

Depression

Depression, it seems, has become synonymous with living in a society flooded with innumerable problems. It is an ailment which has unfortunately reached epidemic proportions. In the search for a solution, we sink deeper and deeper into the abyss of depression. Hardly a day passes, without some person complaining about his failures or being depressed, due to various factors. What we need is Tafweez. If we learn Tafweez, then we have indeed found the antidote for depression.

We need to understand, that we cannot escape the decisions of Allāh Ta'ālā with regard to any matter in our lives. Whatever Allāh Ta'ālā has decided will happen, no matter how much we may wish otherwise. Our anxieties, depression and worries are all created because we first make the decisions and then expect Allāh Ta'ālā to conform; whereas what we plan and decide is subject to Allāh Ta'ālā's decree.

Advice of a sheikh

One student, after having spent many years in the company of Sheikh Abdul Qādir Jaylāni (Raḥimahullah), requested some parting advice, before taking leave from his Sheikh. Sheikh Abdul Qādir Jaylāni (Raḥimahullah) told him: "Do not claim Divinity and do not claim Nubuwwah?" The student asked: "Does Ḥadhrat think that after all these years in his company, I will make such a claim?"

Sheikh Abdul Qādir Jaylāni (Raḥimahullah) then explained to his Murīd (disciple) that, "Do not claim to be Allāh", means that do not wish that everything happens according to your will and desire. If you do so, then you are claiming to be Allāh, whereas whatever Allāh Ta'ālā wills, will happen, for it is He who has control over everything. As far as human beings are concerned, if we feel that our whims and fancies have to be fulfilled as is, then we are claiming to be Allāh".

'Do not claim Nubuwwah', means that no matter how much of piety and Taqwā you acquire with Islāh and Tazkiyah (spiritual reformation), do not make the claim that you are sinless and never in the wrong. This is the attribute of the Ambiyā ('Alayhimus Salām), for they are sinless and protected from sin.

Maulānā Jalāluddīn Rumi (r.a) relates the story of a snake catcher who once went to the mountains. Due to the winter cold and heavy snow, many big snakes lay motionless, as if they were dead. The snake-catcher picked up one of these seemingly lifeless snakes and took it to Baghdad, with the purpose of using it for a show. Showing it off, he made big claims as to how he had captured the snake – captivating the attention of his audience.

However, when the sun began to shine and its warmth cloaked the snake, the frigidness in its body disappeared. The signs of life were soon apparent and when the snake began to move, the snake-catcher and all those around, fled for their lives.

Maulānā Rumi (r.a) then explains that our Nafs is like that snake. With Tazkiyah (purification) and Mushaqqat (spiritual effort), our Nafs becomes frozen. It appears to be dead. However, give it a little heat from the fire of sin and it will bite again. A little exposure to some past sins and the Nafs swings back to life.

We should not think that we have dominated our Nafs and thus become unmindful. Yes, with some Mujāhadah (striving), Suḥbah (company) of the pious, Tilāwah (recitation) of the Qurān Shareef, Dhikrullah, following the teachings of Deen and Shariah and in building up that contact and love for Allāh Ta'ālā and Rasūlullah + the Nafs can be frozen. However, a little taste of sin easily revives the evil Nafs.

Let us now consider the various causes of depression to be found presently in our lives. These simple, little things, which if ignored and we adopt a little Tafweez; we will find our lives free of depression. To cite an example (and there are true incidents of this nature): A woman goes to a certain family with a proposal for her son, considering her son to be the ideal suitor in the world. If the son, himself goes, then he believes that there is no one like him as a prospective husband. He has everything: the qualities, degrees and character. He is handsome as well.

Hence, mother and son believe that the moment a proposal is placed forth, the girl's family will definitely accept, without any delay or further consideration. Thus, a decision has been made: If I propose, they are going to accept it.

The girl's family rejects the proposal. Immediately there is depression and enmity. The mother starts thinking about the reason as to why the proposal was turned down: "What is wrong with us? ... Are we bad people? ... Is my son a drug addict? ... What is wrong with him?" Because Tafweez is not adopted, such thoughts surface and depression seizes the person.

Tafweez in this case would have been that the person put forward the proposal and thereafter left the decision to Allāh Ta'ālā. If Allāh Ta'ālā had willed and put an acceptance into their hearts, then they would have accepted. Since everything was done correctly, there is no need to be annoyed or upset. Rather believe that there must be some goodness (khayr) in that.

If we can only learn and understand this, that behind every decision made by Allāh Ta'ālā there is goodness and wisdom. Our duty and endeavour is that we supplicate and ask of Allāh Ta'ālā, then make the correct effort (Tadbeer) and thereafter leave the final decision to Allāh Ta'ālā. This brings peace, contentment and happiness into our hearts.

Rasulullah + has said, "Strive to acquire what is beneficial for you; seek the aid of Allāh; do not lose courage and if a setback overtakes you, do not say, 'If I had done this then it would have happened like this (i.e. not what had happened).' Instead, say, 'Allāh has ordained this. Whatever He has willed has happened.'"