceful and enlightened journey, in shaa Allah!