

distress, anxiety and pain; He will leave him to sort himself out, and cause his heart to be distracted from the love of Allaah towards the love of some created being, cause his tongue to speak only in remembrance of that creation instead of remembering Allaah, and cause his faculties to work in obeying and serving them. So he will strive hard, labouring like some work-animal, to serve something other than Allaah... Everyone who turns away from being a true slave of Allaah and obeying Him and loving Him will be burdened with servitude, love and obedience to some created being. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *‘And whosoever turns away (blinds himself) from the remembrance of the Most Beneficent (Allaah), We appoint for him a shaytaan (devil) to be a qareen (intimate companion) to him.’* [al-Zukhruf 43:36].”

6. A surprisingly effective remedy: remembering death

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Remember frequently the one who will destroy all your pleasures: death, for there is no-one who remembers death when in straitened circumstances, but his situation will become easier, and there is no-one who remembers death during times of ease, but his circumstances will become straitened.”

7. Praying to Allaah, may He be exalted

Du’aa’ (prayer or supplication) is very beneficial, and includes both protection and treatment. As far as protection is concerned, the Muslim is obliged to turn to Allaah and pray to Him for refuge from distress and to keep him away from it, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to do. His servant Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) tells us: “I used to serve the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when he stayed in Madeenah (i.e. was not travelling). I often used to hear him saying: *‘Allaahumma inni a’oodhu bika min al-hamm wa’l-hazn wa’l-‘ajz wa’l-kasal wa’l-bukhl wa’l-jubn wa dala’ al-dayn wa ghalbat al-rijaal* (O Allaah, I seek refuge with You from distress, grief, incapacity, laziness, miserliness, cowardice, the burden of debt and from being overpowered by men).”

This *du’aa’* is very effective in preventing distress before it happens; prevention is better, and easier, than cure.

When one is worried about what may happen in the future, the following *du’aa’* is very beneficial. Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to say: *‘Allaahumma aslih li deeni alladhi huwa ‘ismat amri wa aslih li dunyaaya allati fihaa ma’aashi wa aslih li aakhirati allati fihaa ma’aadi w’aj’al al-hayaata ziyaadatan li fi kulli khayri w’aj’al al-mawta raahatan li min kulli sharr* (O Allaah, make me adhere properly to my religion, on which all my affairs depend; make this world good for me in which is my livelihood; make my Hereafter good for me, in which is my ultimate destiny; make my life increase in every good thing and make my death a respite from every evil).”

When distress and pain befall a person, the door of *du’aa’* is always open to him; it is never

closed. When one calls upon the Most Generous, He will respond and give. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): *“And when My slaves ask you concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me (without any mediator or intercessor). So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.”* [al-Baqarah 2:186]

One of the greatest *du'aa's* which take away distress and anxiety and bring joy is the famous *du'aa'* which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) encouraged everyone who hears it to learn it by heart:

The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: *“There is no-one who is afflicted by distress and grief, and says: ‘Allaahumma inni ‘abduka ibn ‘abdika ibn amatija naasyati bi yadika, maada fiyya hukmuka, ‘adlun fiyya qadaa’uka. As’aluka bi kulli ismin huwa laka sammayta bihi nafsaka aw anzaltahu fi kitaabika aw ‘allamtahu ahadan min khalqika aw ista’tarta bihi fi ‘ilm il-ghayb ‘indaka an taj’al al-Qur’aana rabee’ qalbi wa noor sadri wa jalaa’ huzni wa dhihaab hammi* (O Allaah, I am Your slave, son of Your slave, son of Your maidservant; my forelock is in Your hand, Your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask You by every name belonging to You which You have named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the Unseen with You, that You make the Qur’aan the life of my heart and the light of my breast, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety),’ but Allaah will take away his distress and grief, and replace it with joy.” He was asked: *“O Messenger of Allaah, should we learn this?”* He said: *“Of course; everyone who hears it should learn it.”*

This important hadeeth indicates the following: the slave should admit that he belongs to Allaah and that he cannot do without Him and has no other master than Allaah; that he should be a slave to Allaah, announce his submission to Him, obey His commandments and heed His prohibitions; that Allaah is directing and controlling him as He wills; that he should demonstrate his submission to Allaah and his acceptance of His decree; that he should pray to Allaah, using all His Names, then ask for what he needs.

A number of other *du'aa's* to do with distress and anxiety have also been narrated in the Sunnah. They include the following:

Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that when the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) felt distressed, he would say: *“Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah al-‘Azeem al-Haleem, laa ilaaha ill-Allaah Rabb al-‘Arsh al-‘azeem, la ilaaha ill-Allaah Rabb al-samawaat wa Rabb al-ard wa Rabb al-‘Arsh al-kareem* (There is no god but Allaah, the All-Powerful, the Forbearing; there is no god but Allaah, Lord of the mighty Throne; there is no god but Allaah, Lord of heaven, Lord of earth, and Lord of the noble Throne).”

Anas (may Allaah be pleased with him) reported that when the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was distressed by something, he would say: *“Yaa Hayyu yaa Qayyoom bi rahmatika astagheeth* (O Ever-Living, O Eternal, by Your mercy I

seek help).”

Asmaa' bint 'Umayr said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to me: ‘Shall I not teach you some words which you can say at times of distress? *‘Allaah Allaah rabbee laa ushriku bihi shay’an* (Allaah Allaah is my Lord, I do not associate anything with Him).””

Another of the beneficial *du’aa’s* which the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught us is the one he told us about when he said: “The *du’aa’* of the person who is in distress is: *‘Allaahumma rahmataka arjoo fa laa takilni ilaa nafsi tarfat ‘ayn w’aslih li sha’ni kullahu laa ilaaha illa anta* (O Allaah, for Your mercy I hope, so do not leave me in charge of my affairs even for the blink of an eye; rectify all my affairs. There is no god except You)”

If a person thinks about the meaning of these *du’aa’s* and prays with concentration and a sincere intention, doing all those things that can help to bring about a response, Allaah will fulfil his hopes and do the things asked for; He will turn his distress into joy.

If the *du’aa’* comes from a heart which is filled with faith, it will dispel worry and bring comfort. The scholars have mentioned many stories of people who prayed to Allaah in times of calamity and distress, and Allaah responded to their prayer and saved them from an enemy, or from drowning, or from starvation or disaster. One example is the story of what happened to the great Sahaabi al-‘Alaa al-Hadrami, who was one of the most prominent scholars and devoted worshippers, one of the close friends (*awliyaa’*) of Allaah whose *du’aa’s* are answered. During the campaign against the apostates of Bahrain, he pitched camp, but before the people could settle down, the camels bolted, carrying away all the provisions of the army, including their tents and water, leaving them with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. It was night-time, and they could not restrain even one camel. The people were filled with indescribable distress and alarm, and some of them began making wills to one another (because they felt that death was inevitable). Al-‘Alaa’ called the people together and said: “O people, are you not Muslims? Are you not striving for the sake of Allaah? Are you not the *ansaar* (supporters) of Allaah?” They said, “Of course.” He said, “Then be of good cheer, for Allaah will not forsake anyone who is in your situation.” When the time for Fajr prayer came, he called the people to pray and led them in prayer, then he knelt up, and the people did likewise. He started to pray (make *du’aa’*), raising his hands, and the people did likewise. They prayed until the sun rose, and the people began to look at the mirages caused by the sun, shimmering one after another, all the while fervently praying. When he reached the third [??], Allaah created a great stream of fresh water beside them. [‘Alaa’] walked towards it, and the people followed him, then they drank and washed themselves. Before the sun had reached its zenith, the camels started to come back from all directions, bringing the supplies loaded on them, so the people did not lose anything at all, and they were able to give water to the camels. This is one of the signs of Allaah witnessed by the people during that campaign. (*Al-Bidaayah wa’l-Nihaayah: Dhikr riddat ahl al-Bahrayn wa ‘awdatihim*).

8. Praying for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) (i.e., saying “Allaahumma salli ‘ala Muhammad,” etc.)

This is one of the greatest ways through which Allaah may relieve worries:

Al-Tufayl ibn Ubayy ibn Ka’b reported that his father said: “When two-thirds of the night had passed, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) got up and said: ‘O people, remember Allaah, remember Allaah. The first blowing of the Trumpet has come, and will be followed by the second blowing. Death has come, with all that it implies, death has come with all that it implies.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allaah, I pray a lot for you. How much of my prayers should I devote to you?’ He said, ‘As much as you want.’ I said, ‘A quarter?’ He said, ‘As much as you want, and if you increase it, it will be good for you.’ I said, ‘Half?’ He said, ‘As much as you want, and if you increase it, it will be good for you.’ I said, ‘Two-thirds?’ He said, ‘As much as you want, and if you increase it, it will be good for you.’ I said, ‘I will devote all my prayer to you.’ He said, ‘Then your worries will be taken care of and your sin will be forgiven.’”

9. Relying upon Allaah and entrusting matters to Him

“When a person knows that Allaah is Able to do all things, that He alone makes choices for His slaves and runs their affairs, that the way He runs His slave’s affairs is better than the way the slave would do it for himself, that He knows better about the slave’s interests than the slave does, that He is more able to achieve them, that He is more sincere and more merciful towards His slave than the slave is to himself; and also knows that he cannot progress or regress any further than the limits that Allaah has decreed for him, for nobody can change the will and decree of Allaah – when a person knows all this, he will submit himself to his Lord and hand over his affairs to Him, throwing himself before his Lord like a weak slave throwing himself before a mighty and powerful king. Allaah deals with His slave as He wishes, and the slave has nothing to do with it. Only after he has submitted thus will the slave feel relief from his distress, worries and regrets. He gives the burden of his needs and interests to One Who is not concerned about how heavy or great the burden is. Allaah will take care of it, instead of him, and will show him His kindness and mercy, without the slave getting tired or worried, because all his concern is now focused on Allaah alone. His worry about his needs and interests in this world has been lifted from him and his heart is now free of this concern. How good his life is now, how blessed his heart and how great his happiness and joy!

But as for the person who insists on running his own affairs and making his own choices, whose concern is only for his own share and not for his duties towards his Lord, Allaah will leave him alone with the choices he has made, so he will be surrounded by concerns, worries, distress, grief, fear, exhaustion and depression. His thoughts will be confused, none of his deeds will be pure and none of his hopes will be fulfilled. He will gain no respite, and will enjoy no pleasure. He will never feel joy or contentment. He will be labouring like a working-animal, with no hope of gaining anything that could help him in the Hereafter.”

“When a person relies upon Allaah and puts his trust in Him, he is not controlled by bad illusions. He trusts in Allaah and hopes for bounty from Him, which protects him from distress and worry, as well as many psychological and physical diseases. Thus his heart gains indescribable strength, relaxation and joy. The one who is truly free from problems is the one whom Allaah has freed and helped to strive against his own-self (*jihad al-nafs*) by seeking beneficial means of strengthening his heart and dispelling anxiety. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “... *And whosoever puts his trust in Allaah, then He will suffice him...*” [al-Talaaq 65:3] – i.e., He will take care of everything that is of concern to him, whether it has to do with his religion or his worldly affairs.

The person who relies on Allaah is strong in heart and is not adversely affected by illusions or things that happen, because he knows that this is a sign of weakness and fear that is unfounded. He also knows that Allaah has guaranteed to take complete care of the one who puts his trust in Him, so he trusts Allaah and has confidence in His promise. Thus his worries and anxiety disappear, hardship is replaced with ease, sadness turns to joy and fear turns to a feeling of security. We ask Allaah to keep us safe and to bless us with strength of heart and steadfastness through complete reliance on Him, for He has guaranteed all goodness and protection from all evil and harm to those who put their trust in Him.”

10. Other ways of dispelling distress and anxiety include paying attention to what is beneficial, focusing on what matters today and no longer worrying about what may happen tomorrow or regretting what happened yesterday

Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sought refuge with Allaah from worry and regret: regret for things that have happened in the past which one cannot go back and change, and worries about what may happen in the future. The slave should think only about the present, focusing his energy on doing his best today, because this is what results in perfect work, and helps him to forget his worries and regrets. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed a *du'aa'*, or taught it to his ummah, he encouraged them not only to seek the help of Allaah and hope for His blessings, but also to work hard and strive to achieve the protection they prayed for, for *du'aa'* goes hand-in-hand with effort. Thus the slave will strive for whatever benefits him in his religion or his worldly affairs, and will ask his Lord to grant him the result for which he is aiming. He asks Allaah for help, just as Abu Hurayrah reported: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allaah than the weak believer, and both are good. Pay attention to that which could benefit you, seek the help of Allaah and do not feel incapacitated. If anything befalls you, do not say, “If only I had done such-and-such, such a thing would have happened.” Say instead, “It is the decree of Allaah, and what He wills, He does,” for saying “if only...” opens the way for Shaytaan.”

Thus the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) established a link between, on the one hand, his command to strive for beneficial things in every situation, seeking the help of Allaah, and not giving in to feelings of inadequacy which the harmful kind of laziness, and, on the other, giving in to regret for things in the past which are over and done with, and

thinking about the will and decree of Allaah. He described things as being of two types: things which the slave can strive to achieve either in totality or as much as he can, or can protect himself from them, or lessen their impact, by making an effort and seeking the help of Allaah; and others about which he cannot do anything, so he should accept them and be content. Undoubtedly, paying attention to this principle will bring about happiness and dispel worry and distress.

The hadeeth quoted above indicates that one should strive to eliminate the causes of distress and bring about causes of happiness, by forgetting about bad things in the past that cannot be changed, and by realizing that to spend too much time thinking about such an impossible task is a foolish and crazy waste of time. So one should try not to think about it, and try not to feel anxious about the future or imagine fear and poverty that may or may not lie ahead. We should realize that the future, whether good or bad, is something unknown; it is in the hands of the Almighty, All-Wise, not in the hands of His slaves, and all they have to do is to strive for the good things and protect themselves from bad things. The slave should know that if he distracts his mind from worries about the future and puts his trust in his Lord, then Allaah will take care of it and his worry and anxiety will disappear.

11. One of the most effective ways of finding comfort and contentment is to remember Allaah frequently

Dhikr (remembrance of Allaah) has a wonderful effect in calming the soul and relieving stress and worry. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “... *Verily, in the remembrance of Allaah do hearts find rest.*” [al-Ra’d 13:28]

The greatest phrase of *dhikr* that can relieve the distress of death is: “*Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah* (there is no god except Allaah).” This is what Talhah told ‘Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him: “I heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say a word which no slave says at the time of death but Allaah will ease his distress and brighten his colour. It was only the fear that I might not be able to do it that prevented me from asking him about it before he died.” ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “I know what it is.” Talhah asked, “What is it?” ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “Do you know any word greater than what he told his uncle to say? – ‘*Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*’.” Talhah said, “That’s it, by Allaah, that’s it!”

12. Seeking refuge in prayer

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “*And seek help in patience and al-salaat (the prayer)...*” [al-Baqarah 2:45].

Hudhayfah said: “Whenever the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was grieved by something, he used to pray.” When Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) heard about the death of his brother, he stopped at the side of the road – as he was on a journey – and prayed, following the command of Allaah.

13. Another thing that may dispel worry is jihaad for the sake of Allaah.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “You must strive in jihaad for the sake of Allaah, may He be blessed and exalted, for it is one of the gates to Paradise, and Allaah dispels worry and distress through it.”

14. Speaking about the blessings of Allaah, both those which are obvious and those which are hidden

Acknowledging them and speaking about them dispels worry and distress. The slave is encouraged to have the attitude of thankfulness, which is the highest level he can reach, even if he is in a state of poverty, sickness or other kinds of misery. If he were to compare the innumerable blessings that Allaah has bestowed upon him with the bad thing that has befallen him, he will see that the distress is as nothing in comparison to the blessings. When Allaah tests His slave by means of these disasters and miseries, and the slave does his duty of being patient and accepting, then the difficulties become easy for him to bear, and he has the hope of earning reward from Allaah for submitting to Him, and being patient and content. This makes bitter things sweet; the sweetness of the reward helps him to forget the bitterness of patience.

One of the most beneficial things in this regard is to follow the advice of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) given in the saheeh hadeeth reported by Abu Hurayrah: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Look at those who are below you, not at those who are above you, so that you will not think little of the blessings that Allaah has bestowed upon you.’”

If a person keeps this important concept (of looking only at those below him) in mind, he will definitely feel that he is better-off than many others when it comes to good health, physical strength, and provision (*rizq*) such as food, clothing, shelter, etc., no matter what his situation. So his anxiety and distress will disappear, and he will feel increased happiness and joy in the blessings of Allaah which have raised him above others.

The more he thinks about the blessings of Allaah, both obvious and hidden, spiritual and worldly, he will see that his Lord has given him many good things, and has lifted from him many bad things. No doubt this too will dispel worries and anxieties, and bring joy and happiness.

15. Keeping oneself busy with useful work or the pursuit of beneficial knowledge

This will distract a person’s mind from the matter that has been causing anxiety. Maybe then he will forget the causes of his distress, and begin to feel happier and more energetic. This is something which both believers and non-believers may try to do, but the believer is distinguished by the fact of his *eemaan* (faith), his sincerity and his hope for reward when he occupies himself with learning or teaching something useful or doing something beneficial. If he is keeping himself busy with worship, then this is worship, and if he is keeping himself

busy with some worldly work or custom, then he tries to accompany it with the right intention, and seeks the help of Allaah to do this thing as an act of obedience or worship to Him. Thus his action will be effective in dispelling his anxiety, stress and grief. How many people are suffering from anxiety and constant feelings of depression, which result in various kinds of disease and illness. The right treatment for them was: to forget the thing that caused the depression and worry, and to keep themselves busy with some important work. It was important that the work with which they kept themselves busy was something that they liked to do and looked forward to; this was more effective in bringing about the desired good results. And Allaah knows best.

16. Looking for the positive aspects of the events in which he tends to see only things that he dislikes

Abu Hurayrah said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘No believing man should hate a believing woman. If he dislikes one aspect of her character, he will be pleased with another.’”

The benefits of this hadeeth include: lifting anxiety and stress, preserving tranquillity, continued upholding of the duties which are either obligatory or encouraged, and the achievement of peace between the two parties. Anyone who is not guided by the Prophet’s words, but does the opposite, will see only the negative aspects of a situation, and will be blinded to the positive aspects. So it is inevitable that he will become anxious and depressed, the relationships between him and those with whom he is in close contact will turn sour, and he will neglect many of the mutual duties that both parties should pay attention to.

17. Understanding the true value and shortness of this life, and that time is too precious to be wasted in stress and anxiety

The wise person understands that his true life is one of joy and contentment. Life is very short, and he should not let himself get carried away with distress and depression that will make it even shorter. This goes against the true idea of life, so he is reluctant to spend too much of his life in distress and depression. In this regard, there is little difference between the righteous and the rebellious, but the believer can achieve this in the best way, in a way that benefits him both in this world and in the Hereafter. When misfortune strikes, or when he is afraid of something bad happening to him, he should also compare the blessings that he enjoys, both spiritual and worldly, with whatever misfortune has befallen him. When he does this, he will see just how much blessing he has, and the bad things will be put into perspective. Similarly, he can make a comparison between the thing he fears will harm him and the far greater possibility that he will be kept safe from it: the faint possibility that he may be harmed is far outweighed by the greater positive possibilities, and so his anxiety will be relieved. He takes into account the most likely scenario so that he can try to prepare himself in case it does happen, and he takes measures to protect himself against things that have not happened, or to alleviate or reduce the impact of things that have happened.

18. Another beneficial measure is not to allow one’s work and other duties to

accumulate

This means taking decisive action immediately, so that one is free to deal with whatever comes up in the future, because things that are not dealt with immediately pile up and are added to previous work that should have been done, thus making the burden even heavier. If you deal with everything at the right time, you will be free to deal with whatever lies ahead with a focused mind and adequate strength.

You should prioritize your work in order of importance, and try to choose things that interest you and that you enjoy, otherwise you will become bored and fed up. You can help yourself to achieve this by thinking clearly and consulting others, for one need never regret consultation. Study what you want to do in depth, and once you are sure about what action is needed to achieve your interest and have resolved to go ahead, then put your trust in Allaah, for Allaah loves those who put their trust in Him.

19. Constantly anticipating and being prepared for all possibilities

If a person is prepared for the possibility of the loss of a loved one, the sickness of a relative, incurring a debt, being overpowered by an enemy, or any other unpleasant possibility that has not yet happened – whilst seeking refuge with Allaah and hoping to be safe from it – then if his fears materialize, their impact will not be so great because he has already anticipated them and prepared himself to deal with them.

One important point that we should make is the fact that many ambitious people are prepared to deal with major calamities in a calm and patient manner, but they are unduly worried and stressed by trivial problems. The reason for this is that they prepare themselves to face major problems, but forget to prepare themselves to cope with minor troubles, which consequently cause them harm. The prudent person prepares himself to deal with both major and minor problems, and asks Allaah to help him and not leave him to deal with it by himself for even the blink of an eye. Thus both major and minor troubles become easier to bear, and he remains calm and serene.

20. Another remedy is to complain to religious scholars and ask them for advice

Their advice and opinions are among the things that can be of the greatest help in remaining steadfast at times of calamity. The Sahaabah used to complain to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about the torture they were suffering...

Khabbaab ibn al-Aratt (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “We complained to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) when he was reclining on his cloak in the shade of the Ka’bah. We said to him: ‘Why do you not ask Allaah to help us (grant us victory)? Why do you not pray to Allaah for us?’ He said, ‘A man from the people before you would be placed in a hole dug for him, then they would bring a saw and cut his head in two, yet that would not make him renounce his faith. They would use an iron comb to drag the flesh and nerves from his bones, yet that would not make him renounce his faith.

By Allaah, this matter will be completed (i.e. Islam will be perfected and will prevail) until a rider travelling from Sana'aa' to Hadramawt will fear nobody but Allaah or the attack of a wolf on his sheep, but you are too impatient.”

The Taabi'een also complained to the Sahaabah. Al-Zubayr ibn 'Adiyy said: “We came to Anas ibn Maalik and complained to him about what we were suffering at the hands of al-Hajjaaj. He told us: ‘Be patient, for there will come no time but the time after it is worse, until you meet your Lord. I heard that from your Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).’”

So the Muslim will hear from the scholars and leaders words which will help him and alleviate his pain, distress and anxiety.

Similarly, one can also seek the help of sincere brothers, wise relatives and faithful spouses. When Faatimah (may Allaah be pleased with her) felt distress, she complained to her husband 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him). 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father) tells us the story: the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to visit Faatimah, but he found a curtain over her door, so he did not enter. It was very rare for him to enter without greeting her so when 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) came, he saw that she was worried and upset. He asked, “What is the matter?” She said, “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to me, but he did not come in.” So 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) went to him and said: “O Messenger of Allaah, Faatimah feels very upset because you came to her but you did not come in.” He said, “I have nothing to do with these worldly things and fancy decorations.” So 'Ali went to told Faatimah what the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had said. She said, “Ask the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) what I should do with it.” He said, “tell her to send it to Banu So-and-so.” (It was a curtain that was decorated with embroidery and so on).

Going to a man who is wise and has sound opinions can also help to dispel anxiety.

Al-Mugheerah, the freed slave of al-Waleed, said: “I entered upon al-Waleed and found him looking worried. I asked, ‘What is worrying you, O *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*?’ He said, ‘The number of Muslims has increased, and the mosque is becoming too small for them. I offered them money for the rest of this church, so that I could take it and add it to the mosque, to make the place big enough for the Muslims, but they refused.’ Al-Mugheerah said: ‘O *Ameer al-Mu'mineen*, I have an idea that may relieve your worry.’ He asked, ‘What is it?’ I said: ‘When the Sahaabah took Damascus, Khaalid ibn al-Waleed entered through the Eastern Gate, conquering by the sword. When the people heard of this, they rushed towards Abu 'Ubaydah (who was laying siege to another gate of the city), asking him for protection. He granted them protection, so they opened the Gate of Jaabiyah for him. Abu 'Ubaydah entered peacefully, having made a truce with the people. We should find out how far the military seizure of land reached, and take it, but the areas covered by the truce should be left in their hands. I hope that all of the church will be on land seized militarily, so that you can incorporate it into the mosque.’ Al-Waleed said: ‘You have made me feel much better. Take

care of this matter yourself.’ So al-Mugheerah took care of it; he surveyed the area extending from the Eastern Gate towards the Gate of Jaabiyah, as far as Sooq al-Rayhaan, and found that the military seizure of territory had continued as far as a little more than four cubits beyond the Great Arch, so the church could be incorporated into the mosque. So al-Waleed sent word to the Christians to tell them: ‘The whole of this church lies in the territory which was seized militarily, so it belongs to us, not to you.’ They said: ‘Initially you offered us money and land, and we refused. Be generous and give us what you offered us originally, so that we may settle this matter peaceably, and we will give you the rest of the church.’ So the matter was settled peaceably.” (*Al-Badaayah wa’l-Nihaayah fi Seerat al-Waleed*).

21. The person who is distressed or worried should know that after hardship comes ease

So he should think positively and realize that Allaah will make a way out for him. The more intense his stress and depression is, the closer he is to relief and a way out.

Allaah says in Soorat al-Sharh (interpretation of the meaning): “*So verily, with the hardship, there is relief, verily, with the hardship, there is relief.*” [al-Sharh 94:5-6]. In effect, hardship is mentioned once, and relief is mentioned twice, because the definite article (“*al*”) indicates that the hardship mentioned in the first *aayah* quoted is the same as that mentioned in the second, whereas the fact that relief is mentioned in an indefinite form (with *tanween*) shows that the relief mentioned in the second *aayah* is different from that mentioned in the first.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) advised Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father): “Know that victory (or achievement) comes through patience, and that ease comes through hardship...”

22. Another remedy for distress is certain kinds of food

Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reports that ‘Aa’ishah used to order *talbeen* for people who were sick or had been stricken by tragedy, and she would say: “I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say: ‘*Talbeen* warms the heart of the sick person and alleviates some of a person’s grief.’”

Al-Bukhaari also narrated from ‘Aa’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that whenever a member of her family died, and the women gathered together then dispersed, except for her family and close friends, she would ask for a pot of *talbeen*, then she would cook it, make *thareed* [a dish of sopped bread, meat and broth] and pour the *talbeen* over it, then tell the women: “Eat from it, for I heard the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) say that *talbeen* is the cure for the heart of the sick person and alleviates some of a person’s grief.”

Talbeen is a soup or broth made from flour or bran to which honey is added. It is called *talbeen* because it resembles milk (*laban*). It is cooked from ground barley.

Saying that it is a cure for the heat of the sick person means that it relaxes him, gives him energy and alleviates his grief and distress.

Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported that ‘Aa’ishah said: “Whenever the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) heard that someone was sick or in pain, and not eating, he would say: ‘You should make *talbeen* and let him sip it. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, it will cleanse the stomach of any one of you just as you wash the dirt from your faces with water.’”

Al-Tirmidhi reported that ‘Aa’ishah said: “Whenever any member of his family fell ill, he would order that soup or broth be made for them, then he would tell them to sip it. He used to say, ‘It makes the grieving heart strong and cleanses the heart of the sick person, just as any of you cleanses the dirt from her face with water.’”

Even though some people might find this strange, this is a true matter, as it has been proven to be part of the Revelation conveyed by the infallible Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Allaah has created all kinds of food, and He knows best their characteristics, so the soup of barley mentioned in the hadeeth is one of the types of food that make people feel better. And Allaah knows best.

With regard to the method of cooking this food for the person who is physically sick or whose heart is stricken with grief, Ibn Hijr (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “What suits the sick person is the water from barley that has been cooked whole, and what suits the grieving person is the water from ground barley that has been cooked. And Allaah knows best.”

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4. Writings of Immam Ibn al-Qayyim on Treating Distress and Grief:

Following this discussion of cures, we will pause to look briefly at the list written by Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) in which he lists fifteen kinds of remedies through which Allaah may alleviate distress and grief:

1. *Tawheed al-Ruboobiyyah* (Unity of Divine Lordship)
2. *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah* (Unity of Divinity)
3. Unity of belief, i.e. *Tawheed al-Asmaa’ wa’l-Siffaat* (Unity of the Divine Names and Attributes).
4. To declare that Allaah is far above mistreating His slave or punishing him without any cause on the part of the slave himself.
5. Admission on the part of the slave that he is the wrongdoer.
6. Beseeching Allaah by the best of things, which are His Names and Attributes. Among the most comprehensive in meaning of His Names and Attributes are the Names *al-Hayyu* (the Ever-Living), *al-Qayoom* (the Eternal).

7. Seeking the help of Allaah Alone.
8. Putting one's hope in Allaah.
9. Putting one's trust in Allaah and handing over all one's affairs to Him, recognizing that one's forelock is in His hand, that Allaah runs all one's affairs as He wills, that His command is ever executed and that His decree is just.
10. Reading Qur'aan and pondering its meaning, seeking consolation in it for all disasters, and seeking a cure in it for all diseases of the heart (i.e., spiritual or psychological diseases) for it washes away grief and heals his distress and anxiety.
11. Seeking the forgiveness of Allaah.
12. Repentance
13. Jihaad (striving for the sake of Allaah).
14. Salaat (prayer)
15. Admitting that one has no power or strength at all, and attributing them to the One Who holds them in His hand.

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5. Du'aa' (supplication):

We ask Allaah, may He be exalted, to keep us safe from distress, to grant us relief from depression and to alleviate our worries, for He is the All-Hearing Who answers prayers, He is the Ever-Living, Eternal.

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6. Reminder:

Finally, let us remind ourselves that no matter how great and how numerous the worries and distress of this world may be, the distress and anguish of the Hereafter will be far greater. This includes that which will befall all people when they are gathered all together for Judgement. Al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) reported from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I will be the master of all people on the Day of Resurrection. Do you know why I will be the master of all people? Allaah will gather together all the people, the first and the last of them in one place, in such a way that if a caller calls out to them, they will all hear him, and they will all be seen at once. The sun will be brought close to them, and they will feel more distress than they can bear. People will say, 'Can you see what has happened to you? Won't you see who can intercede for you with your Lord?' Then some of them will say to others, 'Let's go to Adam...'"

There will be no cure for distress and anguish on that Day unless one turns to Allaah today.

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his Family and Companions, who are the best of people. Praise be to Allaah Who is overtaken by neither slumber nor sleep.

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