

**wayad‘u l-insānu biss-sharri du‘āahu bil-khayri wakāna l-insānu ‘ajūlan  
(Surah Al-Isra 17:11)**

As it is, man [often] prays for things that are bad as if he were praying for something that is good: for man is prone to be hasty [in his judgments]

Most of our self-inflicted suffering traces back to one of two sources: an inability to find gratitude in what we already have, and an inability to accept a destiny different from the one we imagined. The first one is our resistance to the decree already manifested, and the second one is our stand against the destiny that might manifest in our lives.

Let us examine the first one, the inability to find gratitude in what has already been manifested. Dissatisfaction has a way of blinding us to our own blessings, and makes us fall into the trap of comparing our lives to others'. We begin questioning why we do not have what others have. When we lose sight of what we have, we begin to obsess over what we lack. We feel resentment and perceive our state as unfair. That is why Rasulallah (saws) advised us to look at those who are less fortunate in terms of status, wealth, health, and not to look at those who are above us. This is because looking at those who are less fortunate is more likely to prevent us from despising or belittling the blessings of Allah upon us. He does not give us what we desire but precisely what we need.

Dissatisfaction triggers another spiritual sickness, envy, the desire for a blessing to be taken away from another person. It is often accompanied by a wish for the other person to lose what they have, even if the envier doesn't gain it themselves. This is called hasad, malicious envy. Hasad destroys good deeds. Rasulallah (saws) said: "Beware of jealousy, for verily it destroys good deeds the way fire destroys wood."

Envy is seen as a rejection of Allah's decree (Qadr). By being envious, a person is essentially questioning Allah's wisdom in how He distributes His blessings among His creation. Hasad often serves as the opening to other major sins like backbiting, slandering, lying, and even physical harm.

We should not worry about whether we will receive blessings, but rather whether we are capable of handling the blessings that are bestowed upon us. In one narration, the Prophet (saws) said that when a servant of Allah asked for something, the angels made preparations to deliver what was requested. Yet Allahhu Ta'ala looked upon him and said to the angels, "Relieve him of this burden, for if I grant him this blessing, it will lead him to Hellfire. This means that the blessing would have caused him to become

heedless and go astray. It is essential for us to understand that when Allah Ta'ala withholds something from us, it is out of His mercy, and ultimately for our own good."

One of the sahabi, Tha'laba, had excessive greed for wealth and property. He wanted to become rich. He repeatedly approached the Prophet (saws), asking him to pray that Allah grant him wealth. Rasulallah (saws) initially declined and cautioned him, saying "A little that you are able to give thanks for is better than much wealth which you cannot". He warned of the spiritual dangers of receiving what one desires without the capacity for gratitude and for fulfilling responsibilities. Unchecked blessings only deepen greed and nurture selfishness. The sahabi withdrew his request, but after a while he came back, and again asked him to pray that he would become rich. Rasulallah (saws) said: "Am I not a sufficient example for you? By Allah, had I wished it, these very mountains would have flowed behind me as gold and silver — yet I chose to remain content."

Tha'laba once again withdrew his request, yet his ambition was never subdued. He convinced himself: "If I were to become wealthy, I would aid the poor and the destitute, and thereby earn far greater reward." Overcome by this thought and defeated by the fierce demands of his own nafs, he went to the Prophet (saws) a third time and declared: "By the One Who sent you as a true Prophet, if I am granted wealth, I will provide for the poor, protect the vulnerable, and give every rightful owner his due!" Faced with this relentless and unyielding insistence, the Messenger of Allah (saws) raised his hands and supplicated: "Oh my Lord, grant Tha'laba the worldly wealth he seeks."

Before long, through the blessing of this prayer, Allah bestowed upon Tha'laba immense riches. His flocks multiplied until they filled the mountains and the valleys. Yet the very man who had once been known as "the bird of the mosque" for the constancy of his presence there gradually began to neglect the congregational prayers, consumed as he was by the management of his wealth and property. In time, he came only for Friday prayers. Then, after a while, even those he neglected.

One day, upon learning of his condition, the Messenger of Allah (saws) said sorrowfully: "Woe to him!"

Yet Tha'laba's heedlessness and ignorance did not stop there. When the collectors came to him to gather the obligatory zakāt, he turned them away, declaring: "What you are doing is nothing but extortion, blackmailing, extracting money forcefully!" Gone were the promises he had once sworn so fervently. Not only did he abandon the charitable giving he had pledged, but he went so far as to withhold even the minimum due to the poor, a right established beyond all doubt by the very verses of the Qur'an. In the end, he was counted among the hypocrites.

The story is not discouraging Muslims from becoming rich, but rather invites them to be thankful, and to use their riches for the benefit of others. On the contrary, working

hard is considered a form of worship and a moral duty, not merely a means to accumulate wealth.

The second source of self-inflicted suffering is our resistance to a decree that unfolds differently than we imagined. As “creatures of haste” we rush from one thing to another, striving to achieve our goals without pausing to reflect on our ultimate purpose. We often demand that our prayers be answered without any delay at the time we want. We find ourselves asking: When will this trial end? When will I get that job? When will I get that opportunity I have been waiting for? When will I finally get married? In reality, Allah-u Ta’ala has a unique plan for every one of us.

But in reality, Allah-u Ta’ala has a plan for each one of us, and sometimes, the delay in achieving our goals is a blessing in disguise, leading us to a more fulfilling and rewarding outcome. We must learn how to submit ourselves to Allah’s schedule, and to His timeline, and stop seeing the delay in fulfilling our desires as deprivation. Delay is not a deprivation or denial of our supplication. It does not mean Allah-u Ta’ala is telling us NO. It means that He is telling us that NOT YET, NOT NOW, and it is for our own good. If, in the meantime, we cannot see the wisdom behind that delay, and fail to appreciate it, then the delay and the blessing hidden behind it would go to waste. Allah-u Ta’ala will not let us approach Him without giving in return what we asked for or better, provided that we show patience and wait.

While we hasten to fulfill our desires, we seldom show the same urgency when it comes to our responsibilities. Though we are urged to race toward good deeds before poverty, illness, old age, or sudden death overtake us, we delay what is required of us. Through this negligence, we lose the very opportunities that were destined for us, simply because we failed to act with promptness.

There is a beautiful prayer that teaches us how to face our decree, what is written for us. The first part of the prayer is: “Oh Allah, let me be pleased with what has been decreed for me; that is your judgment that has already been manifested.” It is a medication for ingratitude about what has already been manifested.

In the second part of the prayer, we are asking to receive the blessings that will be bestowed upon in the future. We pray “Oh Allah, bless us with the divine decree that is yet to come.”

The final part of the prayer is advice for our hasty disposition: “Hatta la uhibbe ta’jiile akhkhart”: so that I do not love anything that you hasten which was meant to be delayed, and, “wa laa ta’kheera maa ajjal”: I do not love that which you delayed that you decided to hasten for me.

**Yurdaer Al Latif Al Jerrahi**