

Why We Suffer:

Islamic Perspectives on Hardship

Lesson 2



tasneeminstitute
ENRICHING THE SOUL

Justice or Equality

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَةَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ
دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

“Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank] that they may make use of one another for service. But the mercy of your Lord is better than whatever they accumulate.” Quran 43:32

Justice or Equality

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ

“And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you.” Quran 6:165

- That God provides for human beings in different degrees allows Him to test the generosity and kindness of those given worldly nobility and wealth toward those given less as well as to test the patience and trust of those given little

Justice or Equality

- Society would cease to function if all human beings were created alike. There is a need for division of labor.
- The differences in intelligence, strength, passions, etc allow us to compliment one another.

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا تَفَاوَتُوا، فَإِذَا اسْتَوَوْا هَلَكُوا

“People will remain in a good [condition] as long as they are different for if they made to be similar, they would perish.”- Imam Ali (a)

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in the Quran

مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنَ نَفْسِكَ

“What comes to you of good is from God , but what comes to you of evil, [O man], is from yourself...” Quran 4:79

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in the Quran

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return ” Quran 30:41

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in the Quran

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“That is because God would not change a favor which He had bestowed upon a people until they change what is within themselves. And indeed, God is Hearing and Knowing.” Quran 8:53

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in the Quran

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تُصِيبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ

“And when We let the people taste mercy, they rejoice therein, but if evil afflicts them for what their hands have put forth, immediately they despair.” Quran 30:36

- People rejoice in their blessings, which they attribute to their own merits and which they believe are a testament to their own superiority. However, when a misfortune strikes them, they blame God and fall into despair.

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in the Quran

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَدْرَارًا وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ
لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

“Then I said, Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving: He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in abundance. And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.” Quran 71:10-12

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in the Quran

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكْلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ

“And if only they upheld [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to them from their Lord, they would have consumed [provision] from above them and from beneath their feet...” Quran 5:66

- Upholding Divine laws ensures even worldly prosperity

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in Hadith

الدُّنُوبُ الَّتِي تَحْبِسُ غَيْثَ السَّمَاءِ : جَوْرُ الْحُكَّامِ فِي الْقَضَاءِ ، وَشَهَادَةُ الزُّورِ ، وَكِتْمَانُ الشَّهَادَةِ

“The sins that prevent rain from falling are: the judges' unjust rulings, the giving of false testimony and the concealing of one's testimony.” -
Imam al-Sajjad (a)

Source: Ilal al-Shara'i , p. 81

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in Hadith

كلما أحدث العباد من الذنوب ما لم يكونوا يعملون أحدث الله لهم من البلاء ما لم يكونوا يعرفون

“Whenever people introduce new sins that they had never done before, God introduces new punishments that they had never known.”-
Imam al-Ridha (a)

Source: al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 270

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in Hadith

مَنْ يَمُوتُ بِالذُّنُوبِ أَكْثَرُ مِمَّنْ يَمُوتُ بِالْأَجَالِ

“There are more people who die as a result of their sins than who die because they have reached their appointed time.”- Imam al-Sadiq (a)

Source: al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 272

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in Hadith

إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ يُذْنِبُ الذَّنْبَ فَيُحْرَمُ صَلَاةَ اللَّيْلِ ، وَإِنَّ الْعَمَلَ السَّيِّئَ أَسْرَعُ فِي صَاحِبِهِ مِنَ السَّكِّينِ
فِي اللَّحْمِ

“Indeed the servant commits a sin, and as a result he is deprived of the Night Prayer. And verily the evil deed pierces into and affects the one who committed it faster than a sharp knife can pierce into meat.”-
Imam al-Sadiq (a)

Source: al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 272

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in Hadith

وقال الباقر عليه السلام: «وجدنا في كتاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: إذا ظهر الزنا من بعدي كثر موت الفجأة، وإذا طفف المكيال والميزان، أخذهم الله تعالى بالسنين والنقص، وإذا منعوا الزكاة، منعت الأرض بركتها من الزرع والثمار والمعادن كلها

Imam al-Baqir (a) said that he found in the book of Imam Ali (a) that he has said that the Prophet (s) said: "When adultery appears (abundantly in a society) the (number of) sudden deaths increases; and when there is fraud, God seizes them with years of deprivation and loss. When people stop giving alms tax, the earth holds back its blessings from plants (crops), fruits, mines, and all such things.

The Connection Between Human Suffering and Sin in Hadith

وإذا جاروا في الأحكام، تعاونوا على الظلم والعدوان، وإذا نقضوا العهد سلّط الله عليهم عدوهم، وإذا قطعوا الأرحام جعلت الأموال في أيدي الأشرار، وإذا لم يأمروا بالمعروف، ولم ينهوا عن المنكر، ولم يتبعوا الأخيار من أهل بيتي، سلّط الله عليهم شرارهم، فيدعو أخيارهم فلا يستجاب لهم

When they act unjustly in judgements, they have helped injustice and aggression. When they breach (their) promises, God will set their enemies as absolute masters over them. When they sever relations with their kindred, their wealth will be put in the hands of the wicked. And, when they do not enjoin good and forbid evil and do not follow the chosen ones of my Ahlul Bayt, God will set their wicked ones over them and, in this condition, the good among them will supplicate but their prayers won't be answered."

Source: Safinat-ul-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 630