

ALI 353: Human Suffering and Coping Strategies in the Light of the Qur'an

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Introduction

- ❖ Human suffering is inevitable
- ❖ Why human beings face calamities?
- ❖ How can all-powerful Allah permit suffering?
- ❖ Criteria of Punishment of Allah in this world
- ❖ The Qur'an and Human Suffering
- ❖ Human suffering and Trial of Allah
- ❖ Human suffering and Traditions of Allah

Philosophy of Trial of God (1)

- ❖ **To see the quality of our deeds (67:2)**
- ❖ **It flourishes our soul and purifies our heart**
- ❖ **To distinguish the bad from the good (8:37)**
- ❖ **To make the reward and punishment possible**
- ❖ **To activate our potentials and capacities**

Philosophy of Trial of God (2)

- ❖ **To make us courageous and steadfast**
- ❖ **To awake us from negligence**
- ❖ **To expose our real face (3:154)**
- ❖ **To provide the opportunity to seek forgiveness (7:168)**
- ❖ **To take suffering as an admonisher (9:126)**

Philosophy of Trial of God (3)

- ❖ **To see whether we are thankful or unthankful (27:40)**
- ❖ **To reveal to us or others our real spiritual position**
- ❖ **To show who is truthful and who is untruthful (29:3)**

Psychological Aspects of Suffering

- ❖ **Suffering is temporary in nature**
- ❖ **Objective suffering is different from subjective suffering**
- ❖ **Suffering can go away by adding meaningfulness**
- ❖ **Relief can be found in the heart of suffering**
- ❖ **Absolute evil does not exist. Positive aspect always exists**

Textual Evidence of the Issue of Human Suffering in the Qur'an

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

It is He who has created death and life to put you to the test and see which of you is most virtuous in your deeds. He is Majestic and All-forgiving (67:2)

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعاً وَ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعاً

**Very upset when touched by evil.
And very stingy person when visited
by good fortune (70:20–21)**

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَ يَغْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

Whatever hardships befalls you is because of what your own hands committed while he overlooks many of your faults (42:30)

ما أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ لَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

No Calamity befalls the earth or your own selves but it is predestined in a Book before We bring it into being. Indeed it is easy for Allah (57:22)

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

**So that you may neither grieve on
what has escaped you, nor over-exult
on what He has given to you. And
Allah does not love any self-admirer,
over proud (57:23)**

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا . إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

**So doubted along with the hardship
there is ease. Undoubtedly along with
hardship there is ease (92:5–6)**

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا. وَ يَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ
وَمَنْ يَتَّوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ
اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

Whoever fear Allah, He brings forth a way out for him. And provide him from where does not even imagine. And whoever places his trust in Allah, He is sufficient for him (65:2–3)