Remaining Firm Against Adversities

"The believer's affair is wondrous. The whole of his affair surely brings him good, and this never applies except for a believer: if he is granted something pleasant, he shows gratitude, and this is good for him; and if he is afflicted with something harmful, he holds patience, and this is good for him." -(A Prophetic hadith narrated by Muslim)

Life Always Contains Adversities

Hope, security, contentment, love, and tranquility of the heart are delicious fruits produced from the seeds of Iman to the soul of the believer and ever-filled stores that provide him with supplies in the battle of life. It is indeed a prolonged battle which causes many expenses and is surrounded by dangers and difficulties.

This is because the nature of this worldly life, as well as of the life of the humans therein makes it impossible for a man not to be inflicted with some kind of catastrophe or adversity. He may fail in doing some work, his hope may come to nothing, he may lose a loved person, or be afflicted with some illness, or lose some money, or face any other calamity of life that contains many causes of distress and suffering.

This is a norm of Allah with regard to life and people in general, yet the people of missions in particular are afflicted with more calamities and adversities of life. They call to goodness but the supporters of evil show enmity toward them; they enjoin the right but the adherents of wrong act in hostility towards them... Thus, they are always surrounded by adversities, tribulations, trials, and conspiracies. This is a norm set by Allah, Who created Adam and Iblis, Ibrahim and Namrud, Musa and Pharaoh, Muhammad and Abu Jahl.

Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy among the sinners... (Al-Furqan: 31)

This norm has always been applied to Prophets, their inheritors, those who follow in their footsteps, and those who invite people to their call, with aggressors who prevent people from the way of Allah.

Once Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was asked, "Which persons are the most afflicted with tribulations?" He (pbuh) answered,

"Prophets, then those who are next to them in honor (and degree), then those who are next to them (these) in honor (and degree)... Man is afflicted with tribulation according to his (level of) religiosity. if his religiosity is strong his tribulation increases (quantitatively and qualitatively), and if his religiosity involves weakness, Allah afflicts him with tribulation according to (this level of) his religiosity. Thus the tribulation (which is afflicted accordingly) is not removed from (this) servant (of Allah) until he walks on earth while bearing no sin.

The Believers' Firmness and Its Source

The believers are the most patient among the people in the face of tribulations, the most steadfast in front of adversities, and the most content with bitter destinies.

They know that the lifetime of this world is short compared to the lifetime of eternity, so they do not wish that their life becomes a paradise before the eternal Paradise.

Say: Short is the enjoyment of this world: the Hereafter is the best for those who do right. (An-Nisa': 77)

For the life of this world is but good and chattels of deception. (Al'Imran: 185)

They know the norm of Allah regarding this kind of creation (man), who is tried with the blessing of having free will and being Allah's vicegerent on earth, so they do not wish to be angels with wings.

Verily We created man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him...(Al-Insan: 2)

They know through the history of their Prophets and Messengers that, of all people, they are the most afflicted with tribulations in this worldly life and receive the minimum of its enjoyment, so they do not seek to be better than them, as they have good examples in them.

Believing in Destiny Alleviates Tribulation

The believers know that calamities are not inflicted upon them randomly or without purpose, but rather are given out in accordance with an appointed measure and Divine judgement, so they believe that whatever misfortune afflicts them was never to miss them and whatever misfortune misses them, was never to afflict them.

No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: that is truly easy for Allah. (Al-Hadid: 22)

They know that Allah is kind in His judgements so He alleviates tribulations. Accordingly, whoever thinks otherwise lacks discretion.

Verily my Lord understand best the mysteries of all that He planned to do. For verily He is full of knowledge and wisdom. (Yusuf: 100)

They know that out of the Kindness of their Lord the adversities that afflict them involve valuable lessons and useful experiments which are very important both for their religious life and for their secular life. These lessons and experiments mature their souls, polish their iman, and remove the rust from their hearts.

"The likeness of the believer who is inflicted with tribulation is as the likeness of a piece of iron: it gets rid of its rust and keeps its valuable parts when it enters the fire." How eloquent are these words of Ar-Rafi'i:

"Calamity is very similar to an egg: people think that it is a prison for the object that it contains although it protects and nourishes it until it is ready to get out. It has only to remain for a definite period of time, then the egg is incubated, and another creature emerges.

The likeness of the believer's life, is like that of a fledgling in its egg: he must wait until he is complete therein and then he can go out with his perfect personality into his perfect world."

When the believer combines these blessings with every calamity in this world, he shows gratitude to Allah, accepts His judgement, and patiently bears the tribulation He has inflicted upon him.

Calamities Pertaining to This Worldly Life Are Easy

Calamities pertaining to this worldly life can be compensated with something good but any calamity related to one's religion is a great loss that can never be requited. Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) was made to choose between staying in prison and being in the company of the vilest, or incline to the women and thus be one of the ignorant.

When Prophet Yusuf was made to choose between these two things, he chose the calamity pertinent to the secular world: so he said,

O my Lord! The prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me...(Yusuf: 33)

The Prophet of Islam (pbuh) taught his Ummah to say these words,

"O Allah! Please do not inflict us with any calamity that may decrease our religiosity, nor make this worldly life our greatest goal, nor make it the only thing that we seek to know!

The Sweetness of Reward and the Bitterness of Pain

It is a spiritual blessing that man wishes for Allah's reward for the tribulation that he is afflicted with, as this blessing alleviates the effect of the tribulation. This reward is represented in expiation of his evil deeds, which are so many, and increase in his good deeds, which he so greatly needs. The Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said,

"Whatever befalls a Muslim of grief distress, fatigue, or chronic illness, and even should he be pierced with a thorn, Allah surely expiates (some) of his sins for that."