

Adapted and translated from
Bi-Panahe Asre-Hazir - Dar Rahe
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Since the outset of this century, millions have taken their lives through suicide. Many of them young ones who had hardly seen the full sunshine of life and enjoyed its blessings.

It is said that one-fourth of the Scandinavians, one-third of the French, two-fifth of the Russians and one out of every two Americans today are suffering from insomnia (due to fear and lack of mental peace). It is also reported that during the last world war, some 300,000 Americans may have lost their lives but during the same period, some two millions had died from heart-attack, many of whom as a result of excessive mental worries.

In Europe and the U.S.A. today, millions of sleeping tablets are consumed daily. Why? Because an average man in the West is unable to enjoy regular natural sleep due to excessive mental tensions and worries. The so-called Western civilization and space-age advancement is yet unable to solve this scourge. Anxiety, worry, lack of mental peace is the wide-spread malady of our time, from which millions of people are suffering.

It is believed that mental tension and worry is the root of most of physical and psychic ailments. Indigestion, stomach ulcer, heart trouble, insomnia, rheumatic pains and many other illnesses are said to be caused by mental tensions and emotions.

IS WORRY A NEED OF LIFE?

Life has its ups and downs and man is often confronted with events of conflicting nature. There are good as well as bad times. There is light as well as darkness. The state of one's life does not remain the same throughout. As such to a certain extent man's mental upset and state of anxiety at times is unavoidable and only natural. Its absence at times due to sense of neglect and apathy is believed by psychiatrists as a kind of mental deficiency termed as psychopathy.

There is no doubt that during this age the causes of man's worries and mental tensions are much more than those in the past. Fear of the unknown and dark future, concern for acquiring something unobtainable be it in business, occupation or otherwise, mental disturbances arising out of domestic pressures etc are some of them.

But this age in which we live, itself is not to be condemned for our mental problems. We need to find out correct methods of facing the unpleasant vicissitudes of life so as to bring about peaceful survival. We have to learn the basic correct ways of overcoming anxieties and means of benefitting ourselves from divine blessings in life.

NEED OF FAITH AND SPIRITUAL UPLIFTMENT

Life is like a sea full of high waves and strong currents and its every moment is frightening man lest he drowns. However there is no alternative for him but to travel and pass through this sea of life. In order to save himself from drowning, he needs to have intermediaries through which to keep his head out of water. And this is only possible by being on board a reliable and well-equipped vessel and possessing the knowledge of swimming. In other words, man ought to have adequate knowledge to guide him and ^{ways} means of solving problems when they crop up in his life.

The seventh Imam Musa Kazim a.s. is reported to have narrated to Hisham that Lokman the wise told his son "The world is a stormy sea that many men have drowned in it. Piety and abstinence are your vessel full of faith (in God), its sails are tawakkul and reliance on Allah, its watchman and protector is your intellect and sense of reason, its guide and captain is your knowledge and prudence and its steerman is your patience and forbearance that enable you to resist the pressure of heavy storms and waves of life so that you do not fall apart and perish."

Undoubtedly without equipping oneself with these qualities, one would be unable to survive in the stormy sea of life and ^{to} safeguard himself from drowning. Without faith, patience, strong will and reliance on the power of Allah and his blessings, success in life is not possible.

Worry and mental tension is such a dreadful ailment that it daily takes away many lives in this world. It points to the failure of the modern civilization and decay in the state of character and outlook of the present day society. It denotes the incapacity of the modern materialistic sciences to remedy this scourge. It is unable to guide towards the solution of human problems, notwithstanding the great advances made in technological and scientific fields. Despite all the modern amenities of man's comfort and welfare, why this mass lack of mental peace and happiness and ever increasing state of anxieties and worries ?

Man is in search of something which he feels to have lost but since it is only to be found under the shadow of faith in God which he disregards, he tries to remedy his intermittent mental ailments by resorting to drugs, alcoholism and sleeping tablets, failing which he decides to take his life through suicide. Why does this happen? It is because that modern sciences have only taken care of materialistic aspects of human welfare, ignoring the fact that man's soul also requires care and the spiritual aspect of his life needs equal nourishment as is the case with his physical aspect.

The need of religious faith is so important and its impact and influence readily felt that great psychologists and medical men of our time have ~~all~~ recognized this fact.

Professor Carl Young, an expert on this subject, says that the sickness of our age is one of religious outlook. Under the influence of technological advancement, adverse propaganda and narrow-mindedness, people of twentieth century have become anti-religion. They are wandering in search of their own spirit and they will not attain peace without faith in religion."

Thus mental health and peace is closely linked with true religious faith and constant communion with the Almighty Allah. The holy Qur'an explains this in very clear terms:

"And he who turneth away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall ^{bring} him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection" (Ta Ha - v.124)

The life narrowed by anxieties and worries is because of lack of faith and ^{spiritual} sanctuary and due to the loneliness of man in his individual and social life. In this age full of ~~mental~~ mental tension and fear, there is no lasting solution to such man's problems except in having true religious faith.

The great philosopher of our time Mr.C.A.Liebman says "Religion in life provides man with mental peace and spiritual sanctuary". And the holy Qur'a'n has this to say on the subject : "Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Al Ras'd - v.28)

But why is mental peace and rest specially reserved for the God-believing and faithful only and denied to others ?

Let us give deep thought to this question and accept the fact that one who all the time seeks assistance for all his needs from the All-powerful and Unseen Being. One who always with all his heart relies upon Allah as to be the All-Merciful, All-wise and as capable of protecting all his creatures and in full control over their destiny. One who does not commence with any of his work but with remembrance of Allah and expecting reward for all his deeds from none but Him in this and the next world. Certainly it is such a person who is able to enjoy full mental peace and moral boost in this world as he has recognized and taken advantage of the true source of security.

In contrast, one who lacks faith and remembrance of Allah, he does not have mental resting-place and spiritual sanctuary. When overtaken with misfortunes and calamities of life, his mind constantly wanders about in acute imbalance and depression of mind.

Let us weigh both the above two categories of people and give true verdict as to which one is equipped and capable of deriving mental peace and security.

The holy Qura'an gives a clear-cut answer to this where comparing between the polytheists, non-believers and the true believers, it says: " And. which then of the two parties has greater right to security, if ye know ? Those who believe and mix not their faith with inequity(those are they for whom is security, and they are (the ones) guided guided aright" (Al-Anam - v.82-83)

With the aid of full faith in Allah and His remembrance, it is certainly possible to overcome calamities and mental tensions in life. So much so, it can be used as a remedy and spiritual medicine to alleviate physical and mental ailments.

Dr. Paul Ernest Adolph- a physician and surgeon from University of Pennsylvania, describing his experience from his treatment of a lady with a fractured hip, writes:

" Her broken hip bone had healed without a snag but her broken heart (due to decision conveyed to her by her daughter that she would not be taken back into their home but instead into an old people's home) had not. The most important element needed in her recovery was not the vitamins, nor the minerals, nor the splinting of her fracture. It was HOPE. When hope was gone, recovery failed. This could never have been the outcome of this lady had she known the God of hope the way I knew Him.