

**THERAPY FROM THE**  
**QURAN AND SUNNAH SERIES** **1**

# A Reference Guide for Character Development



الصلاح من القرآن والسنة  
دليل مرجعي لتطوير الشخصية

**Dr. Feryad A. Hussain**

**IPH** الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي





IN THE NAME OF

**ALLAH**

THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL



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**A Reference Guide for  
Character Development**

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Dr. Feryad A. Hussain



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي  
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## PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSLITERATION CHART

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans- literated form
أ	short 'a', as in <i>cat</i>	a
آ - إ	longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i> )	â
ب	/b/ as in <i>bell, rubber</i> and <i>tab</i>	b
ت	/t/ as in <i>tap, mustard</i> and <i>sit</i>	t
ة	takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	/th/ as in <i>thing, maths</i> and <i>wealth</i>	th
ج	/j/ as in <i>jam, ajar</i> and <i>age</i>	j
ح	a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well	h
خ	as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well	kh
د	/d/ as in <i>do, muddy</i> and <i>red</i>	d
ذ	as in <i>this, father</i> and <i>smooth</i>	dh

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
ر	/r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>arid</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish	r
ز	/z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i>	z
س	/s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i>	s
ش	as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i>	sh
ص	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth	ʃ
ض	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth	ɖ
ط	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth	ɟ
ظ	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth	<u>dh</u>
ع	no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat	ʕ
غ	no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge'	gh
ف	/f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i>	f

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Transliterated form
ق	no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth	q
ك	/k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i>	k
ل	/l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word <i>Allah</i> , it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i>	l
م	/m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i>	m
ن	/n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i>	n
هـ - ه - ا	/h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well	h
و	as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i>	w
و	long 'u', as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i>	oo
ي	as in <i>yard</i> and <i>mayo</i>	y
ي	long 'e', as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i>	ee
ء	glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : <i>bu'er</i> , or the stop sound in <i>uh-oh!</i>	(omitted in initial position)

## Diphthongs

Arabic script	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
أُو، وَاو	long 'o', as in <i>owe</i> , <i>boat</i> and <i>go</i>	au, aw
أَي، يَاي	long 'a', as in <i>aid</i> , <i>rain</i> and <i>say</i>	ay, ai, ei

## Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

Name of mark	Pronunciation	Trans-literated form
◌َ fathah	very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel)	a
◌ِ kasrah	shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel)	i
◌ُ dammah	shorter version of oo	u
◌ّ shaddah	a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled	double letter
◌ْ sukoon	no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word	absence of vowel





## ARABIC HONORIFIC SYMBOLS

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(سُبْحَانَكَ)	<i>Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ</i>	The Exalted
(سَلَامٌ)	<i>şalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam</i>	Blessings and peace be upon him
(سَلَامٌ)	<i>'alayhi as-salâm</i>	May peace be upon him
(رَضِيَ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhu</i>	May Allah be pleased with him
(رَضِيَ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with her
(رَضِيَ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhumâ</i>	May Allah be pleased with both of them
(رَضِيَ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhum</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them
(رَضِيَ)	<i>radiya Allâhu 'anhunna</i>	May Allah be pleased with all of them (females only)



## HADITH GRADE TERMS

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Sound: *ṣaḥeeh*

Reliable: *ḥasan*

Weak: *ḍa'eef*

Odd: *ghareeb*

Authentic: includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between

Acceptable: *sakat 'anhu*; the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it



## ABOUT THE WORD 'LORD'

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The word lord in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is 'master' or 'ruler', and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: 'the lord of the mansion' or 'Lord So-and-So' (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God – Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah – not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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All praises and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty, and the All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His messengers and prophets, and his family, his Companions, and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

Despite faith and trust in Allah and in His divine decree, many Muslims nonetheless suffer from psychological issues and may seek help from a doctor or therapist. Unfortunately, modern secular psychological theory is largely divorced from religion and spirituality, thus ignoring the most important aspect of a believer's life. A gap therefore exists which must be closed in order for the Muslim patient to reap full benefits of therapeutic assistance.

In this first volume of her series titled *Therapy from the Qur'an and Sunnah*, Dr. Feryad A. Hussain blends modern psychology with verses from the Qur'an and authentic hadiths to produce a groundbreaking reference in the emerging field of Islamic psychology. The text offers an Islamic reframing of a number of pertinent themes and has much to offer to both patients and therapists, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

May Allah accept the efforts of all those who contributed to the production of this book, and may it be acceptable to Him, *âmeen*.

Muhammad Abdul Mohsin Al-Tuwaijri  
Managing Director  
International Islamic Publishing House  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah,  
the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise is for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. May He shower peace and blessings upon all the prophets (peace be upon them all), from the first, Âdam (*'alayhi as-salâm* – peace be upon him), to the last, Prophet Muhammad (*salla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* – blessings and peace be upon him), who was sent to humankind as the finest living model of the Qur'an. May He be pleased with the Companions (*rađiya Allâhu 'anhum* – may Allah be pleased with all of them) and the Imams who came after them and who were some of the greatest intellects and examples of faith in history. May al-Ĥakeem (Allah, the Most Wise) grant us the wisdom to live according to this knowledge for the benefit of the Ummah (Muslim nation) and for our success in the worldly life and the hereafter, and may He grant us a rank with the most excellent of companions. Truly, all success is from Allah (*Subĥânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He) alone.



## DEDICATION

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To my family, all of whom – in one way or another – introduced me in the most inspiring way to the best role models, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his wives and Companions (رضي الله عنهم), and who took me safely – heart and soul – through the years of working on this project.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

If this book were written through shared excitement and encouragement, Fatima Khatibi would truly be my co-author. *Jazâhâ Allâhu khayran* (may Allah reward her with goodness) for her twice-daily reviews and discussions on developments as well as her review from a *da'wah* perspective.

To Rob Chappel (Consultant Psychologist/Head of Inpatient Services, Northeast London Mental Health Trust, UK) for his very helpful review from a psychological perspective and for highlighting questions for non-Muslims. Also to Professor Malik Badri (International Islamic University Malaysia) (may Allah have mercy on him) for his overall feedback and for agreeing to write the foreword.

Most specially, a heartfelt thanks to my 'Baji', Naeema Noor, who opened her home to me, whose *tafseer* (exegesis) of the Qur'an triggered the writing of this book, and whose sisterhood and *du'â's* (supplications) were the greatest source of blessing for me.

To the IIPH team with whom it has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work. Their ongoing support and suggestions are of an equal measure to my own efforts.

*Jazâkum Allâhu khayran katheeran* to all. May Allah (ﷻ) accept it from us.



## FOREWORD

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A few decades ago, the late Dr. Muhammad Uthman Najati (may Allah bless his soul) wrote two books: *The Holy Qur'an and Psychology* and *The Prophet's Hadith and Psychology*. In these books, the author simply categorised verses from the Qur'an and Hadith that were related to different topics of general psychology. I was honoured to have Dr. Najati as my colleague at the Imam Muhammad ibn Saud University in the 1980s. He told me that before retiring at night, he used to read a few pages from the Qur'an or Hadith of our Prophet (ﷺ) and whenever a verse or hadith seemed to him to be expressing some aspect of modern psychology, such as motivation, personality, or perception, he would categorise it as such. Dr. Najati was a pioneer of Islamic psychology, and his two books were the first endeavours of their kind.<sup>1</sup> They were and still are of great benefit to Arab university students of psychology as well as to the general public.

The present volume by Dr. Feryad A. Hussain is a similar book. In my experience, European psychologists who convert to Islam and non-European Muslim psychologists who were born and raised in Europe or the US do not show the apologetic attitude that we generally find among Arab and Asian psychologists when critiquing secular Western psychology. Once the former group commit themselves to Islam, their psychological worldview is diametrically changed. They know their own Western culture and are quite aware of its deep-down

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<sup>1</sup> The two books referred to are *Qur'an wa 'Ilm an-Nafs* (Qur'an and psychology) and *Hadeeth an-Nabawi wa 'Ilm an-Nafs* (Prophetic Hadith and psychology). (Editor)

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secular and anti-religious aspects. They do not harbour any conscious or unconscious feelings of inferiority towards the claims of Western social sciences and are not afraid to appear as 'unscientific', as some psychologists do. This is because they are better able to differentiate between what is really scientific and what poses as scientific but in reality is only pseudo-scientific, supported by a materialistic philosophy. Their early education thus gives them good training in critical thinking.

For example, my dear American friend Dr. John Sullivan, who converted to Islam more than forty years ago, informed me that whenever a Muslim client came to him for counselling, he would ask whether he or she prayed. If the answer was in the affirmative, he would ask the client to perform ablution and then together they would pray two *rak'at* (units of prayer). After prayers, John would humbly supplicate aloud, asking Allah (ﷻ) to enable him to help the client with the knowledge that was bestowed on him. If the client did not pray, he would simply pray and supplicate alone. He informed me that his Muslim clients were generally spiritually touched by this approach and that Allah had privileged him to treat many unhappy persons to get over their problems and, in some cases, to build a warmer relationship with Allah. He stresses that if Muslim therapists in a Muslim environment wish to be of real help to their patients, then they should not only be friendly but also courageously throw away the non-judgemental approach and that of the unconditional acceptance of the client propagated by Person-Centred Therapy. The patient is not like a paying customer who is always right!

Dr. Feryad is clearly a young woman of this Islamic generation. She was born, raised, and educated in the UK. She obtained her Practitioner Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and worked as a clinical psychologist for a number of years.

In his work, Najati covers all aspects of Western psychology and his books are more of a reference of Qur'anic verses and hadiths related

to various topics of general psychology. This work, on the other hand, is an in-depth, Islamic approach to therapy, where verses from the Qur'an and sayings of our Prophet (ﷺ) are related to and combined under eighty-five therapeutic themes. These themes reflect cognitions and psychological dilemmas/perceptions such as 'accepting advice', 'anger and aggression', 'asking questions', 'bad things don't happen to good people', 'being realistic', 'death', 'divorce and marital problems', 'feeling there is no way out', 'patience', 'self-control', and 'the power of prayer'. These therapeutic themes have been carefully selected to cover the most common cognitions held by patients in therapy. The Qur'anic verses and hadiths serve as analogies to facilitate a deeper understanding of the problems of patients and consequently impact upon treatment effectiveness. Thus, unlike many books written on the psychological interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith, this text is more of a practical workbook that helps therapists view and address the problems of their patients in a spiritually meaningful manner. In this respect, the author believes that it can be of help to non-practicing Muslims as well as to non-Muslims, since the analogical issues of good and evil are 'wired' into our human souls.

The book is written in a beautiful, easy-to-read style. Since it does not have any chapters, it compels one to continue reading one short therapeutic theme after the next without feeling the passage of time, whilst vicariously gaining useful knowledge from the Qur'an and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Like the books of Najati, this is a reference that will not become obsolete. May Allah reward our young author and may this be only the beginning of more blessed works on Islamic psychology.

Malik Badri

(16<sup>th</sup> February 1932-8<sup>th</sup> February 2021)



## INTRODUCTION

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The relationship between Islam and psychology is well established. The Qur'an is often described as a book of human nature, teaching all of humanity their purpose of life with continuous reminders to reflect on its words and learn from its meanings. The Qur'an deals with the human psyche and exemplifies the challenges to behavioural change and character development through its narratives, analogies, and direct guidance.

The therapeutic process is, in essence, based on these very principles. Although the Qur'an does not describe itself as a book of psychology, it is nevertheless a great resource for those who work with people with psychological problems. Allah (ﷻ) Himself tells us:

﴿... هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢)

﴿...in it is guidance for those who fear Allah.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 2)<sup>1</sup>

That our purpose is to worship the Creator is made clear:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾ (سورة الذاريات: ٥٦)

﴿I have not created the jinn and humans except to worship Me.﴾ (*adh-Dhâriyât* 51: 56)

However, it is 'the Book' (that is, the Qur'an) that gives us the directives towards its attainment, which is the actualisation of the *fiṭrah* (the natural disposition of human beings). Qur'anic teachings, then,

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<sup>1</sup> The translations of the meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book are taken (with some changes to the text) from *The Majestic Qur'an*, translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab, under publication with IIPH. (Editor)

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accord the creation the freedom to live the *ḥaq* (divine truth) through the development of his or her character, since the final accounting will be for that individual alone with no excuses or justifications based on cultural or social acceptability. This empowers the creation to be free to choose, to enable ultimate self-liberation.

Allah (ﷻ) sent many beautiful models of character in all the prophets (peace be upon them all) and tells us:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٢١)

﴿Verily, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for those who look with hope to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah much.﴾ (al-Aḥzāb 33: 21)

The unique Qur'anic generation, the Companions (رضي الله عنهم), set us fine examples as everyday (though extraordinary) citizens of the Islamic world. They implemented this guidance and utilised it successfully to meet the psychological as well as social challenges of their lives, as is evidenced throughout the Qur'an and Sunnah/Hadith and in the legacy of their worldly achievements. Indeed, those achievements now form the cornerstones of societies the world over.

Muslims working in the discipline of contemporary clinical psychology in the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds alike have reverted with a passion to the use of the Qur'an and Sunnah to address the challenges facing humanity today. The growing development of models which make up 'Islamic psychology' is a testament to this fact. This does not, however, mean there has been no controversy or difficulty regarding the acceptability of the underlying concepts of these new developments from an Islamic legal (Sharia) point of view. Debates notwithstanding, the approaches are continuing to be modified and implemented in their various guises.

## What is the purpose of this book?

For Muslim clinical psychologists, a major dilemma has been one of implementation; that is, how to apply the concepts in a therapeutic setting, since there is no clear methodology in spite of the growing abundance of theory. The majority of Muslim psychologists in non-Muslim countries are not necessarily well versed (or not versed at all) in Arabic or the Qur'anic sciences and have, therefore, been restricted in their use of this information. Where attempts at integration have been made, there is also reasonable doubt as to the level of qualification of psychologists to apply the information within the correct Islamic frame of reference, according to accepted tafseer and Hadith methodology. This problem, coupled with the lack of connection to Islamic scholars in the world of therapy, has necessitated the need for a move towards a more inclusive approach, where both psychologists and scholars of tafseer work together. However, the need has been met with a random rather than systematic pairing, and calls for use of the Qur'an and Sunnah in therapy continue.

In an attempt to meet the challenge of implementation, one simple, practical approach is a basic reference text citing psychologically relevant verses of Qur'an and/or hadiths, identified and interpreted according to accepted tafseer/Hadith methodology. The urgency of need and the lack of availability of such texts in the English language have resulted in this attempt, ill-qualified though I am for the task. As I am a clinician but not an Islamic scholar, my aim must be modest: to make easy the process of finding references and support from the Qur'an and hadiths for incorporation into therapeutic interventions for clinicians.

This text is simply that: identification of those Qur'anic verses and hadiths which may be used for therapeutic purposes, through analogy, in order to facilitate understanding of mental health problems and impact upon effectiveness of treatment.

The reader should be clear that the text is in no way a psychological interpretation of Qur'an and Hadith. In order to keep within an accepted framework from a methodological perspective, only pre-existing and accepted interpretations of all religious texts have been used.

## Who is the book for?

The aim of this text is that it be used as a therapy aid for psychologists, therapists, and counsellors working in the field of mental health, or indeed anyone who is striving to maintain good mental health or develop an upright character.

Islam was sent to all creation, not just Muslims, and Allah (ﷻ) repeatedly addresses humankind throughout the Qur'an. Hence, its applicability is universal. Though the details of the faith may not be something non-Muslims or indeed even some Muslims are familiar with, the concepts therein remain effective, as with any alternative ideas given to clarify or exemplify the explanation of a situation. The symbols of good and evil, whether one is a Muslim or not, will still apply and do not replace the reality of Allah and Satan. Where there are descriptions of reward and punishment, paradise and hellfire, or the worldly life and the hereafter, but the patient cannot relate to them, this does not negate the satisfaction one feels at doing the 'right thing' if only in the opinion of the creation (on a secular basis or otherwise). Additionally, the beauty of analogy means that any scenario can be offered to increase understanding or motivation to change, since the principles may still be applied. Hence, the work may be useful for all individuals regardless of their religious beliefs and simply for the benefit of one's overall psychological well-being.

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## The analogical model

The model of Islamic psychology upon which this text is based is one of analogy. (Note: In this model, 'analogy' refers specifically to parallel cases, agreement, and similarity of ideas and so excludes any form of symbolic interpretation as may be commonly employed in alternative therapeutic techniques.) The similarity of meaning comes only from the apparent and overt meaning of the verses as well as accepted interpretations. Where interpretations refer to hypocrites or non-believers, the link or description refers to the characteristic, not the person, based on interpretations made by Ibn Katheer. The text also makes use of any direct guidance for humankind regarding behaviour, such as guidance on food or activities of daily living – all of which contribute to a healthy lifestyle and, for the comfort of non-Muslims, have been supported by recent scientific research.

Just as therapists use analogy to facilitate understanding of their clients' situations, the verses and hadiths and their surrounding circumstances are used, since the words of the Creator will most aptly summarise the experience of the creation. Clearly, in order to learn from analogy, one is not necessarily expected to participate or live the ideas being considered. However, the lessons learned therein allow for a diversity of meaning, as with any therapeutic approach. Patients themselves are better than therapists at making the connections to their own lives. Use of analogy in this way can be incorporated into any model of therapy. Application of the chosen verses and hadiths may also facilitate implementation of the various Islamic psychology models, since the principle of application therein would necessarily require inclusion of this information to support and validate the intervention. The verses and hadiths present analogies where both the patient and psychologist may use the information to explain, empathise, sympathise, and understand the patient's experience. They may also offer practical advice which may be incorporated into the intervention along with other suggestions.

## Choosing between clinical diagnosis and clinical cognitions

The assertions and references to psychological states and complaints related to interpretations are based wholly on the clinical experience of working with a range of people with mental health problems. (See the section titled 'The remit of this text'.)

The decision to exclude DSM diagnostic criteria was intentional, since to match verses and hadiths with DSM classifications would limit the use of information to those pathologies.<sup>1</sup> This is not the aim of this book. To benefit a wider audience, the focus is on common patient cognitions and therapeutic themes. Such cognitions may arise irrespective of the diagnosis given and may overlap across diagnoses.

Further, although some reference may be made to different psychological problems such as depression or addictions, these references are simply to contextualise the inferences made, not to imply a linear relationship between that interpretation and specific illnesses (again, the reason being that cognitions may overlap). Many of the cognitions may apply to human nature in general and not specifically to clinical settings since, of course, individuals retain their humanity irrespective of the psychological problems they may experience.

## Calling to Islam or calling to therapy?

Whilst all Muslims have an obligation to call others to Islam, it is, of course, important to be aware that the information herein should

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<sup>1</sup> DSM: *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychological Association, is widely used by mental health professionals in the United States and elsewhere to diagnose mental illnesses.

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be presented to the patient with the focus on the therapy itself so that the therapy session does not instead become a da'wah session. This must be kept distinct, since therapists are not 'soul seekers' intending to convert patients under the guise of therapy; this can be the case in situations where vulnerable people are coerced into alternative belief systems. As a formal methodology, da'wah is a specialist skill and a therapy session cannot be considered an appropriate time and place for disseminating such information. Indeed, the timing of such information is, in itself, something that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) demonstrated in his behaviour. Ibn Mas'ood (*radiya Allāhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to select a suitable time for teaching about Islam so that his listeners would not get bored. (He abstained from bombarding others with constant religious talk.) (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup> Clearly, this is about considering receptivity and circumstances.

The emphasis in therapy must be on resolving difficulties. This in no way promotes the idea that one's way of life is suspended and isolated from one's daily life, since actions in this life determine our place in the hereafter. However, fulfilling one's responsibilities in the best manner and easing the distress of others are also manifestations of the core principles of Islam and so cannot be seen as secularising religious belief, especially where it involves Islamic teachings as guidance. The point is to focus on the patient's needs in addressing the immediate problem. Regarding the obligation to call all Muslims to the faith specifically in a therapy setting, we can refer to the advice given in the Qur'an:

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<sup>1</sup> All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is usually because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. (Editor)

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٦)

﴿Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clear from error...﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 256*)

The Muslim therapist may naturally address such issues more directly with Muslim patients since there is a shared understanding of the relationship between behaviour and practising/implementing the faith. For non-Muslims, though, the use of the references from the Qur'an and Hadith literature may be adequate; one's coming to Islam may stem from any aspect.

## Using the reference text

The information is presented in a way that balances both tafseer and therapeutic methodology requirements, as follows:

- The information is presented according to therapeutic themes/cognitions as opposed to pathologies, simply because patient cognitions are not specific to any one diagnosis.
- The theme is briefly introduced and the relevant Qur'anic verses are presented. Verses are referenced by the name of the *soorah* (chapter of the Qur'an) followed by the chapter and verse number (for example, *al-Baqarah 2: 1*).

(Note: To avoid misapplication and acknowledgement of the context, the complete verses and hadiths are presented as much as possible.)

- The interpretation of the verse is given briefly within footnotes to present the information within the original context.
- Elaboration on inferences made is then offered as related to clinical issues.

- Where relevant, hadiths have been added. They have been presented according to the compiler (that is, subjects are dealt with using different books within the text).
- All hadiths are presented in chronological order as cited in the original texts. Since the Prophet (ﷺ) was the narrator and therefore able to substantiate and amplify hadiths, the interpretations are already made by him. Therefore, the authors of the Hadith texts themselves offer only a brief description in the form of a theme or chapter heading to summarise or indicate the relevant context. (The theme or chapter headings for each hadith are mentioned within footnotes.)
- As with Qur'anic verses, the connection of hadiths to each psychological difficulty has been highlighted.

Of course, it cannot be claimed that this is a comprehensive list of all related verses and hadiths as clinical experience varies from therapist to therapist and patient populations. More experienced therapists will be aware of the differing contexts in which the examples given occur (as well as overlap) and will naturally have many more rich examples of their own. Therefore, the grouping of verses and hadiths under the given cognitions may not be familiar or agreeable to all therapists. It is also important to acknowledge that there will be numerous verses and hadiths that relate to human nature in general and not simply to psychological pathology. The focus of this book is on a therapeutic setting and not on human nature in general. These verses and hadiths may not, therefore, have been considered applicable since there was no additional meaning as far as a therapeutic application is concerned.

Additionally, because verses and hadiths are applicable at an interpersonal and intrapersonal level and since some of these issues overlap, there may be some repetition, although care has been taken to avoid this where possible. However, where this occurs, it may be that the information is being viewed from an alternative perspective.

Verses and hadiths relating specifically to the Day of Judgement, tenets of faith, religious obligations, and Islamic rulings have been excluded. The remit of the book is not to offer these rulings and judgements without the correct context being presented, especially since they are presented in relation to a human situation and Qur'anic verses. Such work is the domain of Islamic scholars. Hence, to avoid possible misapplication, these were deliberately omitted.

## Interpretation of the Qur'an

The basic English translation of verses has been taken from *The Majestic Qur'an*, translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab. All interpretations of verses are taken solely from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. This may limit the analysis, and readers well versed in tafseer may question Ibn Kathir's exegesis. However, since this text is not a psychological tafseer, the use of this established interpretation was considered adequate. (Note: There are instances where 'No Comment' has been given by Ibn Kathir without explaining why. In these cases, in order to honour his interpretation, no further elaboration has been made by the author.)

The Sharia gives rulings on the applicability and acceptability of knowledge dissemination; hence, secular models of knowledge dissemination cannot be applied. Whilst psychology as a discipline encourages developing symbolism in understanding problems, the dangers of symbolic and random interpretation of Qur'anic verses for one's faith and for the credibility of the work in the discipline of Qur'anic sciences is well understood. There is a distinct difference between permissible creative applicability of verses and symbolic applicability, where the literal meaning is reduced or removed for the sake of convenience. From a Sharia point of view, only the former is acceptable.

It is important to note that any therapeutic parallels drawn are neither attempts nor claims at making new and far-fetched interpretations,

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nor do they intend to ignore existing classical interpretations. The interpretation of verses is brief since the detailed interpretation is considered beyond the remit of this work. The aim is not to rewrite classical interpretations but to apply underlying principles for use in therapy.

(Note: Reference to the differences between religious groups at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an is simply coincidence and is representative of the events at the time. The intention is not to vilify adherents of any religion, but to report the historical facts as recorded in established and recognised interpretations. Such is the case with all religious texts.)

## Interpretation of hadiths

All hadiths were taken only from the English translations of the seminal collections of Hadith, *Ṣaḥeḥ al-Bukhârî* and *Ṣaḥeḥ Muslim*.

Hadith literature is known to support, amplify, and clarify any ambiguity (in terms of permissible meaning and subsequent action) of Qur'anic verses. The Sunnah is a complete and living example of the teachings of the Qur'an and Islam for humankind to emulate. It is important to note that the significance of the Sunnah is not simply to follow a chosen prophet at the expense of deriding others. This is not permissible in Islam, as all prophets (peace be upon them all) brought the message of monotheism to their people. However, the message and guidance of Muhammad (ﷺ), the last prophet, is final. This consolidates or revises all previous revelations and teachings of the messengers.

The following of the Sunnah is to benefit humankind in a practical way, thus making Islam accessible and its aims achievable to people in general. Otherwise, as with many religions, it may be misunderstood as simply a set of beliefs which seemingly do not relate to worldly life, but are merely a theoretical life option. The Sunnah highlights

and facilitates the connection between this life and the hereafter. How people live in this world determines their ultimate end, as is repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an. Hence Islam is described as a complete way of life. The Sunnah is an actualisation of this. Obviously, its inclusion here is because it is a perfect example (as is apparent in the hadiths presented) of balanced living: the healthiest approach for humankind.

From a psychological viewpoint, this balanced and considered approach to living is always the aim. It should be acknowledged that although there are other examples of model lifestyles throughout history, there is none more thoroughly recorded and investigated across age and circumstance (and therefore applicable to humankind) as the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is.

### *The explanation of hadiths*

The themes presented are the interpretations of the information as categorised by Imams Bukhari and Muslim. Therefore, no elaboration is given on the interpretation. However, applicability of hadiths across circumstances is an allowable process in the Hadith sciences, so it may be possible that one hadith is used under different sections of the work. It is important for the reader to be aware when applying these hadiths that given that the definition of the Sunnah includes words and actions as well as direct or tacit approvals or disapprovals of the Prophet (ﷺ), it may be that whilst the words are not directly relevant it is the response or action of the Prophet (ﷺ) that makes the point; this may be summarised in the theme given to that hadith.

Alternatively, the theme may capture the concepts being reflected more than the words and vice versa. Full and allowable use has been made of all aspects of applicability. As with Qur'anic verses, no symbolic explanation of hadiths has been made or intended as this would nullify the explanation according to tafseer methodology as well as Sharia.

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Where the themes of hadiths refer to the 'statement of Allah', this is a reference to a Qur'anic verse and the details are given within footnotes.

The choice to use only the books of Bukhari and Muslim for hadiths is due to the established view amongst Muslim scholars that their works are the two greatest and most accepted Hadith collections in existence. This is not to claim that other works are not acceptable; however, these two books are considered, without exception, the highest in validity and reliability in terms of authenticity.

## The remit of the text

It is important that the user be clear about the specific function of this text, since it is admittedly limited in its use. The remit of the text is as follows:

### *Information regarding implementation*

Since the text is a reference text, it is most beneficial to experienced therapists or those individuals who are working on self-development, character development, or behavioural change. Methods regarding application and use of analogies are not offered, since implementation of ideas and therapeutic principles is a basic clinical skill and requirement. The choice of analogies and the point at which they are used is obviously dependent upon the clinical judgement and expertise of the psychologist. Incidentally, though, a summary of the clinical context and relevance of information are cited to contextualise the point being made, thereby allowing their use on these occasions as and when considered appropriate.

### *Incorporation (or not) into existing models*

The information provided is not presented as an alternative, religiously-centred model of therapy in and of itself, although

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the practising Muslim therapist may be able to readily apply the ideas herein; it is not an Islamic critique of the theories underlying contemporary therapeutic approaches used in the non-Muslim world. There are many seminal works available in Arabic or as translations by notable classical scholars such as Miskawayh, Imam al-Ghazâli, Ibn Taymiyah, and others and more recent critiques by Malik Badri (1979) and Jamaal Zarabozo (2002).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, numerous published papers and literature reviews cite and highlight problems with implementing some existing therapeutic models with Muslim populations in the area of cross-cultural/cross-religious research.<sup>2</sup> Each tackle the issues from their own perspective, be it from a *fiqh*, philosophical, or psychological point of view.

What these studies highlight is that there is not always a linear opposition between contemporary models of therapy and Islam, as is often claimed when justifying culturally- and/or religiously-centred alternatives. For example, current models of Cognitive Therapy are

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<sup>1</sup> For details, refer to the Bibliography of this book.

<sup>2</sup> See:

Hussain, "The Mental Health of Muslims in Britain: Relevant Concepts for Therapy"

Hussain and Cochrane, "Depression in South Asian Women Living in the UK: A Review of Literature"

Hussain and Cochrane, "Living with Depression: Coping Strategies in South Asian Women with Depression"

Hussain and Cochrane, "Depression in South Asian Women: Asian Women's Beliefs on Causes and Cures"

Wilson, "Black Women and Mental Health: Working Towards Inclusive Mental Health Services"

Greenwood, Hussain, Burns, and Raphael, "Asian In-Patients and Carer Views of Local Mental Health Services"

Cochrane and Sashidharan, "Mental Health and Ethnic Minorities: A Review of Literature and Implications for Services"

Wilson and MacCarthy, "Consultation as a Factor in the Low Rate of Mental Health Service Use by Asians".

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in essence based on models developed by Islamic scholars many centuries ago; the contributions of al-Ghazâli and al-Balkhi are indeed well documented by Muslim academics within the discipline of clinical psychology. Such models have since been updated and modified by non-Muslims and do not necessarily conflict with Islamic monotheism.

This is certainly not to deny the reality that there are some therapeutic models that conflict with the fundamental tenets of faith of Muslims and therefore are not appropriate. However, use of contemporary therapeutic models cannot be depicted as a battle between Western and Eastern ideologies, as this is a counterproductive division. There is obvious overlap as ideas have been inherited from each other, although the original source may not be clearly identified. So the distinction is not as clear-cut as is often projected. The emphasis ought simply to be based upon what is Islamic and what is non-Islamic, irrespective of culture or geography. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the information here may be incorporated into any model where there is no conceptual conflict with Islam, since this is the flexibility of an analogical approach.

### *The evidence-base question*

There is no intrinsic conflict between Islam and science. The debate within the profession of Clinical Psychology acknowledges that certain research methods lend themselves to certain therapeutic approaches (such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy [CBT], Behavioural Therapy, and Solution-Focused Therapy). However, other methods restrict or do not allow for measurement of effectiveness of certain therapeutic approaches (for example, Psychodynamic Psychotherapy and Narrative Therapy). Therefore, empirical research methods as currently defined do not allow incorporation of all approaches. This neither prevents the use of less empirical-research friendly approaches nor nullifies their benefit. It simply means there is no research evidence available

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to justify all claims made. The issue here is the refinement of research methodology, not necessarily a problem with the approach itself.

It is often the case that treatment methods for mental illness vary across the world and are used unquestioningly and with considerable benefit. This was once the situation with all contemporary therapeutic approaches used today, which relied on self-report and non-return of the patient to the physician as evidence of their effectiveness or ineffectiveness. The emphasis on scientific rigour is a recent and clearly valuable development.

There is, of course, no room for empirical research on the validity and reliability of revelation in and of itself. This is because revelation, by its very nature, is often beyond human intellect. However, this is not to deny that one can carry out research on its applicability to human-made models as with any other subject. As mentioned earlier, the interpretation (psychological or otherwise) of any verse or hadith is subject to its own methodology and so does not escape scientific rigour. Methods here are, in fact, well established and were in use during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They have become increasingly refined over time, particularly bearing in mind the consequences of allowing such information to be disseminated and the impact it has on faith. Protecting Islam is the priority of all Muslims, hence scientific rigour cannot be surpassed or ignored but comes with its own criteria for measurement.

The user should be aware that the information is edited and viewed through research methodology developed specifically for Qur'an and Hadith literature. It is not related to empirical methods as applicable to non-revelation-based knowledge, since these methodologies do not apply to it. The difference in methodology does not reduce the scientific rigour and acceptability, however. Again, the aim of the text is simply to add an additional perspective to understanding the patient's experience and alleviating distress. It is hoped that the effectiveness of its use will be researched in due course.

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No doubt, the Creator (ﷻ) best knows His creation. May He, *al-Kareem* (the Generous), *al-Wadood* (the Loving), and *ar-Ra'oof* (the All-Pitying), accept this work and write it as a good deed. Any mistakes are my responsibility; for this, the reader is requested to ask for forgiveness for the author. Readers are also requested to contact the publisher regarding any corrections, thereby adding this effort to their own continuous charity, *in shā' Allāh*. They should also make *du'ā'* for themselves after each verse to be protected from or aided through the words and promises therein.

Since what will remain of us is only what we do for Allah (ﷻ), may He, *al-Hafeedh* (the Protector), always keep pure the intentions of those of us who use any of the ideas presented and may the knowledge herein be a means of connecting our daily lives with our Lord, to Whom is the final return.

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## THERAPEUTIC THEMES

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﴿ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الفاتحة: ٦-٧)

﴿Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom You have blessed; not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.﴾ (al-Fātiḥah 1: 6-7)

Note: The word ‘patient’ has been used in connection with clinically-specific issues and the word ‘individual’ is used where issues are generally applicable to human suffering. Overlap will necessarily occur since patients in therapy are not depersonalised but remain individuals.

### Part 1: Accepting advice

Accepting advice is an active process. It involves psychological presence, active listening, and a commitment to the ideas discussed. This inherently involves an ability to reflect on and reconsider one’s position where necessary.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اختلف فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أوتوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٣)

﴿Humankind was one single nation, then Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the scripture with the truth, to judge between people concerning matters wherein they differed. But none differed concerning it except those to whom it was given – after the clear signs had come to them – out of mutual envy. So Allah by His grace guided the believers to the truth concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 213)<sup>1</sup>

Advice (in the form of therapeutic implementation) is the foundation of the therapy setting. However, it is common for patients to attend sessions with no intention to change at that time. Their attendance may simply be to appease other people's concern about their problem. Of course, what is lacking here is commitment to change, and attending therapy would naturally be counterproductive. This verse exemplifies this process.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ أَنفَا  
أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ﴾ (سورة محمد: ١٦)

﴿Among them are some who listen to you [O Muhammad], but when they leave your presence, they say to those who have been given knowledge: What did he say just now? These are the ones whose hearts Allah has sealed up and they follow their own whims and desires.﴾ (*Muhammad* 47: 16)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 213: This verse discusses deviation from the truth and causing disputes after clear signs have been presented, proving the haq.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Muhammad* 47: 16: This verse describes the hypocrites at the time of revelation in Madinah. They were misguided and limited in their understanding of what was for their benefit: to maintain monotheism.

«My similitude and the similitude of the people is as a person who lit a fire and moths and insects fell into it. He continued to ward them from it, but they overwhelmed him and plunged into it. He (then) said: This is my similitude and yours. I ward you from the fire, but you overwhelm me and dive into it.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

Patients will often attend sessions, sit, listen, and agree. They will then return to the next session without having followed any of the suggestions, yet complaining of the same difficulties. Although obvious, it is important to emphasise the need to be present both physically and psychologically in therapy. We should also highlight that choosing not to follow advice is an obvious explanation for lack of change or progress. It is surprising how many patients do not make this connection, assuming that the cure is simply in the conversation alone without action on their part outside of therapy sessions. The above verses and hadith both point to this process.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوْنَهُ أَفَأَنْتَ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ ۗ إِنَّ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٤﴾﴾  
(سورة الفرقان: ٤٣-٤٤)

﴿Have you seen the one who takes his own whims and desires as his god? Can you be his keeper? Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are just like cattle; nay, they are further astray from the right path.﴾ (al-Furqân 25: 43-44)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of merits.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Furqân 25: 43-44*: The disbelievers attempted to find fault with the revelation given to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They chose their own way/behaviour/thinking as their God since this was prioritised. They are likened to cattle since cattle do nothing more than what they were created to do: graze and give milk and meat. However, the hypocrites refused to do what they were created to do: to worship Allah (ﷻ).

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوْنَهُ وَأَصْلَهُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَىٰ

بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَن يَهْدِيهِ مِن بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ (سورة الجاثية: ٢٣)

﴿Have you seen the one who takes his own whims and desires as his god, whom Allah causes to go astray despite his knowledge, and has sealed up his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight? Who can guide him after Allah [has abandoned him]? Will you not then pay heed?﴾<sup>1</sup> (al-Jāthiyah 45: 23)<sup>1</sup>

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا ...

﴿٥﴾ (سورة الجمعة: ٥)

﴿The likeness of those who were given the Torah but failed to uphold it, is that of a donkey laden with weighty tomes...﴾ (al-Jumu'ah 62: 5)<sup>2</sup>

Patients may (understandably) attend sessions with a number of prejudices, such as the belief that a request for therapy does not mean that they need advice or that they have already decided on the type of advice required and consequently reject any unexpected advice offered. The above verses all offer analogies as to why individuals may reject guidance and advice.

Allah (ﷻ) instructs:

﴿فَنُوحِلْنَا فِيهَا فَأَنْزَلْنَاهَا فِي سُدُورِهِمْ فَمَأْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا وَكَرِهْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذَلِكَ فَتَأْتِيهِمْ فِيهَا الْآيَاتُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَذَكَرْنَا فِيهَا الذِّكْرَ لِنُنْفَعِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

(سورة النازيات: ٥٤-٥٥)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Jāthiyah 45: 23: The conviction of the disbelievers to live their lives according to their basic needs (based on primitive desires) and the consequence of rejecting Allah's message is that either knowledge is removed from them or they are blinded to it because of their rejection.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Jumu'ah 62: 5: This verse describes the condition of the Jews who were entrusted with the Torah but refused to abide by it.

﴿So turn away from them; you are not to blame. But continue to exhort them, for exhortation benefits the believers.﴾ (*adh-Dhâriyât* 51: 54-55)<sup>1</sup>

Patients often feel frustrated that they are not being heard when they attempt to advise others. The same can be said for therapists when the patient is not following advice or interventions! These verses offer guidance to both; it is a reminder that simply listening to other people's suggestions is important. It is surprising how, upon reflection, patients realise how little they do this as they are sometimes too distressed or angry to hear or interpret advice as constructive. Occasionally, they are simply defensive and may not admit they are taking an unhelpful stance. For such occasions, when the therapist might ask the patient to review and repeat their understanding of the conversation to clarify their understanding of the process, the verse informs them that they are not responsible for the reaction of the other person.

Ibn Mas'ood narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) used to take care of us in preaching by selecting a suitable time, so that we might not get bored. (He abstained from bombarding us with knowledge and religious talk all the time.)» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: What is wrong with those people who look towards the sky during the *ṣalâh* (obligatory prayer)?»

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *adh-Dhâriyât* 51: 54-55: This verse comforts Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), reminding him of how all the prophets (peace be upon them all) met with denial from their nations and that there would be no blame if he turned away from them because only the believing hearts benefit from being advised.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The Prophet (ﷺ) used to take care of the people in preaching by selecting a suitable time so that they might not run away or get bored.



His tone grew stern while delivering this speech and he said: They should stop (looking towards the sky during ṣalāh); otherwise their eyesight would be snatched away.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

«'Ā'ishah (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhā* – may Allah be pleased with her) said: I asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) about looking here and there in ṣalāh. He replied: It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) of the ṣalāh of a person.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

These hadiths make the fundamental point that central to accepting advice is openness and readiness to listen, psychological presence, and good timing. The final hadith clearly states the consequence of not doing so.

## Part 2: Actions, not words

The end of any therapeutic conversation is in the subsequent action: that is, behavioural change and achievement of therapy goals.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن أُمِرُوا لَيُخْرَجُنَّ قُلُوبُهُمْ لَئِن لَّمْ يَفْعَلُوا مَنَظْرًا مَا كَانَ مِنَ صِدْقِهِمْ إِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٣)

«They [the hypocrites] swear their most solemn oaths by Allah that, if you give the command, they will surely march forth. Say [O Muhammad]: Do not swear; [the real nature of your so-called] obedience is known. Verily, Allah is well aware of all that you do.» (an-Noor 24: 53)<sup>3</sup>

Cognitive change alone without the related behavioural change will not be long lasting or effective in managing the patient's problem. This verse is a good reminder to the patient that the point of attending

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Looking towards the sky during ṣalāh.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: To look all around during ṣalāh.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Noor 24: 53*: This verse mentions the hypocrites who promised to go into battle with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), though their level of obedience was known to be false/a lie.

therapy is not purely the agreements made with the therapist but in the resulting change of behaviour.

### Part 3: Allah on your side

When all else fails and individuals feel very isolated, they seek some support to enable them to carry on making an effort. The awareness and remembrance that Allah is omniscient give patients support in a powerful form. Although human nature necessitates it, individuals may no longer feel the need to rely on the support and approval of other people. It is an experience that any one believing in Allah (ﷻ) can relate to. This is not to deny that people need each other or to claim that one can live successfully in isolation, but it reiterates that Allah is *al-Qādir* (the All-Powerful, the All-Capable).

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدِ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَآخَظْتَهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَىٰ دِيَارِهِمْ لِيُذَمِّقَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ النَّارَ لِمَن كَانَ يَأْتِيهَا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَاتَذَكَّرُ أَشَدًّا ﴿١٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٣-١٧٤)

Those to whom people said: The people have gathered against you, so fear them. But it [only] increased them in faith. They said: Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs. And they returned with grace and bounty from Allah, and no harm touched them, for they pursued the pleasure of Allah... ﴿﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 173-174)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 173-174: These verses describe the incidents related to the Battle of Ḥamrā' al-Asad, when the idolaters wanted to re-attack the Muslims in Madinah after weakening them on the battlefield at Uḥud. When Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) heard the news, he requested that the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) join the fight and demonstrate their courage and commitment to defend themselves. They did this in the face of warnings that the enemy was greater than them; they remained steadfast in their trust in Allah, Who returned them safely to their homes.

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَرْغَبُوا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَطْغُونَ مَوْطِئًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كَيْبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا يُفْقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا كَتَبَ لَهُمْ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَمَا كَانِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً ۚ فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلْيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلظَةً وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ ﴾

(سورة التوبة: ١٢٠-١٢٣)

﴿It was not fitting for the people of Madinah and the Bedouin around them to stay behind [after the departure of] the Messenger of Allah, or to prefer their own comfort and well-being to his. That is because whenever they suffer any thirst, weariness or hunger in Allah's cause, or they take any step that angers the disbelievers, or inflict any loss on an enemy, a righteous deed is recorded to their credit thereby. For Allah will not cause the reward of those who do good to be lost. Nor do they spend anything [for Allah's cause], small or great, or cross any valley, but it is recorded to their credit, so that Allah may reward them in accordance with the best of their deeds. It is not right for all the believers to go out together [to receive religious instruction]; from every community, a group should go out to acquire deeper knowledge of the faith, in order to admonish their people when they return to them, so that they may be cautious. O you who believe, fight those disbelievers who are nearest to you, and let them find toughness in you; and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 120-123)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Tawbah 9: 120-123*: These verses mention=

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوسُفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَتَّبِعُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ نُصِيبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَشَاءُ وَلَا نُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾ (سورة يوسف: ٥٦)

¶Thus We established Yoosuf in the land, so that he was free to do therein whatever he willed. We bestow Our mercy upon whomever We will, and We will not cause the reward of those who do good to be lost. ¶ (Yoosuf 12: 56)<sup>1</sup>

In trying to challenge their difficulties, patients may become despondent. They may feel that no one is on their side and the problem is too major to manage. It is important to remind them at this point that Allah (ﷻ) is with the person who lives by and for the haq (divine truth). These verses indicate that trust in Allah's omniscience and His knowledge motivates the individual to persist in their efforts, reduces feelings of isolation when managing their problem, and increases feelings of mastery and empowerment to succeed. (The power to change lies in the belief that one can achieve aims against the odds. Though realistic goals are important, it is this belief and hope that initiates the attempt to realise them.)

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=the rewards of jihad (fighting in the way of Allah) and recognition of the suffering therein. One interpretation of the verses is that at the time of the Battle of Tabuk, those who participated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also took instruction and further knowledge from the revelation, thus attaining two goals: jihad and knowledge of Islam. This was done by alternating groups so that the Prophet (ﷺ) was never left alone whilst the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) were all on the battlefield.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoosuf 12: 56: This soorah mentions the story of Prophet Yoosuf (ﷺ) and his suffering, first at the hands of his brothers, who exiled him from his home due to their actions against him, and then his subsequent wrongful imprisonment at the request of the wife of al-'Azeez. After many years, he was liberated from all false accusations and given honour and prestige with the king. This verse specifically refers to Prophet Yoosuf's reign in Egypt and how this was his reward for his patience during the aforementioned difficulties.

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## Part 4: 'Analysis paralysis'

This well-known phrase describes instances where over-analysis or questioning leaves the patient cognitively and therefore behaviourally 'paralysed'. They are consequently left unable to make progress because they become overwhelmed with all the new information and simply cannot work out in which direction to turn.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠٨)

Do you want to question your Messenger just as Moosâ was questioned before? Whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has strayed from the right path. ﴿ (al-Baqarah 2: 108)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنَ أَشْيَاءَ إِن بُدِّ لَكُمْ تَسْؤُكُمْ وَإِن نَسَأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنزَلِ الْقُرْءَانُ بُدِّ لَكُمْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٠١)

O you who believe, do not ask questions about matters which, if they were made known to you, would only cause you hardship. If you ask about them while the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be made known to you. Allah has pardoned whatever happened in the past [of such questions]. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing. ﴿ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 101)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 108: This verse prohibits unnecessary questions. Some people would ask Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) questions simply out of defiance and disbelief as the Jews did with Prophet Moosâ (ﷺ), hence choosing ignorance and misguidance.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mâ'idah 5: 101: This verse indicates the disapproval of unnecessary questioning. The Companions, in their enthusiasm, would often ask Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) questions unnecessarily, whilst hypocrites and disbelievers would ask him questions simply to mock him. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) warned of the dangers of doing this, since the answer could have serious implications.

﴿وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلَىٰ مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِ خَيْرًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٦٨)

«For how can you have patience with something that you cannot fully comprehend?» (*al-Kahf 18: 68*)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Satan comes to one of you and asks: Who created so-and-so; who created so-and-so? – till he asks: Who has created your Lord?

So when he inspires such a question, one should seek refuge with Allah and give up such thoughts.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Anas narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) delivered a sermon the like of which we had never heard before. He said: If you knew but what I know, you would have laughed little and wept much.

When they heard that, the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) covered their faces and the sound of their weeping was heard.

A man asked: Who is my father?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: So-and-so.

So this verse was revealed: «O you who believe, do not ask questions about matters which, if they were made known to you, would only cause you hardship...» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Kahf 18: 68*: This verse contains an extract from the story of the journey of al-Khaḍir (Khidr) and Prophet Moosâ (ﷺ). Prophet Moosâ was in quest of knowledge. He felt that no one had more knowledge than him, until Allah led him to al-Khaḍir. The verse refers to the request of Prophet Moosâ to join al-Khaḍir on the journey. Al-Khaḍir reminds him that he possesses knowledge and a responsibility from Allah in which Prophet Moosâ (ﷺ) has no share. As the account unfolds, it is clear that Prophet Moosâ is being taught a lesson of patience.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The characteristics of Iblees (Satan) and his soldiers.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: «O you who believe, do not ask questions about matters which, if they were made known to you, would only cause you hardship...» (*al-Mâ'idah 5: 101*)

In another version, Ibn Abbâs (*raḍīya Allāhu 'anhumâ* – may Allah be pleased with both of them) narrated:

«Some people were asking Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) questions in a mocking way. A man would ask: Who is my father?

Another man whose she-camel had been lost would ask: Where is my she-camel?

So Allah revealed this verse in this connection: «O you who believe, do not ask questions about matters which, if they were made known to you, would only cause you hardship...» (*al-Mâ'idah 5: 101*)

– and he recited the whole verse.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«People will not stop asking questions until they say: This is Allah, the Creator of everything; then who created Allah?» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The most grievous wrong that a Muslim commits against another Muslim is the one who questions something that was not prohibited to the Muslims, then it becomes unlawful to them due to his questioning.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Hurayrah reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Shun what I have prohibited you and do what I have ordered you to do, to the utmost of your ability. The people before you were destroyed because they questioned excessively and disagreed with their prophets.» (Muslim)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: «O you who believe, do not ask questions about matters which, if they were made known to you, would only cause you hardship...» (*al-Mâ'idah 5: 101*)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is disliked about asking too many questions and of troubling oneself with what does not concern him or her.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of merits.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The book of merits.

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ood narrated:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Perished are those who are excessive in their words and deeds.

He repeated it three times.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

In instances where patients ask hypothetical questions concerning, “What if...?” or over-analyse things that happen to them once or even before they begin therapy, they may spend time in sessions attempting to theorise and debate psychological theory as a way to avoid discussing their problem. This results in ‘analysis paralysis’ and patients can no longer effectively reflect on the reality of their situation. At this point, the therapist’s job is, of course, to limit this discussion and encourage the patient to re-focus. The above verses and hadiths offer examples of how such attitudes towards information can affect the learning experience. The hadiths in particular demonstrate how excessive questioning can undermine the foundations of one’s beliefs. This can also be the case in therapy where if certain questions cannot be answered, patients may feel there is little point in going on with the sessions.

## Part 5: Anger/aggression

When anger is channelled in a healthy way and for the right reasons, it can prove to be productive and healing. However, anger expressed in and of itself as a result of internal frustration with no constructive or identified direction is nearly always damaging to relationships and hinders positive interaction. (This is not to say that expressing anger is a problem, but it should be done with some direction in mind.)

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿هَاتَيْنِمْ أَوْلَاءَ يَحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and the joining of the ties of relationship.

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وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَنَامِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُؤْتُوا بَعْضِكُمْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ  
الصُّدُورِ ﴿١١٩﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٩)

﴿O you who [take them as close friends], you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the scriptures. When they meet you, they say: We believe, but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips in their rage against you. Say: Perish in your rage; Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.﴾ (*Al 'Imrân 3: 119*)<sup>1</sup>

This verse makes a connection between hypocrisy and anger and hints at their destructive effect on personality. The effects may be buried under pressure but will manifest themselves at some later point due to the lack of resolution and honesty with oneself or others.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ  
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ  
وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً  
أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ دَكَرُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَاسَتْغَفِرُوا الذُّنُوبَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ  
وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٢٣-١٣٥)

﴿Hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as vast as the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the pious, those who spend [in Allah's cause] in times of both ease and hardship, who control their anger, and pardon people, for Allah loves those who do good; and those who, if they do something shameful or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins –

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Al 'Imrân 3: 119*: The believers who loved the hypocrites did so because they believed them to be Muslims. The beliefs of the Muslims encompassed all earlier revelations, whereas the revelation in Islam was rejected and disliked by the disbelievers. Allah was aware of their insincerity even though the believers were not.

for who can forgive sins except Allah? – and do not knowingly persist in what they have done. ﴿*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 133-135)<sup>1</sup>

Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«While I was sitting in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ), two men abused each other and the face of one of them became red with anger and his jugular vein swelled (that is, he became furious).

When he saw this, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: I know words, the saying of which will cause him to relax. If he says: *A'oodhu billāhi min ash-Shayṭān* (I seek refuge with Allah from Satan), all his anger will go away.

Somebody said to (the man): The Prophet (ﷺ) has said: Seek refuge with Allah from Satan.

The angry man said: Am I mad (that is, insane)?» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The strong one is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself when he is angry.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

«A man said to the Prophet (ﷺ): Advise me!

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not become angry and furious.

The man asked (the same) again and again, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said in each case: Do not become angry and furious.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

«'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ood said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked: Whom do you consider to be a *raqoob* among you?

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl 'Imrān* 3: 133-135: These verses describe the people of paradise, who – no matter what the circumstances – never fail to do their best. They always behave according to Allah's will, forgiving those who hurt them and controlling their anger, and therefore avoid falling into error.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The characteristics of Iblees and his soldiers.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: To be cautious about being angry.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: To be cautious about being angry.

They said: The one who has no children (children are born to him, but they do not survive).

Then he said: He is not a raqoob, but a raqoob is one whose child does not precede him (as a forerunner in paradise).

Then he asked: Who do you consider a wrestler among you?

We said: The one who wrestles with others.

He said: No, it is not he, but the one who controls himself when he is angry.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

These hadiths suggest that replacing anger with forgiveness encourages a generosity of character. This may be modelled to ensure inner peace, with the added motivation that it is loved by the Creator. The idea that managing anger is charitable for the other person facilitates the management of the problem, since psychologically the one who forgives is in a stronger position and so is relieved of tension.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٩)

﴿It is by the mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. If you had been harsh or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, and ask for [Allah's] forgiveness for them; and consult them in matters of importance. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him].﴾ (Al 'Imrān 3: 159)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and joining the ties of relationship.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Al 'Imrān 3: 159*: This verse mentions some qualities of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) such as showing mercy and kindness. It contains a reminder that all characteristics are given by Allah's own mercy and kindness. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) used to ask His Companions (رضي الله عنهم) about military and community affairs in order=

It is commonly accepted that aggressive speech can be much less powerful and effective in creating change than gentle speech.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا﴾  
 ﴿إِنْ تُبْدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُوًّا قَدِيرًا﴾ (سورة  
 النساء: ١٤٨-١٤٩)

«Allah does not like anyone to speak ill [of others] in public, except the one who has been wronged. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. If you do good openly or conceal it or pardon a wrong [done to you], then verily Allah is Pardoning, Omnipotent.» (*an-Nisā' 4: 148-149*)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Mas'ood al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Once a man said: O Messenger of Allah! I may not attend the (compulsory congregational) ṣalāh because so-and-so (the imam) prolongs the ṣalāh when he leads us for it.

(The narrator added:) I never saw the Prophet (ﷺ) more furious in giving advice than he was on that day.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: O people! Some of you make others dislike good deeds. So whoever leads the people in ṣalāh should shorten it because among them there are the sick, the weak, and the one who is in a state that requires urgent relief (having some pressing jobs to do).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

There are times when anger is justifiable and healthy to express. Internalising anger can oftentimes lead to destructive behaviours such

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=to instil confidence in them; it was also a reminder to trust Allah once a course of action had been decided.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 148-149*: These verses specify what is allowable in cases where someone has been wronged; however, this has its reasonable limits. Forgiving others or admitting favours done by them brings a person closer to Allah (ﷻ).

<sup>2</sup> Theme: To be furious while preaching or teaching if one sees what one hates.

as suicidal ideation or physical health problems. The above verses and hadith allow expression of anger and also indicate that such anger does not necessarily need to be directed as verbal abuse to the other person, as is often the case. The second part of the verse emphasises a more constructive approach and how pardoning the other individual may enable (an alternative route) to the attainment of inner peace.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَدَا النُّونَ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغْرِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٧)

﴿And [remember] Dhun-Noon [Yoonus], when he departed in anger, thinking that We would not punish him. Then he called out in the depths of darkness: There is no god worthy of worship except You. Glory be to You; I have indeed done wrong.﴾ (*al-Anbiyā' 21: 87*)<sup>1</sup>

Anger is such that it tends to be recalled, even after forgiveness is applied. The verse is a reminder to keep anger in check since it may have far-reaching consequences. It also implies that the higher one's standing in one's social circle is, the more important it is to control one's anger and admit one's mistake, if applicable.

«Ā'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said to her: I know when you are pleased with me or angry with me.

I said: How do you know that?

He said: When you are pleased with me, you say: No, by the Lord of Muhammad, but when you are angry with me, then you say: No, by the Lord of Ibrâheem (Abraham).

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Anbiyā' 21: 87*: This verse describes the story of Yoonus and the whale and how Yoonus left his people in anger and was swallowed by the whale. When he found himself in this difficulty, he prayed to Allah to release him and admitted his wrong.

I said: Yes (you are right), but by Allah, O Messenger of Allah, I leave nothing but your name.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This hadith points to a very helpful technique in identifying changes in language when individuals are angry with each other and can be used as an example when helping couples to recognise this. It further suggests a subtle alternative to expressing anger without causing distress whilst simultaneously validating the emotion experienced.

Abu Bakrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«A judge should not make a judgement between two persons when he is in anger.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

It is often the case that individuals create difficulties for themselves by making important decisions in the heat of anger, leading to further complications. The hadith is a clear reminder to avoid this.

## Part 6: Appearances can be deceiving

Deceptive appearances do not begin and end with what is physical but may extend to concepts and ideas. Confidence (although it may be false) is the key that makes the individual feel that their behaviour is acceptable, even though it may be counterproductive.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَيَسَّسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٩٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٦-١٩٧)

«Do not be deceived by the [uninhibited] movement of the disbelievers throughout the land. It is only a brief enjoyment; their ultimate abode is hell: what a wretched resting place!» (Āl 'Imrān 3: 196-197)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The jealousy of women and their anger.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Can a judge give a judgement or a formal legal opinion while he is in an angry mood?

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 196-197: These verses warn=

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: On the Day of Resurrection, a huge, fat man will come who will not weigh the weight of the wing of a mosquito before Allah.

Then the Prophet (ﷺ) added: If you wish, recite (the verse):

﴿... فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٥)

﴿...and on the Day of Resurrection, We will not give them any weight.﴾ (*al-Kahf* 18: 105)» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

These verses suggest that the definition of true confidence is inextricably linked to liberation, and that enjoyment at the expense of someone else's happiness is unlikely to be long-lasting or uninterrupted, especially where rights are taken or abused. However, patients suffering from low self-esteem may believe that simply having confidence is enough to live successfully, irrespective of the beliefs their confidence is based on. Consequently, they expound unhealthy beliefs yet are content with the resultant behaviour. Similarly, patients may also feel that perpetrators of their problems are more liberated than they are for the same reasons (of confidence) and feel increasingly trapped when they see the other person's behaviour.

The above hadith highlights that what is given weight in the worldly life by the creation is not necessarily accepted by the Creator. It offers a helpful analogy relating to false confidence and deceptive appearances.

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=against being deceived by this life and specify the rewards of the righteous believers. They also refer to how the deceivers will be given time to continue their lives, but in the hereafter they will be punished.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿They are the ones who reject the signs of their Lord and deny the Meeting with Him. Their deeds will come to nothing and on the Day of Resurrection, We will not give them any weight.﴾ (*al-Kahf* 18: 105)

## Part 7: Asking questions

It is natural human behaviour to ask for evidence of promises or suggestions made by others. This is not because they believe they are false but simply for their own peace of mind and certainty. In therapy, this is manifest when the therapist and patient discuss the evidence for possible beliefs and outcomes even though there is agreement on them already.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أُولِمُ تُوْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿۲۶۰﴾ (سورة البقرة: ۲۶۰)

¶And [remember] when Ibrâheem said: Show me, O Lord, how You will give life to the dead, He replied: Do you not believe then? He said: Yes of course, but just to reassure my heart. [Allah] said: So take four birds and cut their bodies into pieces, then place a piece of each of them on each hill. Then call them; they will come swiftly to you. Know that Allah is Almighty, Most Wise.﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 260*)<sup>1</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

¶While we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) in the mosque, a man came riding on a camel. He made his camel kneel down in the mosque, tied its foreleg, and then said: Who amongst you is Muhammad?

At that time, the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting amongst us (his Companions), leaning on his arm.

We replied: This white man reclining on his arm.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 260*: This verse mentions the incident of Prophet Ibrâheem, who supplicated to Allah to show him how He resurrects the dead. Reasons for this request included consolidation of knowledge about resurrection for Prophet Ibrâheem and seeking certainty. The verse also reinforces the supremacy of Allah in the resurrection of the birds.



The man then addressed him: O son of ‘Abdul-Muṭṭalib!

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: I am here to answer your questions.

The man said to the Prophet (ﷺ): I want to ask you something and will be hard in questioning. So do not get angry.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Ask whatever you want.

The man asked: I ask you by your Lord and the Lord of those who were before you, has Allah sent you as a messenger to all of humankind?

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: By Allah, yes.

The man further asked: I ask you by Allah, has Allah ordered you to offer five ṣalāh in a day and night?

He replied: By Allah, yes.

The man further asked: I ask you by Allah, has Allah ordered you to observe fasting during this month of the year (that is, Ramadan)?

He replied: By Allah, yes.

The man further asked: I ask you by Allah, has Allah ordered you to take zakat from our rich people and distribute it amongst our poor people?

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: By Allah, yes.

The man then said: I believe in all that with which you have been sent, and I have been sent by my people as a messenger, and I am Ḍimām ibn Tha‘labah from the brothers of Bani Sa‘d ibn Bakr.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Abi Mulaykah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Whenever ‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), heard anything which she did not understand, she used to ask again until she understood it completely.

(‘Ā’ishah said:) Once the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Whoever will be called to account (about his deeds on the Day of Resurrection) will surely be punished.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: To recite or read (something) and present it in front of a scholar.

I asked: Does Allah not say:

﴿فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا﴾ (سورة الانشقاق: ٨)

﴿He will have an easy reckoning.﴾ (al-Inshiqâq 84: 8)?

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: This means only the presentation of the accounts, but whoever will be argued about regarding his account will certainly be perished (or ruined).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The verse and hadiths clearly suggest that asking for evidence or questioning about a directive does not necessarily indicate disbelief in one's view. There is always individual freedom in the response as long as the intention is positive. Patients can be fearful of asking people questions to justify their expectations and beliefs about the interactions they have been involved in. Similarly, they can become distressed and defensive when other people question them. They may focus on negative intentions for the conversation, forgetting that often these questions are a sign of concern and an attempt to try and understand their experience. Here, the Creator and His Messenger (ﷺ) are questioned. This begs the question that if the Creator allows this, then why can the creation not ask questions?

## Part 8: Avoiding suspicion and questioning motives

Having suspicions about the intentions or motivations of other people's behaviour is rarely productive. It not only prevents or hinders the individual from attempting change but also influences the decision-making process and may, therefore, perpetuate the problem.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ وَلَا﴾

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Whoever heard something (but did not understand it) and then asked again until he or she understood it completely.

أَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ تَزِدُّونِي أَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنِّي  
إِذْ أَلَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ (سورة هود: ٣١)

«I do not tell you that I possess the treasures of Allah and I do not have knowledge of the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. Nor do I say of those who are contemptible in your eyes that Allah will never grant them any good – for Allah knows best what is in their hearts; if I did, then I would surely be one of the unjust.» (Hood 11: 31)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ﴾ (سورة الناس: ٤-٦)

«[I seek refuge] from the harm [and mischief] of the insidious whisperer who whispers into the hearts of humankind, from among the jinn and humankind.» (an-Nās 114: 4-6)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales and do not look for others' faults and do not spy and do not be jealous of one another and do not desert (cut your relation with) one another and do not hate one another, and Allah's worshippers, be brothers (as Allah has ordered you).» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The above verses and hadith remind us how being suspicious about the intentions of others is unlikely to be a productive and progressive stance and that objective etiquette of behaviour still

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Hood 11: 31: This verse indicates how Prophet Nooh (Noah) invited his people to the message of Allah. The disbelievers of his time wanted him to disassociate with the believers, who they felt were inferior to them. Nooh responded by reminding them of his role in delivering the message.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Nās 114: 4-5: In these verses, the «whisperer» is understood to mean Satan, who whispers to human beings continuously, no matter what his or her condition or circumstance is; he withdraws only after he is obeyed

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Jealousy and mutual estrangement are forbidden.

applies, irrespective of the situation. For psychotherapy patients, using such measures as benchmark behaviours (although, of course, they are moderated by cultural influences) are even more important in maintaining good mental health, especially since the latter verses suggest that the temptation to be suspicious (that is, Satan's whispers) occurs irrespective of one's condition. This problem is accentuated for patients, especially when they are not sharing their problems with other people and so have no challenge to their assumptions.

## Part 9: "Bad things don't happen to good people"

When patients suffer some form of trauma, the logic offered is usually as follows: "I have always been a good person and never tried to hurt anyone. Bad things don't/shouldn't happen to good people. A bad thing happened to me, therefore I must be a bad person. I am being punished." This message may be reinforced in instances of sexual abuse, where the abuser may use this accusation as 'justification' (albeit immoral) of their actions to the victim.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّهُمُ  
الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلاَ إِنَّا  
نَصْرُ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٤)

﴿Or do you think that you will enter paradise without such [trials] as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity, and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and the believers who were with him said: When will the help of Allah come? Verily, the help of Allah is [always] near.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 214)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 214: Victory will be achieved=

Difficulties build character and although at the time they are challenging, they may ultimately facilitate improvement in understanding. This in turn benefits the individual in other aspects of their lives. When patients suffer from traumatic events and fail to find an acceptable explanation, they commonly resort to the belief that they suffer because they are not good people. However, when therapists ask a patient to identify people who they consider as inspirational characters in their strength and ability to bear difficulties, patients across religious groups will name the prophets and the peacemakers, all of whom faced incredible difficulties in spreading their message. They were far from bad people; rather, they were considered strong enough to face these situations or the situations made them stronger. The verse highlights that being strong does not mean a denial of feelings or total self-sufficiency since here, the messenger and the believers call for help.

## Part 10: Being clear about 'bad behaviour'

Whilst it is psychologically beneficial to have good assumptions about others, it is equally important for patients to recognise and identify negative behaviours, especially in the case of immoral and unethical behaviours, if only to safeguard oneself from harm.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيهِمْ إِنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٦٧)

=only after succeeding in a trial: be it illness, pain, disasters, or hardships. The verse is also understood to offer a message about having patience while waiting for help to come.

﴿The hypocrites, men and women, are all alike. They enjoin what is wrong and forbid what is right, and they are tight-fisted. They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them. Verily, the hypocrites are the wicked.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 67)<sup>1</sup>

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْوُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يَفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَّرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا هُمْ يَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ هَلْ يَرِيكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾﴾ (سورة التوبة: ١٢٦-١٢٧)

﴿Do they not see that they are being tested once or twice every year? Yet they do not repent and they do not pay heed. Whenever a soorah is revealed, they look at one another [as if to say]: Is anyone watching? Then they turn away. Allah has turned their hearts away, for they are a people who do not understand.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 126-127)<sup>2</sup>

﴿إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ أُوتِيَكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾﴾ (سورة الشورى: ٤٢)

﴿But there is reason to reproach [and punish] those who wrong people and spread mischief throughout the land without justification. For such there will be a painful punishment.﴾ (ash-Shoorā 42: 42)<sup>3</sup>

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَلَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بَعْدَ الْمَسْرِقَيْنِ فَيَنْسُ الْقَرْيُنَ ﴿٣٨﴾﴾ (سورة الزخرف: ٣٨)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 67: This verse describes the characteristics of the hypocrites and their punishment.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 126-127: This verse explains the afflictions suffered by the hypocrites as a result of rejecting the truth. The reasoning behind their stance is questioned, explaining that they neither can nor want nor attempt to understand Allah's word, actively choosing falsehood over truth.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ash-Shoorā 42: 42: This verse cautions that there is punishment for those who initiate harm and wrongful behaviours towards others.

«Then when [such a one] comes to Us, he will say [to his devil companion]: Would that there was between me and you the distance between east and west. What a wretched companion!» (az-Zukhruf 43: 38)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) sent Khâlid ibn al-Waleed to the tribe of Jadheemah. Khâlid invited them to Islam but they could not express themselves by saying: *Aslamnâ* (that is, we have embraced Islam), but they started saying: *Ṣabâ'nâ! Ṣabâ'nâ!* (That is, we have come out of one religion to another).

Khâlid kept on killing (some of) them and taking (some of) them as captives and gave every one of us his captive until the day when Khâlid ordered that each man (that is, Muslim soldier) should kill his captive.

I said: By Allah, I will not kill my captive and none of my companions will kill his captive.

When we reached the Prophet (ﷺ), we mentioned to him the whole story. When he heard it, the Prophet (ﷺ) raised both his hands and said twice: O Allah! I am free from what Khâlid has done.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The above verses and hadith demonstrate the effect of negative behaviour on character. In a therapy setting, ‘bad/blameworthy behaviour’ by any individual may be pathologised as an illness. However, it is important to recognise the distinction between bad behaviour by a well person and bad behaviour by an ill one. This is because when there is illness there is no call to account as opposed to when there is simply bad behaviour. What commonly occurs with

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, az-Zukhruf 43: 38: This verse describes the situation of those people who take Satan as a companion and who are, therefore, distanced from Allah’s mercy.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The Prophet (ﷺ) sent Khâlid ibn al-Waleed (رضي الله عنه) (to fight) with Banu Jadheemah.

relatives of patients with drug addiction, for example, is that they mistake forgiveness for support and so end up forgiving the bad behaviour under the misunderstanding that they are being supportive. True support is being realistic about events and dealing with them rather than re-interpreting them to the extent that the danger therein is disguised or dismissed to the detriment of that individual and/or their family and friends. This form of support also normalises the unhelpful behaviour, adding further hindrance to healing. The final verse (*az-Zukhruf* 43: 38) clearly indicates that when the behaviour is recognised for what it is, most individuals will attempt to distance themselves from it.

«Abu Hurayrah said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) passed by a heap of foodstuff and placed his hand within it. Then his fingers became wet, so he said: O owner of this heap of foodstuff, what is this?

He replied: O Messenger of Allah, the sky rained upon it.

He said: Why do you not put it on top of the heap so that the people can see it? Whoever cheats is not upon our Islamic way.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

«An-Nawwâs ibn Sam'ân said: I asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) about virtue and vice.

He said: Virtue is a kind nature and vice is what festers in your heart and that which you detest for anyone to know.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

It is a common phenomenon that when wrongful behaviour is being committed, the person tends to do it in secret: a strong indication of its being deceitful or bad behaviour. The examples given in the above hadiths demonstrate how individuals may lie to themselves about their own behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة المطففين: ١٤)

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of selling.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and joining the ties of relationship.



﴿Nay; rather their hearts have been covered with the stain of their misdeeds.﴾ (*al-Mutaffifeen* 83: 14)<sup>1</sup>

The verse demonstrates how once a patient embarks on a certain type of self-destructive behaviour, it is hard for them to recognise why the behaviour is a problem for others. This results in increased isolation and so reduces the possibility of allowing or hearing advice that challenges this.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۚ (٢) وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ۚ (٣) وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ  
فِي الْعُقَدِ ۚ (٤) وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ۚ (٥) ﴾ (سورة الفلق: ٢-٥)

﴿[I seek refuge] from the harm [and mischief] of what He has created; from the harm [and mischief] of the night when darkness grows intense; from the harm [and mischief] of those who blow upon knots; and from the harm [and mischief] of the envier when he envies.﴾ (*al-Falaq* 113: 2-5)<sup>2</sup>

It is a sad fact that there do exist individuals who intentionally harm other people. The therapist may have many explanations but no justifications for certain issues presented in therapy, especially in cases of physical assault or violence. Of course, explanation does not negate responsibility nor does it indicate acceptability of the behaviour, but the reality of this fact should be acknowledged.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mutaffifeen* 83: 14: This verse mentions the record of those described as wicked, how their hearts are covered with a covering, and how on the Day of Judgement they will be veiled from seeing Allah (ﷻ).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Falaq* 113: 2-5: According to this verse, the mischief within creation includes Satan, his progeny, and hell. The evil of the darkness may refer to changes in illness and health during certain phases of the day and night (changes related to either planets or the moon – a phenomenon being explored today). ﴿those who blow upon knots﴾ is a reference to black magic.

## Part 11: Being grateful for what you have

Gratitude for existing graces is important in aiding the patient to a) identify the resources that are currently available to support them – whether these be interpersonal or intrapersonal, physical, financial, psychological, or social – and b) realise that life is not all bad, hence giving the problem its place but not total control over one's life.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَوْعِبْتُمْ أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِي الْخَلْقِ بَصْرَةً فَأَذْكُرُوا آيَةَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٦٩)

﴿Do you wonder that there has come to you an admonition from your Lord through a man from among yourselves, so that he may warn you? Remember when He made you successors to the people of Nooh and increased you in stature. Remember the favours of Allah, so that you may prosper.﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 69)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَخْتَبِرُ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ ۚ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة يونس:

(١٠٧)

﴿If Allah afflicts you with harm, none can remove it but He; if He wills any good for you, none can avert His bounty, which He bestows upon

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-A'raf 7: 69: This verse contains a reference to Prophet Hood (ﷺ) and the people of 'Ad, to whom he was sent. They were tall in stature and physically very strong, but they were hard-hearted and rejected the message of their prophet. He was sent to remind them of Allah's torment, yet they did not show gratitude for the bounty of being among the descendants of Prophet Nooh (ﷺ), thus having good ancestry.

whomever He will among His slaves. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿Yoonus 10: 107﴾<sup>1</sup>

These verses remind the individual to be grateful for existing bounties and for qualities such as forgiveness and mercy. When we face calamities, these are the attributes we need but are least likely to display or consider.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رآه مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَنْ شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ﴾ (سورة النمل: ٤٠)

﴿One who had knowledge of the scripture said: I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye. Then when he saw it set before him, Sulaymān said: This is a favour from my Lord, to test whether I will be grateful or ungrateful. Whoever is grateful, his gratitude is to his own benefit, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is self-sufficient, most generous.﴾ (an-Naml 27: 40)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah reported that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«Allah willed to test three Israelites: a leper, a blind man, and a bald-headed man. So he sent an angel who came to the leper and said: What do you like the most?

He replied: Good colour and good skin, for the people have a strong aversion to me.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 107: Good and evil and benefit and harm come from Allah alone, and only He has power over all things.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 40: This verse refers to the incident of the Queen of Sheba and her acceptance of the invitation to the message of Islam from Prophet Sulaymān (ﷺ). It describes how the throne of Bilqees was bought to Sulaymān by the jinn (beings made of smokeless fire) before her arrival at Sulaymān's palace, literally in the blink of an eye.

The angel touched him, and his illness was cured and he was given good colour and beautiful skin. The angel asked him: What property do you like best?

He replied: Camels.

So he (that is, the leper) was given a pregnant she-camel, and the angel said (to him): May Allah bless you in it.

The angel then went to the bald-headed man and said: What do you like the most?

He said: I like good hair and wish to be cured of this disease, for the people feel repulsion from me.

The angel touched him, and his illness was cured and he was given good hair. The angel asked (him): What property do you like best?

He replied: Cows.

The angel gave him a pregnant cow and said: May Allah bless you in it.

The angel went to the blind man and asked: What do you like best?

He said: (I would like) that Allah may restore my eyesight to me so that I may see the people.

The angel touched his eyes, and Allah gave him back his eyesight.


The angel asked him: What property do you like best?

He replied: Sheep.

The angel gave him a pregnant sheep.

Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones. They multiplied and brought forth so much that one of the men had a herd of camels filling a valley, one had a herd of cows filling a valley, and one had a flock of sheep filling a valley. Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a leper, went to the leper and said: I am a poor man who has lost all means of livelihood on a journey. None will satisfy my need except Allah and then you. In the

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name of He Who has given you such nice colour and beautiful skin and so much property, I ask you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination.

The man replied: I have many obligations (so I cannot give you).

The angel said: I think I know you. Were you not a leper to whom the people had a strong aversion? Were you not a poor man, and then Allah gave you (all of this property)?

He replied: (This is all wrong.) I got this property through inheritance from my forefathers.

The angel said: If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.

Then the angel, disguised in the shape and appearance of a bald man, went to the bald man and said to him the same as he had told the first one, and he too answered the same as the first one. The angel said: If you are telling a lie, then let Allah make you as you were before.

The angel, disguised as a blind man, went to the blind man and said: I am a poor man and a traveller whose means of livelihood have been exhausted while on a journey. I have nobody to help me except Allah, and after Him, you. I ask you in the name of Him Who has given you back your eyesight to give me a sheep, so that with its help, I may complete my journey.

The man said: No doubt, I was a blind man and Allah gave me back my eyesight; I was poor and Allah made me rich; so take anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop you from taking anything (you need) of my property which you take for Allah's sake.

The angel replied: Keep your property with you. You (that is, three men) have been tested and Allah is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: What has been said about Bani Isrâ'eel. (The tale of a leper, a bald man, and a blind man.)

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The above verses and hadith make connections between success, gratitude, and positive thinking and their effect on behaviour and inner peace and contentment.

## Part 12: Being realistic

Patients are regularly cautioned to be realistic about their goals in order to avoid disappointment in working to attain them. This does not conflict with being hopeful. The point is to encourage the patient to deal with reality and to cope with good and bad, not simply to manage what is good and struggle with what is harmful. This is a common occurrence with patients who have physical health problems, whose psychological health can be closely related and proportional to their physical health. Given the fact that their conditions can be chronic, this poses a problem in managing their conditions; this is because it is continually hampered by a fluctuating psychological state.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ  
فَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ فَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ ۗ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ  
وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾﴾  
(سورة آل عمران: ١٣٩-١٤٠)

﴿So do not lose heart nor grieve, for you will overcome if you are [truly] believers. If you have suffered a blow, the [disbelieving] people have suffered a blow like it. Such days [of varying fortunes] We give to people by turns, so that Allah may make known those who believe and so that He may choose martyrs from among you. And Allah does not love the wrongdoers.﴾ (Al 'Imrân 3: 139-140)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 139-140: These verses clarify the wisdom behind the losses at the Battle of Uḥud. The reminder here is that ultimate victory for the followers of Islam will be won in spite of=

Anas narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) had a she-camel called ‘Aḍbā’ which could not be defeated in a race. Once a Bedouin came, riding a camel (that was) below six years of age, which surpassed it (that is, al-‘Aḍbā’) in the race. The Muslims felt it so much that the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed their distress.

He then said: It is incumbent upon Allah that He brings down whatever rises high in the world.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) drew a square; then he drew a line in the middle of it and let it extend outside the square; then he drew several small lines attached to that central line and said: This is the human being and this (the square) is his lease of life. (His day of death) encircles him from all sides (or has encircled him); this (line) which is outside (the square) is his hope and these small lines are the calamities and troubles (which may befall him). If one misses him, another will snap (that is, overtake) him, and if the other misses him, a third will snap (that is, overtake) him.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«(Hell) fire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while paradise is surrounded by all kinds of disliked, undesirable things.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

When traumatised, patients often ask: “Why?” And, more often than not, there is no definitive response. The verses and hadiths clearly demonstrate how life is good and bad for all people, irrespective of

=loss of life and limb in the worldly life, since that is temporary and the hereafter is eternal.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The she-camel of the Prophet (ﷺ).

<sup>2</sup> Theme: About hope and hoping too much (for long life and worldly pleasure).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The hellfire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions.

who they are, and that working towards success takes effort and hard work. It is important to remember that one cannot be disheartened with reality since there is little control over it and the wider circumstances of life. This distancing from life events from being a personal attack to becoming an everyday human experience enables the patient to more readily accept their experience and deal with it.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ ۗ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا تَكْلِفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٥٢)

﴿Do not touch the orphan's property, before he comes of age, except to improve it; give full measure and weight, with equity. We do not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear. And when you speak, be fair, even if it concerns a close relative. And fulfil the covenant of Allah. Thus He instructs you, so that you may pay heed.﴾  
(*al-An'âm* 6: 152)<sup>1</sup>

The verse indicates how the 'truth of fact' ought to remain a priority even though it may be difficult to accept; the point is to learn to deal with the consequences of reality, not to avoid it, since there is success in the former and only difficulties and complications in the latter.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-An'âm* 6: 152: This verse contains commands around managing orphans' property and the rules pertaining to this. The verse reminds us that striving for Allah's pleasure does not necessitate perfect behaviour but the ongoing desire to fulfil His covenant.



الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهُمُ الْخَبِيثَاتِ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ  
عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ فَاَلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ  
أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٥٧)

Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find mentioned in their own [scriptures], in the Torah and the Gospel. He enjoins them to do that which is right and forbids them to do that which is wrong; he makes good things lawful to them and bad things unlawful; he relieves them of their burden, and of the shackles that were upon them. So those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him – it is they who will prosper. (al-A'raf 7: 157)<sup>1</sup>

The laws of Allah have been clearly sent for the benefit of humankind. However, many patients (referring particularly to Muslim patients) struggle with their changing circumstances and coming to terms with those behaviours that the religion allows, since they challenge their personal and cultural experiences of life. They can feel increasingly traumatised due to a weakness in their own faith and so find difficulty in accepting and adhering to or even allowing others to adhere to Allah's laws, causing themselves unnecessary stress. Of course, this is not to dismiss the fact that adjustment may be required. However, given the above verse, no reaction to a law made by Allah can be termed as 'traumatic' when it comes into effect. Trauma generally refers to an incident which was unjust, unfair, wrong, or harmful; it is impossible to describe what is permissible in Islam as traumatic since this would pathologise Allah's law.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-A'raf 7: 157: This verse specifies the description of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in the earlier books of revelation as well as his qualities in behaviour. It goes on to describe how Allah created ease from the self-imposed restriction of the creation by making lawful what is good and unlawful what is not.

## Part 13: Bereavement

Loss and bereavement are always challenging. They are situations one cannot change or improve. This natural life event is complicated when the circumstances of death are unclear or unexpected (such as an accident or due to an assault or suicide), since this may make family and friends of the deceased feel that their relative's death could have been avoided.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كَتَبْنَا مُوَجَلًّا وَمَنْ يُرِدُّ تُوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُوْتِيهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدُّ تُوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُوْتِيهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٤٥)

﴿No soul can die except by Allah's leave, and at an appointed time. Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him thereof. And We will reward those who are grateful.﴾ (*Al 'Imrân* 3: 145)<sup>1</sup>

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى أَنْ يَخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ أَجَلًا لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَأَبَى الظَّالِمُونَ إِلَّا كُفُورًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٩٩)

﴿Do they not realise that Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth, has power to create the like of them? He has decreed an appointed

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Al 'Imrân* 3: 145: Events at the Battle of Uhud caused a rumour to spread that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed. This weakened the resolve of some of the Companions to continue fighting with the same level of commitment. Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه), the close friend and Companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), reminded the others that the cause of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was why they were in battle and encouraged them not to give up the fight. Cowardice in battle will not put death off from its fixed time. The verse also refers to the intention of actions as being for this life and the hereafter and the allocation of reward based on those intentions.

time for them, of which there is no doubt. Yet the wrongdoers persist in disbelief. ﴿ *al-Isrâ' 17: 99* ﴾<sup>1</sup>

The verses challenge the idea that individuals and circumstances, (particularly in accidental cases) may be blamed for the death of someone, imbuing in them superhuman powers over life and death. At this point, relatives (understandably) forget they do not have control over the series of events that contribute towards bereavement. The verses remind us that the power of life and death belong only to Allah, *al-Muhyi* (the Giver of Life). They reinforce the fact that one cannot escape death and encourage the individual to prepare for a reality over which there is no control and whose time no one knows. This also instils hope in the individual at a very difficult time, since no one but Allah knows the outcome.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَلَئِن قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَئِن مُّتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٧-١٥٨)

﴿And if you are slain in the cause of Allah, or die, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could accumulate. And if you die, or are slain, it is unto Allah that you will be gathered.﴾ (*Al 'Imrân 3: 157-158*)<sup>2</sup>

These verses reinforce a powerful message often given to terminally ill patients; it is equally important to consider how one

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrâ' 17: 99*: This verse responds to questions about the resurrection. It also refers to the complete life cycle of creation, death, and resurrection as being in Allah's Hands alone, reminding the questioners that if Allah (ﷻ) can create life, then He can certainly re-create it without difficulty.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Al 'Imrân 3: 157-158*: These verses challenge the disbelievers' ideas about death and predestination. They tell of the mercy, forgiveness, and pleasure of Allah in death or martyrdom, since this returns the creation to their Creator by Whom they will be judged according to their deeds.

lives the remainder of one's life so as to 'die with dignity', since this affects our lives in both this world and the hereafter. This enables patients to consider attitudes and actions that need to be completed during the remainder of their lives. The guidance is also applicable to those individuals who may be considering suicide and those patients who try to avoid living fully for fear of dying.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٨)

{[They are] the ones that said of their [slain] brethren, while they themselves stayed behind: If only they had listened to us they would not have been slain. Say: Avert death from your own selves, if what you say is true.} (Al 'Imrân 3: 168)<sup>1</sup>

﴿اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فِيمَا ضَرَبَ إِلَيْهَا قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَرِيسَلِ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ (سورة الزمر: ٤٢)

{Allah takes [people's] souls at the time of their death, and [He takes the souls] of the living when they sleep. He keeps the souls of those for whom He has decreed death, and He sends the others back for an appointed term. Surely in that there are signs for people who reflect.} (az-Zumar 39: 42)<sup>2</sup>

The verses reiterate the lack of control the creation has over death, no matter how hard they try to prevent it. They encourage the patient to accept this fact.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrân 3: 168*: This verse refers to the Battle of Uḥud and describes how people feel that by staying in their houses, they can avert death. They are then challenged by Allah to do so, if the belief is accurate.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *az-Zumar 39: 42*: Allah is the only One Who causes life and death.

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Some women asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to fix a day for them as the men were taking all of his time. In response, he promised them one day for religious lessons and commandments. Once, during a lesson, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: A woman whose three children die (if she bears their deaths patiently, seeking a reward from Allah) will be shielded by them from the hellfire.

A woman asked: If only two die?

He replied: Even two (will shield her from the hellfire).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a woman who was weeping beside a grave. He told her to fear Allah and be patient.

She said to him: Go away, for you have not been afflicted with a calamity like mine – and she did not recognise him.

Then she was informed that he was the Prophet (ﷺ), so she went to the house of the Prophet (ﷺ) and there she did not find any guard. Then she said to him: I did not recognise you.

He said: Verily, patience is at the first stroke of a calamity.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

«One of the sons of Abu Ṭalḥah became (sick) and died and at a time when Abu Ṭalḥah was not at home. When his wife saw that he was dead, she prepared him (washed and shrouded him) and placed him somewhere in the house. When Abu Ṭalḥah came, he asked: How is the boy?

She said: The child is quiet, and I hope he is in peace.

(Abu Ṭalḥah) passed the night and in the morning took a bath. When he intended to go out, she told him that his son had died. Abu Ṭalḥah

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Should a day be fixed for women in order to teach them religion (apart from men)?

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Visiting the graves.

offered the (morning) prayer with the Prophet (ﷺ) and informed the Prophet (ﷺ) of what happened to them.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: May Allah bless you both concerning your night (that is, may Allah bless you both with good offspring). (Sufyân said): A man from the *Anṣār* said: They (Abu Ṭalḥah and his wife) had nine sons and all of them became reciters (by heart) of the Qur'an.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Sa'd ibn ‘Ubaydah became sick and the Prophet (ﷺ) went together with ‘Abdur-Rahmân ibn ‘Awf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâs, and ‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) to visit him and enquire about his health. When he [the Prophet (ﷺ)] came to him, he found him surrounded by his household and he asked: Has he died?

They said: No, O Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) wept, and when the people saw the weeping of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), they all wept.

He said: Will you listen? Allah does not punish for shedding tears, or for the grief of the heart, but he punishes because of this or bestows His mercy.

He pointed to his tongue and added: The deceased is punished for the wailing of his relatives over him.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Allah says: I have nothing to give but paradise as a reward to my slave, a true believer in Islamic monotheism who, if I cause his dear friend (or relative) to die, remains patient (and hopes for Allah's reward).» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: Whoever shows no sign of grief or sorrow on the falling of a calamity.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: To weep near a patient.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The deed which is done seeking Allah's Countenance (that is, for the sake of Allah).

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The hadiths are a reminder that although there is a loss in the worldly life, there is a gain in the hereafter. Since that life is eternal, where families will be joined together, and this world is temporary and families are duly separated, the bereaved relatives are comforted by this. Of course, this is to be said at an appropriate time and not simply as an immediate resolution or response to the death. It is important to note that sadness at a death does not conflict with patience. As with any pathological reaction, it is the excess of frequency, duration, and intensity of the response that counts since this is where the patient is rejecting the reality of the situation.

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

«A funeral procession passed by, and the people praised the deceased. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: It has been affirmed for him.

Then another funeral procession passed, and the people spoke badly of the deceased. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: It has been affirmed for him.

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb asked Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ): What has been affirmed?

He replied: You have praised this one, so paradise is affirmed for him; and you have dispraised (spoken badly of) the other, so hell has been affirmed for him. You people are Allah’s witnesses on earth.»  
(Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This final hadith is effective in reminding relatives to hold on to the positive memories of the person they have lost, since so often in cases of suicide, murder, or accidental death, relatives (understandably) may become obsessed with the negative circumstances of the death long after the deceased has been buried. They lose focus on their personality as an individual, seeing them only as someone who died in tragic circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The praising of a deceased person by the people.

## Part 14: Blame versus taking responsibility

Individuals can easily lose the distinction between blame and responsibility. Blame is passive and problem-saturated, and can be associated with being a victim, whereas taking responsibility is active and problem-solving, and is associated with survival and survivors.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَوْلَمَّا أَصَبْتَكُمْ مُصِيبَةً قَدِ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنَّنِىْ هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٥)

﴿How is it that, when a calamity befell you whilst you had inflicted twice as much [on your enemy], you said: Where has this come from? Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves. Verily, Allah has power over all things.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 165)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَئِن جَاءَ نَصْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوْلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ١٠)

﴿There are some people who say: We believe in Allah, but when they are made to suffer in Allah's cause, they equate the persecution of people with the punishment of Allah. But if victory comes from your Lord, they say: We have always been with you! Does Allah not know best all that is in people's hearts?﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 10)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 165: This verse clarifies the reason for defeat at the Battle of Uḥud. The Muslims were punished for taking ransom from the disbelievers at the Battle of Badr in return for releasing those captured in the battle. At Uḥud, there were seventy fatalities and some Companions even abandoned Prophet Muhammed (ﷺ).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-'Ankaboot 29: 10: This verse refers to the attitudes of the hypocrites.



These verses demonstrate how individuals can contribute towards a difficulty and then seek to blame circumstances, others, themselves (in the form of guilt), and even Allah but avoid taking responsibility to resolve the situation.

## Part 15: Choosing how to behave

All behaviour is an active choice, be it good or bad. However, the consciousness of the process of making a choice is limited. If each thought process contributing towards a decision is broken down and re-structured, as with basic Cognitive Therapy techniques (for example, challenging negative assumptions and backward chaining), the steps and sub-decisions made towards each action and individual belief can be identified.<sup>1</sup>

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرِهِمْ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٢-١٦٣)

﴿Is the one who seeks the good pleasure of Allah like the one who incurs the wrath of Allah, and whose abode is hell, a hapless journey's end? They vary greatly in rank in the sight of Allah, and Allah sees well all that they do.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 162-163)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A behaviour chain examines how a succession of thoughts, feelings, and decisions to act lead to a behaviour. Backward chaining starts with the negative or harmful behaviour and identifies what the person felt before the action, what thoughts they had before the feelings came, and what situation led to those thoughts. See "Behavioral Chain Analysis: A CBT Tool", accessed June 8, 2021, <https://youmemindbody.com/mental-health/Behavior-Chain-for-CBT-or-DBT-Why-You-Do-What-You-Do>. (Editor)

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl 'Imrān 3: 162-163*: The Prophet (ﷺ) is exonerated of any form of wrongful behaviour as a response to the false accusation of a man that he had taken an illegal share from the war booty.

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٦)

﴿Do not pursue [beliefs, rumours, slander and the like] of which you have no certain knowledge, for verily, the hearing, the sight and the heart, all of these will be asked about.﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 36)<sup>1</sup>

It was related that an-Nawwās ibn Sam'ān said: I asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) about virtue and vice. He said:

«Virtue is a kind nature and vice is what festers in your heart and what you detest for anyone to know.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

The verses reflect how good and bad behaviour is clearly distinguishable even if the individual denies this to themselves and how 'blind following' is no excuse for bad behaviour. The hadith offers a distinct criterion by which to measure this.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت بِحَدْرَتِهِمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦)

﴿These are the ones who have traded guidance for error, but their trade brings no profit and they are not guided.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 16)<sup>3</sup>

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَكُنِ الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاءَ قَرِينًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٨-٣٩)

﴿And those who spend their wealth to show off to people, but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day. If anyone has Satan as a companion,

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Isrā' 17: 36: Do not bear false witness or speak about something of which you have no knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and joining the ties of relationship.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 16: This verse refers to the people who either preferred not to believe or who believed and then disbelieved.

what an evil companion he is! What harm would it do them to believe in Allah and in the Last Day, and to spend out of what Allah has bestowed upon them? For Allah has full knowledge of them. ﴿an-Nisā' 4: 38-39﴾<sup>1</sup>

Therapy often emphasises the individual's right to choose and identifies moments when they choose not to choose. The above verses are reminders of the trade-off between ignoring and taking advice and how actively trading a positive behaviour for a negative one is unlikely to be productive.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصَّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْكَ أَفَأَنْتَ تَهْدِي الْعُمْىَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة يونس: ٤٢-٤٤)

﴿Among them are some who listen to you, but can you make the deaf to hear, if they will not use their minds? And among them are some who look at you, but can you guide the blind, if they will not see? Verily, Allah does not wrong people in the least, but it is people who wrong themselves.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 42-44)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا يَزَالُونَ مُخْتَلِفِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾﴾ (سورة هود: ١١٨-١١٩)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 38-39*: Allah tells us that one of the first people to be sent to the fire will be the one who gave in charity only to be seen by others. Allah asks him what harm would have come upon him if he had replaced this ostentatiousness with sincerity. Allah has perfect knowledge of our intentions and knows who deserves failure and expulsion from His mercy.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Yoonus 10: 42-44*: These verses command to be free and dissociate from the idolaters. They also describe how there remain those who, in spite of awareness of the truth of the message, choose to reject guidance and harm only themselves with their intentions.

﴿If your Lord had so willed, He could have made humankind one nation. But they will continue to differ, except those on whom your Lord has mercy. For that He created them, and the decree of your Lord will be fulfilled: I will certainly fill hell with jinn and men, all together.﴾ (Hood 11: 118-119)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾﴾ (سورة

يس: ١٠-١١)

﴿It is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe. You can only warn those who follow the Reminder [the Qur'an] and fear the Most Gracious unseen. So give them the glad tidings of forgiveness and a generous reward.﴾ (Yâ Seen 36: 10-11)<sup>2</sup>

The verses highlight the discrepancy between patients who are clear about advice given but choose not to follow it, to their own detriment. Patients can sometimes claim helplessness in their behaviours because this is the pattern they have established in their lives (the victim position) and feel that they have no role in resolving their situation. They may even defer responsibility of behavioural change to the problem, reifying it and expecting it to manage itself.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Hood 11: 118-119: People will always differ in their creed, except those upon whom Allah (ﷻ) bestows mercy. These people adhere to the message and the Messenger (ﷺ); they are the only ones for whom there is salvation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yâ Seen 36: 10-11: These verses describe the state of those people who are refusing to be guided; warning them will have no effect. It is only those who believe who will truly benefit from any reminder.

أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ ﴿سورة الحجر: ٣٦-٤٢﴾

Iblees said: O my Lord, grant me respite until the Day they are resurrected. Allah said: You are among those who are granted respite, until the day of the time appointed. Iblees said: My Lord, because You have caused me to be misguided, I will certainly make [evil] fair-seeming to them on earth, and I will certainly mislead them all, except Your chosen [and sincere] slaves among them. Allah said: This [the way of My chosen (and sincere) slaves] is a path which will lead straight to Me. Verily, you will have no power over My slaves, except those misguided ones who choose to follow you. ﴿(al-Hijr 15: 36-42)﴾<sup>1</sup>

The above verses clearly remind us that following bad behaviour is a conscious, active choice even though it may be the case that patients feel they have no control over their behaviour because the problem seems to be controlling them, not vice versa.

## Part 16: Comparing the Creator to the creation

It is a common phenomenon that when patients attempt to understand the reasons for life events, they draw parallels between their own logic and that of the Creator.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾ ﴿سورة الإخلاص: ٤﴾

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Hijr 15: 36-42: These verses mention the intention of Satan to lead humans astray and the reprieve he was given until the Day of Judgement. The verses also relate how it is only those who choose to follow Satan who are led astray.

﴿And there is none comparable to Him.﴾ (*al-Ikhlâs* 112: 4)<sup>1</sup>

Reflection on this statement alone enables the patient to realise that the comparison is futile and nonsensical. This in turn returns them to a position of closeness rather than distance from the Creator. It makes them realise that His attributes belong to Him alone, which allows them to gain perspective on their situation.

## Part 17: Confidence in action

It is important to remind patients that confidence comes as a consequence rather than a prerequisite of trying. No matter how small the effort, one cannot simply wait until one feels confident enough to act. This is because it is the actualisation of the action or taking steps towards its achievement that inspires confidence.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبُحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَنْتَذْبُخُونَهَا قَالِ إِنَّهُ  
أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ  
يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا يَكْرُ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾  
قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْثُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ  
فَاتَّقِعْ لَوْثُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّاظِرِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقْرَ  
تَشَبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا ذَلُولٌ  
تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا لَنَنزِلَنَّ جَنَّتَ بِالْحَقِّ  
فَذَبْحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٦٧-٧١)

﴿[And [remember] when Moosâ said to his people: Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow. They said: Are you mocking us? He said:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Ikhlâs* 112: 4: One interpretation of this is that Allah does not have a spouse. There can be no peer who can resemble Him nor anyone or anything that can resemble Him.

Allah forbid that I should be so ignorant! They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us what [sort of cow] it should be. He said: He [Allah] says: The cow should be neither too old nor too young, but somewhere in between. Now do as you are commanded! They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us what her colour should be. He said: He [Allah] says: A yellow cow, pure and rich in colour, pleasing to the beholder! They said: Pray to your Lord to make clear to us [exactly] what she is, because to us all cows look alike. And surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided. He said: He [Allah] says: A cow not broken in to till the earth or water the fields; sound and whole, without blemish. They said: Now you have brought the truth [concerning the kind of cow to be sacrificed]. Then they offered her in sacrifice, although they almost failed to do so. ﴿*al-Baqarah* 2: 67-71)¹

The above verses exemplify how taking too many precautionary measures over a simple request can result in non-implementation or unnecessary delay of an action. Patients may often demonstrate this type of indecision when initially attempting change. This may result in no change or a hindrance to achieving a simple target.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا﴾  
 ﴿فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا﴾  
 ﴿فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٩)

﴿It is by the mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. If you had been harsh or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them, and ask for [Allah's] forgiveness for them; and

¹ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 67-71*: These verses refer to the stubbornness of the Jews regarding the command to slaughter a cow. Had they followed the initial command and slaughtered a cow, any cow would have been accepted. However, because of their unnecessary questioning, Allah made the matter difficult for them.

consult them in matters of importance. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him]. ﴿*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 159

‘Ā’ishah narrated:

«Some people said: O Messenger of Allah! Meat is brought to us by some people, and we are not sure whether the name of Allah has been mentioned on it (at the time of slaughtering the animals).

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said (to them): Mention the name of Allah and eat it.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«On the day of the Battle of Uḥud, a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: Can you tell me where I will be if I get martyred?

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: In paradise.

The man threw away some dates he was carrying in his hand and fought until he was martyred.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Anas ibn Mālik narrated:

«We had no alcoholic drinks except what was produced from dates and which you call *al-fadeekh*. While I was standing offering drinks to Abu Ṭalḥah and so-and-so and so-and-so, a man came and said: Has the news reached you?

They said: What is that?

He said: Alcoholic drinks have been prohibited.

They said: Spill (the contents) of these pots, O Anas!

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl 'Imrān* 3: 159: This verse mentions the qualities of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) of mercy and kindness and how these behaviours influenced people to listen to the message. The verse also refers to trust in Allah when making a decision with the added advice of consulting others.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Whoever does not consider dark suggestions by one’s own self or similar things as doubtful (unclear) things.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The Battle of Uḥud.

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They neither asked about it (alcoholic drinks) nor returned to it after the news from that man.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

When a patient decides to make changes, they can readily change their minds back to their former thinking due to fear of failure. The verse and hadiths challenge this hesitation through examples, with a reminder that trust in Allah does not allow space for this insecurity. They encourage the individual to decide and act, to seize the day, especially since the potential problems would have already been considered in therapy and the potential risks identified and managed. They also demonstrate instances of immediacy of change when understanding the beneficial implications of advice.

It was related that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar said:

«I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) speaking from the pulpit concerning charity and refraining from asking others for money and about begging. He said: The hand which gives is better than the hand which takes. And the hand which gives is the foremost and the hand which takes is the meanest.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

The hadith succinctly highlights the importance of being active, not passive.

## Part 18: Consequences exist

Individuals often do not consider the consequences of their behaviour beyond their immediate relationships, with the proximity of relations being given priority over the possible extent of impact. This may be functional at one level, but the effects and consequences of behaviour remain, whether good or bad, affecting ourselves or others, in the worldly life or the hereafter.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿O you who believe, intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination, of Satan’s handiwork; therefore avoid such [abomination], so that you might prosper.﴾ (*al-Mā’idah* 5: 90)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of zakat.

﴿ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ إِنَّكَ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِعَادَ ﴾  
(سورة آل عمران: ٩)

﴿Our Lord, You will gather all people on the day of which there is no doubt; for Allah does not break His promise.﴾ (Al 'Imrân 3: 9)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغَىٰ رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْلِفُونَ ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٦٤)

﴿Say: Should I seek a lord other than Allah, when He is the Lord of all things? No soul earns [evil] but it is to its own detriment; no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord you will [all] return, then He will inform you about the matters concerning which you differed.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 164)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا ۖ وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا ﴾ (سورة المعارج: ٦-٧)

﴿Verily, they regard it [the punishment] as something far-fetched, but We know it to be close at hand.﴾ (al-Ma'ârij 70: 6-7)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «On the Day of Resurrection, death will be brought forward in the shape of a black and white ram. Then a caller will call: O people of paradise!

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 9: This verse mentions the truth of the Day of Judgement.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'âm 6: 164: This verse reinforces the command and commitment to trust in Allah. It also reminds how every person will carry the burden of their own behaviour on the Day of Judgement.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Ma'ârij 70: 6-7: This verse is a response to the request by a man to hasten the Day of Judgement and bring about the torment upon the disbelievers. It mentions specifically that the disbelievers see the Day of Judgement as being far-fetched (impossible to occur), whilst the believers know it is near.

They will stretch their necks and look carefully. The caller will ask:  
Do you know what this is?

They will say: Yes, this is death.

By then all of them would have seen it. Then it will be announced  
again: O people of hell!

They will stretch their necks and look carefully. The caller will ask:  
Do you know this?

They will say: Yes, this is death.

And by then all of them will have seen it. Then it (that ram) will be  
slaughtered and the caller will say: O people of paradise! Eternity (for  
you) and no death. O people of hell! Eternity (for you) and no death.

Then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited:

﴿وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ إِذْ قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣٩)

﴿Warn them of the day of remorse, when the matter will have been  
decided, for they are heedless and do not believe.﴾ (Maryam 19: 39)»

(Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Jābir reported that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«Every servant will be resurrected and judged according to his deeds.»  
(Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

The verses and hadiths give a clear reminder that there will always  
be consequences for our behaviour. The Day of Accounting is about  
our own actions and their effects on the lives of others. The Day of  
Judgement is a poignant reminder of consequences and how, although  
they can be ignored in our worldly life, will be subject to scrutiny by  
the Creator (ﷻ). The key advice here is to reflect and moderate one's  
own behaviour before it is too late and unnecessary harm is caused  
to the self and to others.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿Warn them of the day of remorse,  
when the matter will have been decided, for they are heedless and do not  
believe.﴾ (Maryam 19: 39)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of description of the Day of Judgement.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسْتَوْفُوا  
وُجُوهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَلِيُتَبَرُوا مَا عَلَوْنَا  
تَبِيرًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٧)

﴿If you do good, you do good for your own selves. If you do evil, you do it to your own detriment. So when the second of the two came to pass, [We sent your enemies against you] to humiliate and suppress you, and to enter the mosque [the temple in Jerusalem] as they did the first time, and to utterly destroy all that fell into their power.﴾<sup>1</sup>  
(*al-Isrā' 17: 7*)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٦)

﴿Whoever strives [in jihad or worship] only strives for his own benefit. Verily, Allah has no need of the worlds.﴾ (al- 'Ankaboot 29: 6)<sup>2</sup>

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٩﴾﴾ (سورة المذثر: ٣٨-٣٩)

﴿Every person is held in pledge for what he earns [of righteous deeds], except those on the right.﴾ (al-Muddath-thir 74: 38-39)<sup>3</sup>

﴿وَإِذَا الْقُبُورُ بُعِثَتْ ﴿٤﴾ عَلِمَتْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ وَأَخَّرَتْ ﴿٥﴾﴾ (سورة  
الانتظار: ٤-٥)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrā' 17: 7*: This verse mentions the warning in the Torah of the difficulties that would be caused by the Jews and the punishments they would suffer as a result. (The incidents referred to are times in history when the Jews committed tyranny and atrocities, specifically destruction under the order of Nebuchadnezzar and the occupying of Jerusalem, and Allah punished them.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al- 'Ankaboot 29: 6*: Allah will fulfil the hopes of the righteous and He Himself has no need of our good deeds. Any good we do is purely for ourselves.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Muddath-thir 74: 38-39*: Every soul will be tied to their deeds on the Day of Judgement.

And when the graves are overturned, then every soul will know what it has done and what it has left undone. ﴿*al-Infītār* 82: 4-5﴾<sup>1</sup>

The above verses all clearly reiterate that ultimately it is individuals themselves who will benefit or be at a loss from their own behaviour the most, whether in the worldly life or in the hereafter.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَكُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ لِّرِزْقِهِ أَذِنَةٌ ۖ وَخُجِرَ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ أَقْرَأَ كِتَابِكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ﴿١٤﴾ مَن أَهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَلَا نُزِرُ وَاِزْرَةً وَلَا نُزِرُ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٣-١٥)

Every man's deeds We have fastened to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth for him a record [of his deeds] which he will find spread wide open. [It will be said to him:] Read your own record; sufficient is your own soul as a reckoner against you this day. Whoever is guided, is only guided for [the good of] his own soul; whoever goes astray, only goes astray to his own detriment, and no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Nor do We punish until We have sent a Messenger [to give warning]. ﴿*al-Isrâ'* 17: 13-15﴾<sup>2</sup>

The idea of keeping a book of self-accounting to note the instances of and track problem behaviour is commonly advised to patients (as described in the verses above). It is a powerful therapeutic tool to enable patients to reflect on their behaviour and consider their reactions more carefully.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Infītār* 82: 4-5: These verses describe the events on the Day of Judgement regarding one's actions and how humans should not forget Allah (ﷻ).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrâ'* 17: 13-15: On the Day of Judgement, everyone will carry their own book of deeds and none will have to answer for another's behaviour, only their own.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَنِيَّةُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرًا أَمَلًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٤٦)

﴿Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But righteous deeds of lasting merit bring a better reward with your Lord and are a better source of hope.﴾ (al-Kahf 18: 46)<sup>1</sup>

This verse is a simple reminder that it is the good that holds people alive in others' memory more powerfully than their mistakes and errors. This is not to deny the effect of long-term trauma, but even in those circumstances the good someone does to the 'victim' can powerfully encourage recovery.

## Part 19: Consistency in behaviour

Clearly, it is important to alter one's behaviour according to different circumstances. However, when one is not consistent in the same situations, on the same issues, or in the face of available evidence, there is cause for many misunderstandings, resulting in avoidable tensions.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (٧٣) وَقَالَتْ طَافِيَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ءَامِنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَجَهَ النَّهَارِ وَكَفَرُوا ءَاخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾ (٧٣) وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيْتُمْ أَوْ يَحْجُوكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧١-٧٣)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Kahf 18: 46: A person's worship of Allah is affected by their striving for wealth to please their family. Yet better than this are honourable deeds, which are interpreted here as the five daily prayers, remembrance of Allah, and developing and improving adherence to the articles of faith.

﴿O People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth? A group among the People of the Book say: [Claim to] believe in the morning in what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day; perhaps they may turn back [from Islam]. And believe no one except one who follows your religion. Say [O Muhammad]: True guidance is the guidance of Allah. [They say:] Do not believe that anyone else could be given something similar to what you were given, or that they could use it to engage you in argument before your Lord. Say: All bounties are in the Hand of Allah; He grants them to whomever He will. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 71-73)<sup>1</sup>

﴿كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨٦)

﴿How would Allah guide people who disbelieve after having believed and borne witness that the Messenger was true and that clear signs had come unto them? But Allah does not guide people who are given to wrongdoing.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 86)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَلَمَّا أَذَقْتُهُ نِعْمًا بَعْدَ ضِرَاءٍ مَسْتَه لَيَقُولَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّئَاتُ عَنِّي إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُورٌ ﴿١٠﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾ (سورة هود: ١٠-١١)

﴿But if We bestow upon him good fortune after adversity had befallen him, he will surely say: All my woes are gone from me, and will

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 71-73: The Jews would conceal the description of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in their books. They would pretend to be believers during the day but revert back to their religion in the evening. This was done to deceive the weak Muslims, who then believed that their reversion to their faith was due to a shortcoming in Islam which they had uncovered.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 86: Allah does not guide the people who disbelieve after they have believed, unless they repent for their actions and revert to the truth.

become [unduly] exultant and boastful, except those who are patient and do righteous deeds; they will have forgiveness and a great reward. ﴿ Hood 11: 10-11)¹

Inconsistency in conduct tends to end up in abandoning helpful behaviour and will obviously hinder or prevent complete recovery. The verses above also hint at the impact of a lack of faith in the idea – that is, that the particular behaviour or belief is helpful and may bring a desirable outcome. The physical involvement in the act is simply not enough.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَا يَسْعَمُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَتَوَسَّسُ فُتُورًا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْتَهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ (سورة فُصِّلَتْ: ٤٩-٥٠)

﴿Man never grows weary of asking for good things, but if misfortune befalls him, he is filled with despair and becomes despondent. But if We give him a taste of mercy from Us after adversity had befallen him, he will surely say: This is my due, and I do not think that the Hour will ever come; but if I am brought back to my Lord, I will have with Him the best. We will surely inform those who disbelieve about all that they did, and We will surely cause them to taste a harsh punishment.﴾ (Fussilat 41: 49-50)²

﴿سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا

¹ Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Hood 11: 10-11*: This verse mentions that the creation's attitude alters with changing circumstances. It also tells of how the people who will be forgiven are those who performed good deeds in times of health and happiness and who were patient in times of adversity.

² Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Fussilat 41: 49-50*: Humans easily despair of good fortune but do not acknowledge it when things go well.



يَقُولُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۚ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ  
ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ (سورة الفتح: ١١)

Those of the Bedouin who lagged behind will say to you: We were preoccupied with [looking after] our wealth and families, so pray for forgiveness for us. They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: Who has any power at all [to intervene] on your behalf with Allah if it be His will to do you harm or benefit you? Verily, Allah is well aware of all that you do. ﴿al-Fath 48: 11﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ  
تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة الصف: ٢-٣)

O you who believe, why do you say that which you do not do? It is most loathsome to Allah that you say that which you do not do. ﴿as-Saff 61: 2-3﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنسَوْنَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٤)

Do you enjoin righteousness upon people while you ignore your own selves, even though you study the scripture? Will you not then understand? ﴿al-Baqarah 2: 44﴾<sup>3</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Fath* 48: 11: This verse mentions the excuses given by those who were not involved in al-Hudaybiyah (where the Pledge of al-Ridwān took place) and how Allah reminded them that their cases had already been decided by Him.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *as-Saff* 61: 2-3: These verses refute those people who neglect to fulfil their promises.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 44: This verse refers to the People of the Book who would command others to pray and fast but would not practice these acts themselves. Allah ordered that if they were to command others, they should be the first to implement their own commands.

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked: What is the best deed?

He replied: To believe in Allah (and His Messenger [ﷺ]).

The questioner then asked: What is the next (in goodness)?

He replied: To participate in jihad in Allah's cause.

The questioner again asked: What is the next (in goodness)?

He replied: A Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) that is accepted by Allah. (This is a Hajj that is performed not to show off but with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure only, without committing any sin, and in accordance with the legal ways of the Prophet [ﷺ]).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. The first is a person whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously (according to what Allah has ordained in a just and right way); (the second is) the one whom Allah has given *al-hikmah* (wisdom: that is, the knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah) and he acts according to it and teaches it.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Moosâ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was like fertile soil that absorbed rainwater and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance.

(And) another portion of it was hard and held the rainwater; Allah benefitted the people with it and they utilised it for drinking, (making their animals drink from it), and to irrigate the land for cultivation.

(And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits).

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Whoever says that faith is action (good deeds).

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Wish to be like the one who has knowledge and *al-hikmah*. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, "Everyone must acquire sound religious knowledge early before he becomes a chief." Abu 'Abdullâh said, "The Companions of the Prophet [ﷺ] had studied in spite of the fact that they were old."

The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah's religion (Islam) and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me and learns and then teaches it to others. The (last example is that of a) person who does not care for it and does not take Allah's guidance revealed through me (he is like that barren land).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Mâlik ibn Huwayrith (رضي الله عنه) said:

«I offer ṣalâh in front of you and my aim is not (to lead) the ṣalâh but to (show you) the way in which the Prophet (ﷺ) used to offer ṣalâh.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

«'Ali (رضي الله عنه) narrated: I relate the narrations of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to you, for I would rather fall from the sky than attribute something to him falsely. But when I tell you a thing which is between you and me, then no doubt, war is guile. I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: In the last days of this world there will appear some young foolish people who will use (in their claim) the best speech of all the people (that is, the Qur'an) and they will abandon Islam as an arrow going through game. Their belief will not go beyond their throats (that is, they will have practically no belief) so wherever you meet them, kill them, for he who kills them shall get a reward on the Day of Resurrection.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«There will appear some people among you whose ṣalâh will make you look down upon yours and whose fasting will make you look down upon yours and whose good deeds will make you look down

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The superiority of a person who learns (Islam), becomes a religious scholar, and then teaches it to others.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Offering ṣalâh (prayer) in front of the people with the sole intention of teaching them the ṣalâh (prayer) of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Sunnah.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The signs of prophethood in Islam.

upon yours, but they will recite the Qur'an and it will not exceed their throats (they will not act on it) and they will go out of Islam as an arrow goes through game, whereupon the archer would examine the arrowhead but would see nothing and look at the unfeathered part of the arrow but see nothing and look at the arrow feathers but see nothing and finally he suspects to find something in the lower part of the arrow.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Moosā narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The example of a believer who recites the Qur'an and acts on it is like a citron, which tastes nice and smells nice. And the example of a believer who does not recite the Qur'an but acts on it is like a date, which tastes good but has no smell. And the example of the hypocrite who recites the Qur'an is like sweet basil, which smells good but tastes bitter. And the example of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'an is like a colocynth, which tastes bitter and has a bad smell.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

It was related that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The similitude of one who puts the Qur'an to heart is as the one who owns tethered camels. If he keeps them tethered, he will control them.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

These verses and hadiths highlight the importance and consequences of discrepancies between saying and doing. This reinforces the idea that belief is about action, suggesting that inconsistencies here foster mistrust, disappointment, and even anger when rights are taken.

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The sin of the person who recites the Qur'an to show off or to gain some worldly benefit (or to feel proud).

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The sin of the person who recites the Qur'an to show off or to gain some worldly benefit (or to feel proud).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of virtues of the Qur'an.

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## Part 20: Control over other people's behaviour

A common obstacle to consider when attempting problem resolution within difficult relationships is the realisation that there are limits of control over other people's behaviour. Each individual can choose to be either part of the problem or part of the solution, but this is a choice only they can make.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٦)

﴿Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects *taġhoot* and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 256)<sup>1</sup>

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا يُنْفِسْكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا لِأَنْبِعَاءِ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤَفِّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧٢)

﴿It is not for you [O Prophet] to guide them, but Allah guides whomever He wills. Whatever wealth you spend in charity benefits your own souls, and you do not spend except seeking [to see, in the hereafter] the Countenance of Allah. Whatever wealth you give will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 272)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 256: This verse instructs to not force anyone to become Muslim, for the truth is self-evident. Only those whom Allah directs will embrace Islam with commitment and certainty.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 272: This is a response to=

﴿لَقَدْ ابْتَعُوا الْفِتْنَةَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَقَلَبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّى جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ  
أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ﴾ ﴿٤٨﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٨)

¶Indeed, they have tried to sow discord before, and they devised plots against you, until the truth [victory] came and the decree [religion] of Allah prevailed, even though they hated it. ﴿ (at-Tawbah 9: 48)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَإِنْ مَا نُزِينَاكَ بِعُضِّ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَقَّعُكَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلْغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ﴾ ﴿٤٠﴾ (سورة الرعد: ٤٠)

¶Whether We show you [O Muhammad] some of that with which We have threatened them or We cause you to die [before that], your duty is only to convey the message, and the Reckoning is for Us. ﴿ (ar-Ra'd 13: 40)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَكُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ أَلَمِنَهُ طَيْرَةٌ فِي عُنُقِهِ ۖ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا﴾ ﴿١٣﴾ أَقْرَأَ كِتَابِكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ﴿١٤﴾ مَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا نُزِرْ وَاِزْرَةً ۖ وَزَرَّ أُخْرَىٰ ۖ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا﴾ ﴿٥٦﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١٣-١٥)

¶Every man's deeds We have fastened to his neck, and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth for him a record [of his deeds] which he will find spread wide open. [It will be said to him:] Read your own record; sufficient is your own soul as a reckoner against you this day. Whoever is guided, is only guided for [the good of] his

=those Muslims who disliked giving charity to their polytheist relatives. When later they were allowed to do this, they questioned why and this verse was revealed as the answer.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 48: The hypocrites plotted against the Muslims to try and extinguish the religion of Islam but even after all their plans, Allah's religion prevailed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Ra'd 13: 40: This verse explains to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that punishment is in the Hands of Allah and that the job of the Prophet (ﷺ) is only to convey the message.

own soul; whoever goes astray, only goes astray to his own detriment, and no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. Nor do We punish until We have sent a Messenger [to give warning]. ﴿ *al-Isrâ' 17: 13-15* ﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿ لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ أَلِيسَاءَ مَا يَزُرُونَ ﴾ ﴿سورة النحل: ٢٥﴾

¶ Hence on the Day of Resurrection they will bear the full weight of their own burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those without knowledge, whom they misled. Miserable indeed will be their burden. ﴿ *an-Nahl 16: 25* ﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿ أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْنَى ﴿٥﴾ فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى ﴿٦﴾ وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَرْكَبُ ﴾ ﴿سورة عبس: ٥-٧﴾

¶ But as for him who is indifferent, you give him your full attention, although you are not to be blamed if he does not want to be purified. ﴿ *Abasa 80: 5-7* ﴾<sup>3</sup>

﴿ فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لَسْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمُصَيِّرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ ﴾ ﴿سورة الغاشية: ٢١-٢٢﴾

¶ So admonish [O Muhammad], for you are but sent to admonish; you have no power over them. ﴿ *al-Ghāshiyah 88: 21-22* ﴾<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrâ' 17: 13-15*: Whoever does good will face the consequences of their behaviour and no one will have to bear the sins of another.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl 16: 25*: This verse is interpreted to indicate the destruction of the disbelievers and the intensification of their punishment for rejecting the revelation and for those they led astray.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 'Abasa 80: 5-7*: Ibn Umm Maktoom (رضي الله عنه), a Companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), came to him to ask some urgent questions whilst he (the Prophet ﷺ) was talking to one of the leaders of the Quraysh tribe, hoping he would accept Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ), therefore, did not attend to him immediately. This verse was revealed, explaining that perhaps in spite of the attention given to the Quraysh leader, he would not be guided since the Prophet (ﷺ) was not responsible for his faith, whilst Ibn Umm Maktoom came to be guided.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Ghāshiyah 88: 21-22*: Prophet Muhammed=

These verses are reminders that even Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) did not have control over the minds and hearts of others, except as Allah (ﷻ) wished. They demonstrate that others will not be convinced simply because they are asked, but only if Allah puts it in their hearts through their own volition to understand and sympathise. The truth necessarily speaks for itself and needs no defence. The option, then, is only to manage one's own reaction. The reminder is helpful when patients become frustrated when attempting to come to terms with another person's lack of understanding of their position, especially when both parties feel they are right. It is clearly more productive to focus on the individual who is open to reconsidering their position rather than the one who is not flexible at all (though this is not to suggest that this person be isolated or ignored, only that they are clearly harder to convince).

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَةٍ وَاللَّهُ أَرَكْسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٨)

﴿What is the matter with you, that you are divided into two parties regarding the hypocrites, when Allah has cast them back [to disbelief] on account of their misdeeds? Do you seek to guide those whom Allah has caused to go astray? For those whom Allah has caused to go astray, you will never find a way [to guide them].﴾ (*an-Nisā'* 4: 88)<sup>1</sup>

Patients may feel helpless when they cannot reason with their family or friends to help them understand their feelings and thoughts. This verse reminds us that guidance is in the Hands of Allah alone

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=(ﷺ) is told that he is only to convey the message and cannot create faith in the hearts.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā'* 4: 88: Allah is reprimanding the believers for disagreeing among themselves concerning the hypocrites, since some believers supported them and others did not. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not prohibit either group from their argument.



as and when He allows. It also reminds the individual that each is entitled to their view, be it wrong or right, and that a predicted negative outcome does not mean they should not express their point of view.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي ۖ فَافْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴾  
(سورة المائدة: ٢٥)

{He said: O my Lord, I have control only over myself and my brother, so separate us from these rebellious people!} (*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 25)<sup>1</sup>

This verse reminds of the limits of control. It also advises that a sensible option is to separate or simply keep a healthy distance from the company of those people whose friendships may cause difficulties.

## Part 21: Coping

Coping with activities of daily living (such as career, family, and home) when suffering from mental health problems creates an obvious additional strain. Where the stress to balance all these pressures becomes overwhelming, patients may resort either to giving up on therapy and solving the problem or relinquishing responsibilities.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن دَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لِطَآئِفَةٍ لَّنَا بِهِ ۗ وَأَعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ٢٨٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah* 5: 25: Prophet Moosâ (ﷺ) supplicates against the Jews when they refuse to fight the enemy in Jerusalem. He reiterates that he and his brother Hâroon would obey the command from Allah.

﴿Allah does not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear. For it is what it has earned, and against it is what it has committed. Our Lord, do not hold us accountable if we forget or fall into error. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden like that which You laid on those who came before us. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Pardon us, forgive us and have mercy on us; You are our Protector, so help us against the disbelieving people.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 286)<sup>1</sup>

When feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, patients may ascribe responsibility for their behaviour to their illness. This verse is a reminder that they are strong enough to cope (in spite of feeling they cannot) or they would not have been given this test; also that they can choose to make their lives comfortable or uncomfortable, whether from the self or ultimately from the Creator. This reminder can facilitate coping since it suggests that mastery of situations is possible at some level.

﴿... لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٥٢)

﴿... We do not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear...﴾  
(*al-An'ām* 6: 152)

This phrase and others similar to it are used repeatedly throughout the Qur'an and are motivators for individuals when they feel they cannot cope. It is often the case that patients can go much further than they think, even when they have reached this point. It is also a reminder that Allah would not overburden a person and so any trial

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 286: Allah does not test a person beyond their ability. The remainder of the verse is a supplication made by the believers asking not to be burdened as the Jews and Christians were; it is also asking for forgiveness and concealment and immunity from further mistakes. Victory from Allah, al-Hafeedh (the Protector), upon whom the creation is totally reliant, is also requested over the non-believers.

is, in fact, something they can bear. This in turn can encourage the individual to engage in problem solving.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ<sup>١</sup> وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١١٧)

﴿The likeness of what they spend in this worldly life is that of a freezing wind that strikes the crops of people who have wronged themselves, destroying them. It is not Allah Who has wronged them, but they wronged themselves.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 117)<sup>1</sup>

Patients often employ counterproductive coping strategies. They may adhere to behaviours and beliefs which are self-destructive but will not give them up for want of alternatives. The verse offers an analogy to the destruction this causes and how responsibility for this behaviour must be taken by the individuals themselves.

## Part 22: Death

Death, along with birth, is the only experience shared across the whole of creation. The fear of death clearly will not reduce its inevitability. The focus here can only be acceptance and striving to fulfil life aims and goals. Again, this is applicable to terminally ill patients as well as those with a phobia of death. (This is not to deny the general fear of death most people have. Rather, it is a reference to pathological fear which restricts the individual from enjoying and living their lives.)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 117: This verse presents a parable of what the disbelievers spend in this worldly life. The freezing wind refers to the type of wind that is so cold that it has the same effect as fire. It likens their disbelief to a calamity that is self-imposed on a harvest, destroyed when most needed.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحِرَ  
عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْفُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾﴾  
(سورة آل عمران: ١٨٥)

﴿Every soul will taste death, and only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full [for your deeds]. Then whoever is saved from the fire and admitted to paradise will have triumphed, for the life of this world is nothing but a fleeting vanity.﴾ (Al 'Imrān 3: 185)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِلشِّرِّ مِن قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِن مِّتَّ فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ  
ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾﴾ (سورة  
الأنبياء: ٣٤-٣٥)

﴿We did not grant everlasting life to any human being before you [O Muhammad]. So if you die, will they [the disbelievers] live forever? Every soul will taste death; We test you with evil and good by way of trial, and to Us you will be brought back.﴾ (al-Anbiyā' 21: 34-35)<sup>2</sup>

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٥٧)

﴿Every soul will taste death, then to Us you will be brought back.﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 57)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān 3: 185*: This is a statement of reality for all creation without exception; only Allah is Ever-Living. To this extent, it is a comfort since all people and creatures, not just certain individuals, will share this. The verse is also placing the short worldly life in perspective compared to the eternity of the hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Anbiyā' 21: 34-35*: No one is granted immortality. Humankind will be tested and returned to Allah for account.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-'Ankaboot 29: 57*: It is better to obey Allah's command, since death will overtake you wherever you are.

«The truest words said by a poet were the words of Labeed. He said: Verily, everything except Allah is prone to perish.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated:

«Some Bedouins used to visit the Prophet (ﷺ) and ask him: When will the Hour be?

He would look at the youngest of all of them and say: If this one should live until he is very old, your hour (the death of the people addressed) will take place.

Hishâm said that he meant (by the hour) their death.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

These verses and hadiths point starkly to the inevitability of death, so often dismissed or avoided throughout our lives as the final abode. They make continual links between death and the accounting of behaviour; this is a reminder that if the connection between the two were truly understood, there would presumably be a significant change in behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّسَيَّدَةٍ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ قَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٨)

«Wherever you are, death will overtake you, even if you are in fortified towers! If some good befalls them, they say: This is from Allah; but if misfortune befalls them, they say: This is from you [O Muhammad]. Say: All things are from Allah. But what is the matter with these people, that they can hardly understand a word?» (an-Nisâ’ 4: 78)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The days of the (pre-Islamic) period of ignorance.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The stupors of death.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisâ’ 4: 78*: There is no escape from death, irrespective of whoever an individual may be, wherever they may live, or whatever they have done during their life. The verse also refers to the hypocrites’ accusations of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as a bad omen.

﴿ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْمُدْوَةِ الدِّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْمُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَأَخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِي الْمِيعَادِ وَلَكِن لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ بَيِّنَةٍ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَسَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٤٢)

﴿Remember when you were on the nearer side of the valley, and they were on the farther side, and the caravan was on lower ground than you. If you had made prior arrangements to meet there [and fight], you would have failed to keep that appointment. But [Allah caused you to meet] so that He might bring about what was already decreed, and so that those who chose to perish [by choosing disbelief] might do so after seeing clear evidence, and those who chose to live [by choosing faith] might do so after seeing clear evidence. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾ (*al-Anfâl* 8: 42)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلْقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْعَلِيِّ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ فَبَيِّنَاتٍ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (سورة الجمعة: ٨)

﴿Say: Verily, the death from which you flee will overtake you. Then in the end you will be brought back to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you about what you used to do.﴾ (*al-Jumu'ah* 62: 8)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهَا وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (سورة المنافقون: ١١)

﴿But Allah will not grant a reprieve to any soul when its appointed time has come, and Allah is well aware of all that you do.﴾ (*al-Munâfiqoon* 63: 11)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Anfâl* 8: 42: This verse contains details relating to the Battle of Badr, when Allah decreed that Islam would be successful and the idolaters and polytheists defeated.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Jumu'ah* 62: 8: It is considered to be the same as for Soorat an-Nisâ' 4: 78.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Munâfiqoon* 63: 11: When the time of=

These verses repeatedly point out the inevitability of death, pointing towards acceptance as the only form of management.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهِدُوا بَيْنَكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْسِبُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ فَيَقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذًا لَمِنَ الْآثِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٠٦)

﴿O you who believe, when death approaches any of you, let two just men from among you act as witnesses when you make your bequest, or two men from other people if you are travelling in the land and the calamity of death overtakes you. If you have any doubts, detain them after the prayer and let them both swear by Allah: We will not trade our testimony for any price, even if [the beneficiary] is a near relative; we will not conceal the testimony enjoined by Allah, for then we would surely be among the sinners.﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 106)<sup>1</sup>

Occasionally, patients can feel that they are not able to cry when bereaved, maintaining that grief is part of life and must be accepted; they do not feel it is acceptable to cry. This is particularly the case with Muslim patients who see it as a sign of piety, even though the Prophet (ﷺ) himself expressed sorrow and grief during losses in his life. However, the use of the word 'overtake' suggests a context of some form of difficulty and so encourages a natural reaction (obviously within proportion and excluding wailing or hysteria), since it does not deny its effects on the relatives and friends left behind.

It was related that Jābir said:

=death comes, no one will be granted respite.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah 5: 106*: This verse contains rules regarding the testimony of witnesses at the time of will-making.

«Three days before his death, I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: Each of you should be eager that death should not approach him except when he has good hope in Allah's mercy.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The hadith indicates the correct attitude towards death, or even at the point of death, since the fear of death can be overwhelming and this may be due to fear of punishment for one's sins. It also highlights the importance of hope and faith, since even at this final stage it is pertinent.

## Part 23: Defence mechanisms may mean loss, not gain

Unconscious protection of emotional vulnerabilities through cognitive, emotional, and behavioural strategies (that is, defence mechanisms) is, of course, functional in maintaining stability and a feeling of mastery in a crisis situation. In some cases, however, it may become a more permanent, personal style of interaction, although of course this depends on the level of consciousness involved. There is usually a protective rather than malevolent function. However, problems occur when these mechanisms are challenged by environmental circumstances, especially when the defences conflict with the emotional needs of others. In such instances, the defence creates a problem rather than a solution.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٧)

«Those who break Allah's covenant after it has been made binding, and sever the bonds that Allah has commanded to be upheld, and

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of funerals.



spread mischief in the land – they are the ones who are the losers.﴿  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 27)<sup>1</sup>

This verse alerts the individual to the vicious cycle created through certain defence mechanisms. Patients may dismiss the futility of their defences because they feel that they are functional in helping them survive daily life even if they are simultaneously creating long-term problems. However, they often do not acknowledge that this may harm only themselves. Family members generally continue with their lives and relationships and may be quite unaware of the patients' level of suffering or expectations.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَٰكِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَفَرُوا يَعْلَمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۚ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ وَلِيَسْ كَفَرًا مَا اشْتَرَا بِهِ نَفْسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠٢)

They followed that which the devils used to narrate about the reign of Sulaymân. It was not Sulaymân who disbelieved; rather the devils – Hâroot and Mâroot – disbelieved, for they taught people magic at Babylon, and magic was never revealed through the two angels [Jibreel and Meekâl]. But these two never taught anyone without [first] saying: We are but a trial; so do not disbelieve. They learned from them the means of sowing discord between a man and his wife, but they could not harm anyone thereby except by Allah's leave. They

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 27: This verse describes the consequences of the hypocrites' behaviour.

learned that which harmed them, and did not benefit them, knowing full well that whoever dealt in it [magic] would have no share in the hereafter. How wretched was the price for which they sold their souls, if only they knew. ﴿ (al-Baqarah 2: 102)<sup>1</sup>

This verse reminds us of the importance of reflecting on the reasoning behind decisions. Patients can be intent on adhering to belief systems that are harmful both psychologically and socially. They often ‘buy their happiness’, knowing that it will be temporary, and may bemoan its loss later, realising, “I should have known” or “I saw it at the time, but...” or “It is so obvious now; why didn’t I see it then?” It is the lack of understanding of the implications of adhering to these beliefs and behaviours that causes this problem.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ  
وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ  
أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُودُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
وَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ يَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ  
عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٧-٧٨)

﴿As for those who sell Allah’s covenant and their own oaths for a small price, they will have no share in the hereafter. Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment. There are some among them who distort the Book with their tongues, so that

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 102*: Magic existed before the time of Prophet Sulaymân. The verse tells the story of Hâroot and Mâroot, the two angels sent to test humankind by offering to teach them magic, and how learning magic is itself an act of disbelief. One of the reasons for using this magic was to cause marital separation but even then, this could only occur if Allah willed. (Note: For additional discussion, the reader can refer to the original text of Ibn Kathir.)

you would think it is part of the Book, but it is not part of the Book; and they say: This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly. ﴿ *Al 'Imrân* 3: 77-78)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴾ (سورة إبراهيم: ١٨)

﴿The deeds of those who disbelieve in their Lord are like ashes which the wind scatters on a stormy day. No advantage will they gain from their deeds; that is straying far into error.﴾ (*Ibrâheem* 14: 18)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِن بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنكَاثًا تَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخْلًا بَيْنَكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَىٰ مِن أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يَبْلُوكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ ۗ وَلِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْلِفُونَ ﴾ (سورة النحل: ٩٢)

﴿Do not be like the woman who unravels the yarn she has firmly spun, breaking it into strands, by making your oaths a means of deceiving one another, merely because one party may be more numerous than another. Allah is only testing you by means of this, and on the Day of Resurrection He will surely make clear to you the matters concerning which you differed.﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 92)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrân* 3: 77-78: There is no share in the hereafter for those who break Allah's covenant, preferring the life of this world to the hereafter. The Jews at the time would alter the meaning of the words of the Qur'an to deceive ignorant people and attribute their own words to the Qur'an.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Ibrâheem* 14: 18: This verse presents a parable of the disbelievers who reject Allah's message and His messengers, and whose acts have a weak foundation. They will gain no reward for their behaviour except what can be retained from ashes in the wind. This is what it means to stray.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Nahl* 16: 92: There was a woman living in Makkah who would spin thread, strengthen it, and then undo it. She was described by Ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه), a Companion, as being "like the one who breaks a covenant after confirming it." The context of the 'undoing' is interpreted in this verse as something treacherous.

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَرْتَدُوا عَلَىٰ آذَانِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۖ الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴾ (سورة محمد: ٢٥)

﴿Verily, those who turn back to disbelief after guidance has become clear to them, Satan has made [their evil deeds] fair-seeming to them and has deceived them with false hopes of a long life.﴾ (Muhammad 47: 25)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said thrice: Should I inform you about the greatest of the great sins?

They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah!

He said: To join others in worship with Allah and to be undutiful to one's parents.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then sat up after he had been reclining (on a pillow) and said: And I warn you against giving a lying speech (false statement)

– and he kept saying that warning until we thought he would not stop.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

These verses and hadith hint at the futility of choosing an unhelpful strategy over a helpful one simply to maintain the defence mechanism and not consider the negative effects it can have. This can cause the patient to lose direction or can simply be difficult to sustain, since its foundation is weak.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصَلِّحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٤)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Muhammad 47: 25*: This verse condemns apostasy, where Satan has made disbelief seem a good thing.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What has been said about false witness.

﴿Do not allow your oaths in Allah's name to hinder you from doing righteous deeds, guarding [against evil] and making peace between people, for Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 224)<sup>1</sup>

This verse describes the process of exploiting information for one's own gains and the destruction of the character of one who does it. A person may be convinced that their position is correct or they do not wish to face the consequences that changing their attitude will involve. It is often the case that patients will lean on the evidence that supports their argument even if it does not withstand criticism. Failing this, as the above verse demonstrates, patients may quote a more powerful source and make a vague association with the source and their argument, even if the facts do not support their position.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنَةً نَّعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُل لَّو كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٤)

﴿After that distress, He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber, while another group cared only about themselves, harbouring thoughts about Allah that were untrue – thoughts of ignorance. They said: Do we have any say in the matter? Say: All matters belong to Allah. They conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you. They say: If we had had any say in the matter, we would not have been killed here. Say: Even if you had

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 224: This verse contains the prohibition of abandoning a good deed. Allah (ﷻ) is aware of it in spite of the excuses made to others.

remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death; but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts. For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts. ﴿Al 'Imrân 3: 154﴾<sup>1</sup>

It is often the case that when patients are distressed, they blame Allah for their situation but do not reflect on how their own strategies can result in a negative impact on their faith and their relationship with the Creator.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ أَخَذُوا مِنَ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ  
بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾﴾  
(سورة العنكبوت: ٤١)

﴿The likeness of those who take protectors other than Allah is that of the spider that makes itself a house. Verily, the flimsiest of houses is that of the spider, if only they knew.﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 41)<sup>2</sup>

﴿قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُدْعِي الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ﴿٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة سبأ: ٤٩)

﴿Say: The truth has come and falsehood can neither initiate anything, nor restore anything.﴾ (Saba' 34: 49)<sup>3</sup>

This verse points out the fragility of some defence mechanisms, which, despite their creativity and uniqueness, break down when

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 154: The believers fell into a peaceful sleep when they became distressed during the Battle of Uḥud. The phrase ﴿another group﴾ refers to the hypocrites who were in defiance of the truth. Allah revealed the secrets that were hidden in their hearts: thoughts which they tried to conceal from Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-'Ankaboot 29: 41: The goals of the idolaters are compared to a spider's web, which is far from beneficial because of its fragility. If they were aware of this, they would not take any deity besides Allah.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Saba' 34: 49: Truth and Allah's law have come and falsehood has vanished.

tested, since they are fundamentally a denial of reality (irrespective of the given benefit). This is often manifest in the therapy session.

## Part 24: Divine decree (*qadr*)

The concept of destiny plays a powerful role in therapy when attempting to understand seemingly random traumatic life events such as natural disasters, accidents, assault, and others; *qadr* is sometimes the only explanation. Belief in this facilitates acceptance of an experience and allows the patient a more philosophical and emotionally-distanced view of the experience.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمَنَ ۗ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَنُ وَلَٰكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ ۖ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِلَ ۖ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ ۗ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۗ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۗ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۗ وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ وَلِيَسْ مَا شَكَرُوا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٠٢)

They followed that which the devils used to narrate about the reign of Sulaymân. It was not Sulaymân who disbelieved; rather the devils – Hâroot and Mâroot – disbelieved, for they taught people magic at Babylon, and magic was never revealed through the two angels [Jibreel and Meekâl]. But these two never taught anyone without [first] saying: We are but a trial; so do not disbelieve. They learned from them the means of sowing discord between a man and his wife, but they could not harm anyone thereby except by Allah's leave. They learned that which harmed them, and did not benefit them, knowing

full well that whoever dealt in it [magic] would have no share in the hereafter. How wretched was the price for which they sold their souls, if only they knew. ﴿ *al-Baqarah* 2: 102) <sup>1</sup>

﴿ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٥)

﴿Allah: there is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what was before them and what will be after them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He wills. His *Kursi* extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not weary Him, for He is the Most High, the Most Great.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 255) <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 102: Magic existed before the time of Prophet Sulaymân. The verse tells the story of Hâroot and Mâroot, the two angels sent to test humankind by offering to teach them magic, and how learning magic is itself an act of disbelief. One of the reasons for using this magic was to cause marital separation but even then, this could only occur if Allah willed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 255: Described as the greatest verse in the Book of Allah, it mentions Allah's greatest name *al-Hayy* (the Ever-Living). It describes how Allah (ﷻ) is the one and only Lord of creation; that He is Ever-Living; that all creation stands in need of Him, while He needs no one and nothing; and that He has no shortcomings but has complete and perfect attributes. The verse also indicates how the creation is subservient to Allah's command and there can be no interference since He has perfect knowledge of everything. No one can attain this knowledge except as He wills. The Footstool of the Throne of Allah is described, reinforcing His supremacy.



﴿ وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ  
 اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٣٠)

«And [remember] when the disbelievers plotted against you, to take you captive, kill you or expel you. They plot and plan, and Allah also plans; but Allah is the best of planners.» (*al-Anfāl* 8: 30)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas’ood narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), the true and truly inspired, said:

«(The matter of creation of) a human being is put together in the womb of the mother in forty days; then he becomes a clot of thick blood for a similar period, then a piece of flesh for a similar period. Then Allah sends an angel who is ordered to write four things. He is ordered to write down his (that is, the new creature’s) deeds, his livelihood, his (time of) death, and whether he will be blessed or wretched (in the hereafter). Then the soul is breathed into him. So a man amongst you may do (good) deeds until there is only a cubit between him and paradise; then what has been written for him decides his behaviour and he starts doing (evil) deeds characteristic of the people of the hellfire. And, similarly, a man amongst you may do (evil) deeds until there is only a cubit between him and the hellfire; then what has been written for him decides his behaviour and he starts doing (good) deeds characteristic of the people of paradise.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«A man said: O Messenger of Allah! Can the people of paradise be known (differentiated) from the people of the fire?

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: Yes.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Anfāl* 8: 30: This verse highlights the plans of the hypocrites and disbelievers against Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The meeting ended with an agreement to kill him. However, Allah revealed the plan to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he was given permission (from Allah) to leave Makkah for Madinah.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The reference to angels.

The man asked: Why do people (try to) do good (deeds)?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Everyone will do the deeds for which he has been created to do or he will do those deeds which will be made easy for him to do (that is, everybody will find easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his destined place for which he has been created).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

These verses and hadiths highlight that the effect of belief in the divine decree cannot be underestimated; it has a significant impact on reducing anxiety following life events. Belief here allows the patient to become more solution-focused and not problem-focused, since it is a reminder that what is written for them will occur. There is no option but to manage the situation rather than wish it undone. Allah's supremacy reigns, not the individual's, which is quite apart from the free will that humans have been given. There may be, of course, a reaction of defeat, passivity, and hopelessness when patients think about this. However, this should not end hoping and striving, since only the Creator knows what, how, and when the ending will be, as has been the case with so many people. Hope should always remain.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٧)

﴿If Allah afflicts you with harm, none can remove it but He; if He blesses you with good, then He has power over all things.﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 17)<sup>2</sup>

﴿قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٥١)

<sup>1</sup> Theme: (What has been said regarding) the idea that the pen has become dry (that is, after the writing has been completed) with Allah's knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'ām* 6: 17: Allah alone can bring benefit and protect the creation from harm.

﴿Say: Nothing will ever happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us; He is our Master. And in Allah let the believers put their trust.﴾  
(at-Tawbah 9: 51)<sup>1</sup>

The verses answer the question, “Why me?” which many people ask after a traumatic life event, such as accidents, serious illness or injury, and loss of loved ones. The answer is essentially, “Why not?” Patients often assume that problems always happen to other people, forgetting that, in fact, for everyone else, they are the ‘other people’, and that difficult life events and calamities happen to everyone.

## Part 25: Divorce/marital problems

Divorce is often made more acrimonious simply due to unclear intentions or reasons for the action, resulting in either party punishing the other in the process.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمَّا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِنَعْتِدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ، وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ لِيُعْظِمَكُمْ بِهِ وَآتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾﴾

﴿When you divorce women, and they have approached [the end of] their waiting periods, either retain them on equitable terms or release them on equitable terms. Do not retain them in order to harm them, thus overstepping the limits; if anyone does that, then he has wronged himself. Do not make a mockery of Allah’s revelations; remember the favour Allah has bestowed upon you, and what He has revealed

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 51: This verse is the reply Allah willed the Prophet (ﷺ) to give regarding the complete enmity the hypocrites showed to him.

to you of the Book and wisdom, to teach you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah has knowledge of all things. ﴿*al-Baqarah* 2: 231﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلَّقُوهُنَّ إِعْدَتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ لَا تُخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ﴿١﴾ فَإِذَا بَلَغَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ فَارِقُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَأَشْهِدُوا ذَوَى عَدْلٍ مِنْكُمْ وَأَقِيمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ لِلَّهِ ذَلِكَ كُمْ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة

الطلاق: ١-٢)

﴿O Prophet [and believers], when any of you want to divorce women, then divorce them at a time when their prescribed waiting period can properly start, and keep an accurate count of the waiting period; and fear Allah your Lord. Do not turn them [divorced women] out of their houses [during the waiting period], nor should they themselves leave, unless they are guilty of manifestly immoral conduct. Such are the limits ordained by Allah; whoever transgresses the limits ordained by Allah has wronged himself. You do not know; perhaps Allah will bring about some new development [leading to reconciliation]. When they have approached [the end of] their waiting periods, either retain them on equitable terms or part with them on equitable terms. Call to witness two just men from among you, and give honest testimony for the sake of Allah. This is an exhortation for those who believe in

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 231: This verse covers the rules pertaining to divorce and emphasises kindness, irrespective of whether the fate of the marriage is undecided or a divorce has occurred. The rulings are referred to specifically:

- a. When answering men who divorce their wives and then reconcile (only to control them), thus extending the waiting period;
- b. When men claim that the pronouncement of divorce was a joke.

Allah and the Last Day. Whoever fears Allah, He will grant him a way out [from difficulty]. ﴿ (at-Talâq 65: 1-2)<sup>1</sup>

﴿أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكُنْتُمْ مِنْ وُجُوهِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارَّوهُنَّ لِضَيْقِ مَا عَلَيْنَهُنَّ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمْلًا فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأَتَمِرُوا يَلْبَنَّهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِنْ تَعَاسَرْتُمْ فَسَتَرْضِعْنَ لَكُمْ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ٦)

﴿Accommodate them [during their waiting period] where you also reside, according to your means, and do not harass them in order to make their lives difficult. If they are pregnant, then spend on them until they give birth, and if they breastfeed your offspring for you, then give them their recompense and settle the question of recompense between yourselves on an equitable basis. But if it is too difficult for you to reach an agreement [concerning that], another woman may breastfeed the child [in return for recompense].﴾ (at-Talâq 65: 6)<sup>2</sup>

The justice contained in these verses is a reminder of the games that are played with serious issues. It also implies a warning to those people who instigate and attempt to incite divorce for their own purposes and not for the benefit of the relationship. The indication to harm is important since, when all is complete, it is these behaviours which are generally a source of unresolved regret and guilt. It is often

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Talâq 65: 1-2: These verses contain rulings on the practical process of divorce, dependent on the reasons, with consideration of the limits of behaviour. The verse specifies the period during which women remain in their homes, where the responsibility of spending and housing lies with the husband. It also highlights the wisdom of the waiting period being spent in the husband's house, facilitating a possible reconciliation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Talâq 65: 6: This verse discusses divorce when the wife is pregnant, highlighting that the wife has the right to live comfortably according to what is reasonable, that she must not be ill-treated, and that she has the right to maintenance until the delivery (if the divorce is irrevocable). The wife is also given an option to take compensation for suckling the child.

the case that couples are unclear about the intention of divorce and it may be used as a threat or a form of social control where there is no actual intention to go through with the act. The destructiveness and futility of this approach in achieving the desired aim is usually overlooked.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنَ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنَمِّمَ الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَالِدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَكَشَاوَرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْفُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٣)

﴿Mothers may breastfeed their children for two whole years, for those who wish to complete the full term of breastfeeding. It is the obligation of the one to whom the child belongs to provide food and clothing for them [the mothers] on an equitable basis. No soul should have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother should be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor any father on account of his child, and the same duty is incumbent on the [father's] heir. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. And if you wish to provide wet nurses for your children, there is no blame on you, provided you pay [the wet nurses] what you agreed upon, on an equitable basis. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well all that you do.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 233)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 233: This verse contains further details on the process of divorce when the wife is pregnant. The suckling period is two years and monetary compensation is allowable according to what is affordable. There is also guidance on avoiding harm or revenge during this time. Weaning occurs by mutual consent.

The verse is significant in highlighting cases where children are used as a form of control or punishment during divorce, forced to choose one parent whilst living with both or in fact being used as an instrument of communication between parents. The verse acknowledges that the father as well as the mother is exposed to this experience. This is important since it is commonly assumed that it is women alone who suffer in divorce.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِيَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفُجْشَةٍ مُبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَاتٍ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ؕ أَن تَأْخُذُوهُنَّ بِهْتِنًا وَإِنَّمَا مِيزَانٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْتُمْ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٩-٢١)

﴿O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit women against their will, nor to hinder them from marrying others, in order to take away some of what you have given them, unless they are guilty of manifestly immoral conduct; but live with them in kindness. If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good. But if you decide to replace one wife with another, even if you had given one of them a heap of gold, do not take the least bit of it back. Would you take it wrongfully and sinfully? And how could you take it when you have been intimate with one another, and they have taken from you a solemn covenant?﴾ (an-Nisâ' 4: 19-21)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisâ' 4: 19-21*: Prior to Islam, when a man died, his wife was given away as an inheritance to the husband's family, to do with as they pleased, having more rights over her than her=

The period during which divorce is being considered is obviously the most distressing, especially where there is acrimony, as each partner may readily be accusatory and punitive towards their spouse. The verses are a reminder to couples in this situation that there was once enough happiness in the relationship to initiate marriage. It further suggests a return to this style of interaction, even if a separation or divorce has been decided. Indeed, this is one technique often suggested during marriage guidance therapy: to return to the behaviours which drew the couple together at the start and at good points in their relationship. The verses reinforce that an unpleasant situation does not necessarily require unpleasant behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقُ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٥)

«If you fear a breach between them, appoint an arbitrator from his family and another from hers; if they both want to put things right, Allah will bring about reconciliation between them. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.» (*an-Nisā* '4: 35)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah has accepted my invocation to forgive what whispers in the hearts of my followers, unless they put it into action or utter it.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

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=own family. The verses were revealed to direct what the correct behaviour towards widowed and divorced women should be. This includes treating women kindly, irrespective of any bad habits they may have. There is also the prohibition to take back the *mahr* if divorce is considered, since it is a marriage gift to the wife.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā* '4: 35: In this verse, the appointment of two arbitrators is suggested where there is a possible estrangement, although Allah clearly prefers reconciliation.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is said about manumission and divorce by mistake or by forgetfulness.



Patients are often hesitant to get other people involved in their marital disagreements, but, as the verse suggests, it can be a saving grace. Irrespective of what the outcome is, the couple can be assured that at least they made an informed decision. Additionally, when divorce is given in anger, the hadith supports and reminds the individual with the support of the above verse that reconciliation is always possible.

«Umm Kulthoom bint ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Mu‘ayt (رضي الله عنها), who was one of the first emigrants to give allegiance to the Prophet (ﷺ), said that she heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say: The one who makes peace between people by inventing good or by saying good things is not a liar.

Ibn Shihāb said: I have heard that the people were prohibited from lying except in three (situations): war, reconciliation between people, and the conversation of a man and his wife and the conversation of a wife and her husband.

It was also related that she (Umm Kulthoom) said: I have not heard him permit lies in anything of what people say except in three (situations).» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The final hadith reminds us that where reconciliation is at stake, it is acceptable to lie to encourage reconciliation, if Allah wills. This also highlights the priority that reconciliation has over separation and divorce.


Abu Hurayrah reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: «Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour. I command you to take care of women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, you will break it and if you leave it, it will remain crooked; so I command you to take care of women.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and joining of ties of relationship.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The exhortation to take care of women.


The hadith raises a very important point about the importance of allowing individuals (in this case, women) to maintain those qualities which are inherent to them and not impress upon them expectations which go against their nature. The significance of this advice lies in the fact that gender-role expectations are often the source of marital problems and the verse alerts couples to this issue.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَإِنْ يَفْرَقَا يَغْنِ اللَّهُ كِلَا مِنْ سَعَتِهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَاسِعًا حَكِيمًا ﴾ 

(سورة النساء: ۱۳۰)

﴿But if they separate, Allah will compensate both out of His abundance, for Allah is All-Encompassing, Most Wise.﴾ (an-Nisâ' 4: 130)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلٌّ لَمَنْ فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ إِنْ يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِمَّا أُخِذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾  (سورة الأنفال: ۷۰)

﴿O Prophet, say to those who are captives in your hands: If Allah knows of any good in your hearts, He will give you something better than that which has been taken from you, and will forgive you, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ (al-Anfâl 8: 70)<sup>2</sup>

Couples sometimes stay together in misery simply because of convenience, fearing they are too old or emotionally tired to work on another relationship, as they do not wish to remain single. The verses are reminders that reasons for divorce must be clear; after a decision has been made, the individual should be confident that Allah

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Nisâ' 4: 130: This verse contains the reassurance that the loss suffered by the divorced spouse will be replaced by Allah with something better.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Anfâl 8: 70: The prisoners of war at the Battle of Badr were given this promise of something better than they had lost, if they became righteous. The verse also refers to the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who made sacrifices of their wealth and were given more than they had lost.

(ﷺ) will continue to provide for each individual with something better. It encourages the individual to be confident in decisions that are seemingly very difficult and not to sacrifice the cause for fear of (unknown) loss.

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: When two Muslims fight (meet) each other with their swords, both the murderer and the murdered will go to the hellfire.

I said: O Allah's Messenger, it is right for the murderer but what about the murdered one?

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied: He surely had the intention to kill his companion.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This hadith is a poignant reminder of how two people may 'compete' in an act which may be to the detriment of both.

## Part 26: Drinking and gambling

The dangers of drinking and gambling on one's physical and psychological well-being are obvious, but none more so than when these behaviours develop into addictions.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٩)

﴿They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say: In them is great sin, and some benefit, for people; but the sin is greater than the benefit. They ask you how much they are to spend. Say: Whatever is surplus

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Regarding the statement of Allah: «If two groups among the believers fight one another, then make peace between them...» (al-Hujurat 49: 9)

to your needs. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, so that you may reflect. ﴿ (al-Baqarah 2: 219)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٩٠-٩١)

﴿O you who believe, intoxicants, gambling, idols and divining arrows are an abomination, of Satan's handiwork; therefore avoid such [abomination], so that you might prosper. Satan seeks only to stir up enmity and hatred among you, by means of intoxicants and gambling, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. Will you not then abstain?﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 90-91)<sup>2</sup>

Patients often argue that their unhelpful behaviour 'makes them feel relaxed' or is 'an escape'. However, the verse in Soorat al-Baqarah (2: 219) is a reminder that although there may be some benefit, the act as a whole is destructive to both psychological and physical health and wealth even at a non-addictive level, as is obvious in the case of drinking and gambling. But at a pathological level, patients commonly suffer permanent health damage and loss of family members and friends over these habits.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 219*: Alcohol and gambling have a distinct effect on religion and the mind. Whilst there may be benefit, it is transient and purely material. For instance, alcohol has effects such as enjoyment of taste, digesting food, and causing relaxation. Also, earnings through gambling are sometimes spent on one's family. However, the benefits are outweighed by the harm they bring.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah 5: 90-91*: Allah prohibits Muslims from drinking alcohol and gambling. The pre-Islamic Arabs used to gamble, use divination for making decisions, and drink alcohol. With the revelation of Islam, these behaviours were forbidden. The final verse ends with a threat and a warning to change these behaviours and understand their effect on one's religion and mind.

## Part 27: Effective social interaction/ communication styles

Identifying effective communication styles is the key to implementing behavioural strategies, and success can be immediate. However, due to fear of failure, patients often employ more aggressive and controlling behavioural styles under the misapprehension that they will be more effective; for example, not distinguishing between confidence/firmness and arrogance/aggression. The beauty of the examples in the following hadiths is that it is human nature that whenever they are cited, individuals will commonly check to see how many of the behaviours they share. Clearly, this can be helpful in reflecting on one's behaviour as well as offer targets to aim for. (Note: The attainment of these behaviours is far from easy where circumstances are challenging, but it is in such circumstances that individuals are encouraged to 'rise to the occasion'.)

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ٨٣)

﴿And [remember] when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel [saying]: Do not worship anyone but Allah; show kindness to your parents and kindred, and to orphans and those in need; speak good words to people; establish prayer; and give zakat. Then you turned away, except a few of you, and paid no heed.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 83)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 83: This is a reference to the covenant that Allah took from the Children of Israel regarding following the commandments, and how they intentionally turned away from Allah=

Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«I asked the Prophet (ﷺ): What is the best deed?

He replied: To believe in Allah and to fight in His cause.

I then asked: What is the best kind of manumission (of slaves)?

He replied: The manumission of the most expensive slave and the most beloved by his master.

I asked: If I cannot afford to do that?

He said: Help the weak or do good for a person who cannot work for himself.

I asked: If I cannot do that?

He said: Refrain from harming others, for this will be regarded as a charitable deed for your own good.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

In certain instances, patients are advised to channel their aggression or energy into something helpful on a practical level, such as charity work or working with disabled people, the elderly, or children. The above verse and hadith give this advice as direct instruction. This is because it is known that such experiences can contextualise difficulties that otherwise seem insurmountable. Further, the advice to ‘speak fair’ is a standard by which the patient can measure their speech. When patients are influenced by their negative assumptions about others, this may lead to unfair speech and beliefs. This advice is a good example of alternative speech/self-questioning that patients can use to ensure they are avoiding this problem.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ

=and the message of monotheism. After the rights of Allah come the rights of the creation: primarily parents and relatives as well as the more vulnerable members of society.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: What is the best kind of manumission (of slaves)?

إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْقُوبَ أَوْ يُعْقَبَ أَلَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ تَعْمُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ  
وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣٧)

{And if you divorce them before the marriage is consummated, but after their dowry has been settled, then half of the dowry [is due to them], unless they forgo it, or the one in whose hand is the marriage tie [the husband] forgoes his share [and gives her the dowry in full]. And forgoing it is closer to piety. Do not forget to show graciousness to one another, for Allah sees well all that you do.} (al-Baqarah 2: 237)<sup>1</sup>

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أَذَىٰ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَنِّي حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾ ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ٢٦٣)

{Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by hurtful words. Allah is Self-Sufficient, Most Forbearing.} (al-Baqarah 2: 263)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ يَبْنِيْ اِقْر الصَّلٰوةَ وَاْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَاَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاَصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا اَصَابَكَ اِنَّ  
ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْر ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَرْحًا اِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا  
يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُوْرٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ اِنَّ اَنْكَرَ الْاَصْوَاتِ  
لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيْرِ ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة لقمان: ١٧-١٩)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 237*: The wife gets half of her dowry if she is divorced before the consummation of the marriage, unless she declines and relieves the husband from any further financial responsibility. The husband is the one who holds the marriage tie, since the male guardian or representative of the wife cannot interfere with her rights without her consent. Thus, the husband ultimately decides on separation or reconciliation as a practicality. Again, kindness in behaviour is advised.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 263*: This verse praises the people who give charity yet do not remind those who were given the charity of their actions. The harm caused by this will only annul the charity given.

﴿O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; be patient and steadfast in the face of whatever befalls you; that is something that must be adhered to [as it is enjoined by Allah]. Do not turn your face away from people [in contempt], and do not walk on the earth with insolence. Verily, Allah does not love anyone who is conceited and boastful. Be moderate in your gait and lower your voice; verily the most hideous of sounds is the voice [braying] of the donkey.﴾ (Luqman 31: 17-19)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرَكُم مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءً مِّن نِّسَاءِ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُم الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا يَجْتَسِسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بََعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾﴾ (سورة

الحجرات: ١١-١٢)

﴿O you who believe, let not some men ridicule others, for it may be that they are better than them; and let not some women ridicule others, for it may be that they are better than them. Do not speak ill of one another, and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. What a bad thing it is to be called an evildoer after having believed. And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the wrongdoers. O you who believe, avoid suspicion in most cases, because in some cases suspicion is a sin. Do not spy on one another, and do not backbite one

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Luqman 31: 17-19*: These verses contain advice from Luqman the Wise to his son: to offer the prayer properly and at the correct time; to do good and avoid wrong as far as possible; and to exercise patience where this behaviour is challenged, since whoever enjoins good and forbids wrong will inevitably be challenged. He also advised against arrogance and seeing others as inferior; advised to be moderate in one's gait; and underlined the blameworthiness of speaking in a harsh, loud voice.



another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would surely abhor it. So fear Allah; verily Allah is Accepting of repentance, Most Merciful. ﴿ (al-Hujurat 49: 11-12)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ فَانْقُوا لِلَّهِ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنَفْسِهِ، فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ (سورة التباين: ١٦)

﴿So fear Allah as best you can; listen and obey; and spend in charity for the good of your souls. Those who are protected from their own covetousness – it is they who will be the successful ones.﴾ (at-Taghabun 64: 16)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ۖ وَالرِّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ۖ وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْبِرُ ۖ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴾ (سورة المذثر: ٤-٧)

﴿Your garments purify, abomination shun, give not out of a desire for gain, and for the sake of your Lord, be patient!﴾ (al-Muddath-thir 74: 4-7)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Hujurat 49: 11-12: These verses prohibit mocking and ridiculing; defaming and slandering; and calling each other by names of evil (that is, names used in pre-Islamic times). The victimised party may be dearer to Allah. Also, they prohibit baseless suspicion, spying, and backbiting which is likened to eating the flesh of that person. The comparison is used since it goes against nature to do this (eat a person's flesh); so, for the sake of one's religion, one should not backbite.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Taghabun 64: 16: This verse commands to be conscious of Allah as much as possible and neither to make a decision before Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) have given a statement or decision about a matter nor to ignore what is forbidden. It also contains an order to give charity to the needy, modelling the Creator's kindness to the creation.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Muddath-thir 74: 4-7: This verse contains the command to purify clothes, meaning to wear garments from lawful earnings, wear clothes that are clean (since the idolaters would not clean themselves), and purify the heart and intention. It also instructs to not give gifts in exchange for receiving something in return.

Being charitable and pure in intention both are simple yet very powerful styles of interaction and have made impressive inroads in solving difficulties. They also ensure justice in behaviour and not exceeding limits. As the verses suggest, when patients are anxious and their relatives distressed, there can be a tendency to become angry or aggressive or resort to more malevolent behaviours, which may inflame the situation. Alternatively, they may remind others of past favours done which may nullify the favour, since the intention then becomes questionable and takes the form of a trade. The emphasis on softness of speech and the benefit this has on improving relationships is self-evident. It is often the case that the tone, and not necessarily the content of a conversation, is more powerful in creating change.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فَعَانَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ١٤٨)

﴿So Allah gave them reward in this world and the excellent reward of the hereafter. For Allah loves those who do good.﴾ (Al 'Imrān 3: 148)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٦)

﴿Repel evil with that which is good; We know best what they allege.﴾ (al-Mu'minoon 23: 96)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ﴾ (سورة فصلت: ٣٤-٣٥)

﴿عَظِيمٍ﴾ (سورة فصلت: ٣٥-٣٤)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrān 3: 148: This verse mentions that Allah gave victory and a good end as well as gains in this life, for Allah loves those who do good.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mu'minoon 23: 96: This verse instructs to treat kindly those who exhibit bad behaviour, so as to soften their hearts and turn their enmity to friendship.

«Good deeds and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with that which is good, whereupon he between whom and you there was ill feeling will become like a close friend. But none can attain that except those who are patient, and none can attain it except one who is blessed with a great share of good and righteousness.» (*Fuṣṣilat* 41: 34-35)<sup>1</sup>

Jareer ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Bajali (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«He who is not merciful to others will not be treated mercifully.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Be calm, O ‘Ā’ishah! Allah loves that one should be kind and lenient in all matters.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) was neither one who would abuse others nor one who would speak bad words, nor one who would curse (others); and if he wanted to admonish any of us, he used to say: What is wrong with him? His forehead be dusted!» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

These verses and hadiths encourage better behaviour (in all the forms described above). It reminds of the peace one feels knowing that Allah loves their good actions, since they are actions that He

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Fuṣṣilat* 41: 34-35: These verses command to treat the ones who harm you with better behaviour. That good deed will result in reconciliation as closeness will develop between two people who were ‘enemies’. The verses also highlight that this is difficult to do and requires patience. However, its reward is that enmity between people is reduced and they are saved from Satan.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: (What is said regarding) being merciful to people and animals. (This hadith makes clear that the benefit of mercy as a quality is ultimately to oneself.)

<sup>3</sup> Theme: To be kind and lenient in all matters.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The Prophet (ﷺ) was neither one who spoke bad words nor one who uttered obscene words to make people laugh.

Himself' guides the creation to perform. (Or simply that they have done the right or better thing.) Such actions can often be enough to disarm the 'foe'.

Abu Shurayh (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe! By Allah, he does not believe!

It was asked: Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?

He said: That person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet (that is, abstain from all kinds of evil and dirty talk [such as abusing, lying, and backbiting]).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The warning in these hadiths is important, since so many patients suffer significant emotional distress precisely due to disputes with neighbours: problems made worse by exhibiting the above-mentioned behaviours. The hadiths remind us to be mindful of the effect our behaviour has on others and our social obligations to the wider society.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥٨)

«Verily, Allah commands you to render back trusts to those to whom they are due, and when you judge between people, to judge with

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The sin of a person whose neighbour does not feel safe from his evil.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm their neighbour.

justice. How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you! Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. ﴿*an-Nisā*' 4: 58)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَلِإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقْتُلُوا الَّتِي تَبَغَى حَتَّى تَفِجَءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ٩)

﴿If two groups among the believers fight one another, then make peace between them. If one of them transgresses against the other [and rejects all efforts to make peace], then fight [all of you] against the one that transgresses, until it complies with the command of Allah. Then if it complies, make peace between them on the basis of equity and be just, for verily Allah loves those who are just.﴾ (*al-Hujurat* 49: 9)<sup>2</sup>

These verses are reminders of using divine Truth as the ultimate criteria. When dealing with a cross-section of people, sadly it is a common human failing that decisions are based on the relationship with people involved and allegiances to those friendships, not necessarily on doing the right thing.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَلَا تَنَزَعُوا فَنَفْسُلُوا وَتَذَهَبَ رِيحُكُمْ وَأَصِيرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٤٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā*' 4: 58: This verse contains the command to return all those things one is given responsibility to implement or look after, including the rights of Allah as well as people. This refers to all trusts, whether they are documented or not. If these trusts are not fulfilled in this life, they will be extracted from those individuals in the hereafter. This verse also commands to be just, whether one is a layperson or a court judge.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Hujurat* 49: 9: This verse encourages making peace between opposing groups among the Muslims. However, if one of those groups transgresses the bounds set by Allah, then they should be fought.

﴿And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, lest you lose heart and your strength desert you. And be steadfast, for Allah is with those who are steadfast.﴾ (al-Anfāl 8: 46)<sup>1</sup>

Ongoing negativity can create increasing difficulties at both interpersonal and intrapersonal level. As the verse directs, it is usually those people who do not respond with aggression in these situations who tend to be successful in solving their problems; they are also often more at peace within themselves (though usually only if their patience is a result of an active response, not simply passive acceptance).

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا ۚ وَالْوَالِدِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ  
بِالْجُنُبِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا  
فِخُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ  
مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ وَمَن يَكُنِ  
الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاءَ قَرِينًا ﴿٣٨﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ٣٦-٣٨)

﴿Worship Allah, and do not ascribe any partner to Him. Be kind to parents, relatives, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are related to you and neighbours who are not related to you, the companion by your side, the wayfarer, and any slaves you may own. For Allah does not love those who are arrogant and boastful, those who are stingy, and exhort people to stinginess, and conceal what Allah has bestowed on them of His bounty – for We have prepared for disbelievers a humiliating punishment – and those who spend their wealth to show off to people, but do not believe in Allah and the Last Day. If anyone

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Anfāl 8: 46*: This verse orders endurance and patience when facing the enemy in battles and prohibits anyone from fleeing from the battlefield.

has Satan as a companion, what an evil companion he is!) (an-Nisā' 4: 36-38)<sup>1</sup>

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ  
وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ  
الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمِثْلَ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ  
اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾﴾ (سورة إبراهيم: ٢٤-٢٦)

Do you not see how Allah compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches reach to the sky. It yields its fruit at all times, by its Lord's leave. Allah makes such comparisons for people so that they may pay heed. But an evil word is like an evil tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth; it has no stability. (Ibrāheem 14: 24-26)<sup>2</sup>

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ  
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالنُّكْرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يُعْظِمُ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾﴾ (سورة  
النحل: ٩٠)

Verily, Allah enjoins justice, kindness and giving kinsfolk [their due], and He forbids obscenity, wickedness and aggression. He admonishes you, so that you may pay heed. (an-Nahl 16: 90)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 36-38*: These verses contain the instructions to worship Allah (توحيده); to be kind to parents; to fulfil the rights of neighbours according to Islamic teachings; and to be kind to the weaker and more vulnerable people. Arrogance is disliked by the Creator as is miserliness, since it shows ungratefulness for Allah's favour.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Ibrāheem 14: 24-26*: This verse presents a parable of the word of Islam and the word of disbelief: the believers' good actions ascending continuously, giving fruits with their good deeds and so earning benefit, unlike the works of the disbelievers.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl 16: 90*: This verse commands to be fair and kind, and keep the ties of kinship. It also prohibits immorality and tyranny, and reinforces the commanding of good and forbidding of evil.

﴿ ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِّ لَهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴾ (سورة

النحل: ١٢٥)

﴿Invite to the way of your Lord on the basis of clear and definitive proof and goodly exhortation, and reason with them in the most courteous manner. Verily, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He knows best who is rightly guided.﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 125)<sup>1</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The most hated person to Allah is the most quarrelsome person of the opponents.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Umm Kulthoom bint ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Mu’ayt said that she heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«The one who makes peace between people by inventing good or by saying good is not a liar.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands. And a *muhājir* (emigrant) is the one who gives up (abandons) all that Allah has forbidden.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

Abu Moosâ narrated:

«Some people asked Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ): Whose Islam is the best (that is, who is a very good Muslim)?

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl* 16: 125: This verse commands to invite people to Islam with wisdom and good manners, since Allah knows already who will be saved and who will not.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿...yet they are the most contentious of opponents.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 204)

<sup>3</sup> Theme: He who makes peace between the people is not a liar.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands.



He replied: The one who avoids harming the Muslim with his tongue and his hands.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) neither committed indecency nor did he use bad language. He used to say: «The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated:

«Whenever Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was given the choice of one of two matters, he would choose the easier of the two as long as it was not sinful to do so; but if it was sinful to do so, he would not approach it. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) never took revenge (on anybody) for his own sake but (he did so) only when Allah’s laws and boundaries were violated, in which case he would take revenge for Allah’s sake.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) never talked so quickly and vaguely as you do.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated:

«A Bedouin came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: You (people) kiss the boys!<sup>5</sup> We do not kiss them.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: I cannot put mercy in your hearts after Allah has taken it away.» (Bukhari)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Whose Islam is the best (who is the best Muslim)?

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The description of the Prophet (ﷺ).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The description of the Prophet (ﷺ).

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The description of the Prophet (ﷺ).

<sup>5</sup> Other translations of similar hadiths mention children in general rather than boys specifically. (Editor)

<sup>6</sup> Theme: To be merciful to one’s children, kiss them, and embrace them. (Anas said that the Prophet [ﷺ] kissed and smelled his baby son Ibrāheem, who later died during infancy.)

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should entertain his guest generously, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet (that is, abstain from all kinds of evil and dirty talk [such as abusing, lying, and backbiting]).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Do not hate one another and do not be jealous of one another and do not desert one another. O Allah's worshippers, be brothers. Lo! It is not permissible for any Muslim to desert (not talk to) his brother (Muslim) for more than three days.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«It is not lawful for a man to desert his brother (Muslim) for more than three nights. (It is unlawful for them that) when they meet, one of them turns his face from the other, and the other turns his face from the former, and the better of the two will be the one who greets the other first.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Mas'ood narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«One of the sayings of the early prophets which the people have is: If you do not feel ashamed, then do whatever you like.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

Sahl ibn Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his or her neighbour.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Jealousy and mutual estrangement are forbidden.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: To desert or to cut one's relations with another Muslim (that is, not to speak to him when meeting him).

<sup>4</sup> Theme: If you do not feel ashamed (of doing something), you can do whatever you like.

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«Whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two jawbones (that is, his mouth and tongue [illegal talk, lies, and backbiting]) and what is between his two legs, (that is, his private parts [illegal sexual intercourse]), I guarantee paradise for him.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

It was related that Abu Moosâ said that the Prophet (ﷺ) sent him and Mu'âdh to Yemen and told them:

«Be easy with the people; give them glad tidings and do not repel them; obey each other and do not dispute with one another.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

It was related that Abu Hurayrah said:

«Al-Aqra' ibn Hâbis saw the Prophet (ﷺ) kissing al-Hasan, and he said: I have ten sons, and I have never kissed any of them.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: The one who has no mercy will never see it.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

It was related that al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah has prohibited you from being undutiful towards your mothers, from burying your daughters alive, and from neglecting paying the rights of others. And Allah dislikes for you to beg from people, to engage in vain talk or to talk persistently, or to be extravagant.» (Muslim)<sup>4</sup>

It was related that Jareer said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «He who is devoid of tenderness is devoid of any goodness.» (Muslim)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: To protect one's tongue (from illegal talk [abusing, lying, backbiting, and evil words]). (And the Prophet's statement:) «He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good or keep quiet.» (And the statement of Allah:) ﴿Not a word does he utter but there is with him a watcher, ready to record it.﴾ (Qâf 50: 18)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of expedition.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of merits.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and joining the ties of relationship.

<sup>5</sup> Theme: The book of virtues and joining the ties of relationship.

It was related that ‘Ā’ishah said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:  
 «Kindness is never seen in anything except that it increases its beauty and it is not removed from anything but it renders it defiled.»  
 (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

It was related that ‘Ā’ishah said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:  
 «O ‘Ā’ishah! Indeed, Allah is kind and loves kindness and confers upon kindness what He does not confer upon harshness and does not confer upon anything else other than it.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

Good behaviour tends to reap only benefits and bad or unhelpful behaviour tends only to be counterproductive at both an intrapersonal and interpersonal level. The verses and hadiths also point out specific characteristics which are both psychologically and socially healthy as well as those which are unhealthy in a wider social context. The significance of these guidelines is that these basic civilities are often the first to be sacrificed when one is distressed. Though understandable, it often becomes a new interactional style which only further isolates the individual from people trying to help. (It is also a source of regret since the personality is often lost in these fundamental changes of individual communication style.)

It was related that Abu Wā’il (رضي الله عنه) said:  
 «‘Ammâr delivered a sermon and was concise and eloquent, so when he came down (from the *minbar*) we asked: O Abul-Yaqdhân, you have been so eloquent and concise. Why do you not lengthen your speech?

He said: I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say: The length of a man’s prayer and the brevity of his speech is a sign of knowledge. Lengthen your prayer and shorten your speech, for concise speech influences the heart.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of virtues and joining the ties of relationship.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of virtues and joining the ties of relationship.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The Friday prayers.

This hadith makes a helpful point regarding the clarity of response and argument. Oftentimes patients (due to insecurities) tend to over-explain their point of view, causing the actual point made to be lost in information. The hadith offers guidance and reminds the patient to focus on the main point.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ  
 الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا  
 كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذَّلِيلِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي  
 صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٢٣-٢٤)

Your Lord has ordained that you should worship none but Him and show kindness to parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, do not say to them even the mildest word of annoyance or reproach them; rather speak to them with respect. And lower to them the wing of humility out of compassion, and say: My Lord, have mercy on them, as they cared for me when I was small. *(al-Isrâ' 17: 23-24)*<sup>1</sup>

This verse is poignant in the advice offered since it is in old age that people become vulnerable not only to physical decline but also to illness and disability. This is a challenging situation for their children, who may assume they are not responsible for their parents' care. It is a reminder of the circle of life, in which the carers become the cared for and the strong become the weak over time. This, of course, is more challenging when this relationship is difficult due to destructive behaviour on the part of the parents towards their children. However, forgiveness empowers the individual to overcome feelings of hostility; in many cases (though not all, especially where sexual or physical abuse is concerned), it can result in the acceptance of wrong committed by parents and emotional resolution.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrâ' 17: 23-24*: These verses command to worship Allah and be dutiful to one's parents.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَذْهَبَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَقُولَا لَهُ، قَوْلًا لِّيْنَا لَعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة

طه: ٤٣-٤٤)

﴿Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds. But speak to him gently, so that perhaps he may pay heed or fear Allah.﴾ (Tâ Hâ 20: 43-44)<sup>1</sup>

The advice directed in the above verses is challenging since it is a much greater task to do good and be charitable to those who harm you than to those whom you love. However, the former is a much stronger psychological position.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْرَءُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَلُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا تَبْغَىٰ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾﴾ (سورة القصص: ٥٤-٥٥)

﴿Such people will be given a twofold reward for their patience and steadfastness; they repel evil with good, and spend out of that which We have provided for them. When they hear idle [or offensive] talk, they turn away from it and say: To us our deeds, and to you yours. We wish you peace. We have no desire [to be involved] with the ignorant.﴾ (al-Qaşaş 28: 54-55)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Tâ Hâ 20: 43-44: Prophet Moosâ and his brother, Hâroon, are chosen to go and invite Pharaoh to Allah's message as he (Pharaoh) had become incredibly arrogant and insolent against the Creator (ﷻ). In spite of this, they were still advised to use gentle speech with him, so that the message might have some positive effect.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Qaşaş 28: 54-55: Those from the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) who became believers were given two rewards from Allah for completing their religion through both Books (that is, the Torah or Gospels and the Qur'an). They do not mix with people who speak ill but excuse themselves with dignity.

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا﴾ (سورة المزمل: ١٠)

{Bear patiently what they say and keep your distance from them in a dignified manner.} (al-Muzzammil 73: 10)<sup>1</sup>

The most powerful rebuff to any conversation is simply to walk away and not become involved, in the politest manner possible. The physical distancing sends a powerful message to others and creates a form of self-protection. The power one has in this is aptly described in the above verses.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فَلَا أَقْنَمِ الْعَقَبَةَ ۚ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةُ ۚ ﴿١٢﴾ فَكُ رَقَبَةً ۚ ﴿١٣﴾ أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ۚ ﴿١٤﴾ بَيْنَمَا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ۚ ﴿١٥﴾ أَوْ مَسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ۚ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالرِّحْمَةِ ۚ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة البلد: ١١-١٧)

{But he has not attempted the steep path, and how could you know what the steep path is? [It is] freeing a slave, or giving food on a day of privation to an orphan near of kin, or one who is poor and destitute, while being [first and foremost] among those who believe and exhort one another to be steadfast and to show compassion.} (al-Balad 90: 11-17)<sup>2</sup>

﴿الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّىٰ ۚ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِنْدَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَىٰ ۖ ﴿١٩﴾﴾ (سورة

الليل: ١٨-١٩)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Muzzammil 73: 10: This verse commands to be patient regarding the harm caused by the disbelievers, since Allah will deal with them on behalf of the believers.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Balad 90: 11-17: These verses encourage in striving on the path of goodness. The creation is questioned as to whether he or she will try to strive in good works through freeing a slave or giving food in days of hunger to the orphan, relative, or poor person. These, as well as the latter characteristics mentioned, are the characteristics of the believers.

﴿Who gives his wealth seeking generous reward [with his Lord] and owing no one any favour for which he should repay him.﴾ (*al-Layl* 92: 18-19)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Let the slave of the dinar and the dirham and the *qaṭeefah* (thick, soft cloth) and *khameesah* (a type of garment) (that is, money and luxurious clothes) perish as he is pleased if these things are given to him and is displeased if they are not. Let such a person perish and relapse, and if he is pierced with a thorn let him not find anyone to take it out for him.

(The Prophet [ﷺ] added:) *Toobâ* (all kinds of happiness, or a tree in paradise) is for the one who holds the reins of his horse to strive in Allah's cause, with his hair unkempt and feet covered in dust; if he is appointed in the vanguard, he is perfectly satisfied with his post of guarding, and if he is appointed in the rearguard, he accepts his post with satisfaction; (he is so simple and unambitious that) if he asks for permission, he is not permitted, and if he intercedes, his intercession is not accepted.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh narrated:

«While Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was distributing the booty at al-Ji'rânah (name of a place) somebody said to him: Be just (in your distribution).

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied: Verily, I would be miserable if I did not act justly.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Layl* 92: 18-19: These are the people who spend only in obedience to Allah and do not give in order to receive anything in return.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Vigilance during holy battles and in Allah's cause. The aforementioned characteristics are of the person who is not concerned with status and worldly prestige but is focused on winning Allah's pleasure and paradise.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿Know that whatever spoils of war you acquire, one-fifth belongs to Allah and His Messenger...﴾ (*al-Anfâl* 8: 41)



The verses and hadiths remind us of the liberation (that is, true happiness) one feels at giving (in all its forms), simply for the sake of giving, to the wider community or to those less well-off, when striving towards one's goals. This suggestion is often made to facilitate positive channelling of ill-feeling – where individuals may feel disconnected from the wider society or have no direction in their lives – creating self-worth and value for others. The hadith relating to the just distribution of the war booty also reminds us that justice is a state of mind which contributes to maintaining psychological well-being.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Faith (belief) consists of more than sixty subdivisions or branches (that is, parts). And *al-ḥayâ'* (this term includes self respect, modesty, bashfulness, and honour) is a part of faith.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Ibn 'Umar narrated:

«Once Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) passed by an Anṣâri (man) who was admonishing his brother regarding ḥayâ'. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Leave him, as ḥayâ' is a part of faith.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

'Imrân ibn Ḥuṣayn narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Ḥayâ' does not bring you anything except good.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The hadiths reinforce the power of ḥayâ' and how this can oftentimes disarm the most aggressive opponent – as was apparent in Prophet Muhammad's character – and so contribute to achieving one's aims.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah created His creation, and when He had finished it the womb got up and caught hold of Allah, whereupon Allah said: What is the matter?

<sup>1</sup> Theme: (What is said) regarding deeds of faith.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Ḥayâ' is a part of faith.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Ḥayâ'.

It said: I seek refuge with you from those who sever the ties of kith and kin.

Allah said: Will you accept (be satisfied) if I bestow My favours upon the one who keeps your ties and withhold My favours from the one who severs your ties?

It then said: Yes, O my Lord!

Then Allah said: That is for you.

(Abu Hurayrah added:) If you wish, you can recite:

﴿ فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ ﴾ (سورة

محمد: ٢٢)

﴿Then is it to be expected of you, if you turn away, that you will spread mischief in the land and sever your ties of kinship?﴾ (Muhammad 47: 22)» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The word *ar-rahm* (womb) derives its name from *ar-Rahmān* (the Most Compassionate: one of the names of Allah) and Allah said: I will keep good relations with the one who will keep good relations with you (the womb; that is, ties of kinship) and sever relations with the one who will sever relations with you.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying openly, not secretly:

«The family of Abu so-and-so (that is, Ṭālib) are among my supporters and helpers. No doubt my Protector is Allah and (also) the righteous believing people. But they (that family) have kinship with me, and I will be good and dutiful to them.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: «...and sever your ties of kinship?﴾ (Muhammad 47: 22).

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Allah will keep good relations with the one who keeps good relations with his relatives (meaning specifically, to visit them, help them financially, and speak good words with them).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The womb (bond of kinship) remains fresh and fruitful if one looks after it.

The hadiths remind the individual not to break ties with family since good relations are a blessing in and of themselves and separation is often a source of long-term regret.

'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«*Al-Wâsil* (the one who maintains ties of kinship) is not the one who recompenses the good done to him by his relatives, but *al-wâsil* is the one who keeps good relations with those relatives who have severed the bond of kinship with him.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This hadith refers to the challenge of maintaining family relationships when relatives are abusive and unjust. However, again, patience and justice with the aggressor is true strength, and the Creator is with those who maintain the *ḥaq* (truth and rights). This is the way to true respect by and to the self and others.

## Part 28: Expecting immediate results

Waiting to see the fruits of one's labour can be tense, not least because of the waiting. Often patients are reminded that they will not see immediate results and may have to wait weeks, months, or even years since, although they have made efforts to change their behaviour, others will not necessarily coordinate or cooperate with them.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾  
(سورة التوبة: ٧٩)

It is those hypocrites who find fault with those believers who give freely in charity and with those who give according to their means,

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The one who keeps good relations with his or her relatives is not the one who recompenses the good done to him or her by his relatives.

and they ridicule them. Allah will cause their ridicule to rebound on them and theirs will be a painful punishment. ﴿ (at-Tawbah 9: 79)<sup>1</sup>

This verse refers to the significance of the fruits of labour. The outcome may not be seen until long after the effort is given, but this should not deter the individual from trying. This is made more difficult when emotional resources are limited.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كَيْبًا مُؤَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَتَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾ (سورة

آل عمران: ١٤٥)

﴿No soul can die except by Allah's leave, and at an appointed time. Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him thereof. And We will reward those who are grateful.﴾ (Al 'Imrân 3: 145)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمَلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ فَأَلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقَاتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٥)

﴿Their Lord has answered them: Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female; you are both the same in that respect. Those who have left their homes, and been driven

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 79: The hypocrites would ridicule the believers in their charity-giving. If they gave a little, they would mock them and comment that Allah did not need such charity. If they gave a lot, they would make accusations of ostentatiousness. Allah rebuked them because the reward is equal to the action and they will be punished for their behaviour.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 145: No one dies except as Allah wills. Whoever works for the reward of this life will be given it here and will have no share in the hereafter.

out therefrom, and suffered harm for My sake, and fought and been slain, verily, I will absolve them of their bad deeds, and admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, a reward from Allah; with Allah is the best reward. ﴿Al 'Imrân 3: 195﴾<sup>1</sup>

Anas said:

«The people of Bani Salimah wanted to shift to a place near the Prophet (ﷺ). But Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) disliked that Madinah should become naked (that is, with empty outskirts and without inhabitants; that is, leaving their houses empty) and said: (O Bani Salimah), do you not think that for traces (every step) of yours (that you take) towards the Prophet's Mosque there is a reward (while coming for the five compulsory prayers)?» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

'Adiy ibn Hâtim (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«While I was sitting with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), two persons came to him; one of them complained about his poverty and the other complained about the prevalence of robberies.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Regarding stealing and robberies, there will shortly come a time when a caravan will go to Makkah (from Madinah) without any guard. Regarding poverty, the Hour (Day of Judgement) will not be established until one of you wanders about with his object of charity and will not find anybody to accept it. And (no doubt) each of you will stand in front of Allah and there will be

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrân 3: 195*: Allah answers the supplication of the people by reminding them that no deed done will be lost and that all are equal in receiving Allah's reward. The verse refers to those people who were persecuted only for believing in Allah and who were forced to leave their homes because of the torment they suffered at the hands of the unbelievers. The reward for this in paradise will be tremendous since Allah is the Mighty and Most Great. The description of gardens beneath which rivers flow reminds us that in paradise there is what cannot be imagined by the creation whilst living in this world.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Every step towards good deeds is rewarded.

neither a screen nor an interpreter between him and Allah. Allah will ask him: Did I not give you wealth?

He will reply in the affirmative.

Allah will further ask: Did I not send a messenger to you?

And again, that person will reply in the affirmative.

Then he will look to his right and see nothing but hellfire. So let each one of you save himself from the hellfire, even by giving half of a date in (charity). And if you do not find half a date, then (you can do it through saying) a good, pleasant word (to your Muslim brother).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Al-Barâ' (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«A man whose face was covered with an iron mask (that is, clad in armour) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: O Messenger of Allah! Shall I fight or embrace Islam first and then fight?

(He answered:) Embrace Islam and then fight.

So he embraced Islam and was martyred.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: A little work, but a great reward. (He did very little after embracing Islam, but he will be rewarded in abundance.)» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Individuals often expect that the results of their actions should be rewarded immediately and are frustrated when this does not happen. However, gratitude from others cannot be forced, no matter how appropriate the expectation is. When reminded of this verse, patients are often quite happy to forgo any gratitude in the worldly life in favour of the reward of Allah (ﷻ) in the hereafter. The hadiths are also a reminder that every step counts, that no deed should be trivialised, and that good acts should be acknowledged as part of the successful achievement of one's goals, since one never knows where it will

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: To practice charity (as early as possible) before a time comes when no one would accept it.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Practising good deeds before taking part in a (holy) battle.

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lead. Patients often dismiss the smaller achievements as they are overly focused on overcoming the most challenging issues; they do not acknowledge or give due credit to the foundations of their efforts. The final hadith also demonstrates how results can be immediate and none of us can see into the future.

## Part 29: Expecting miracles

When feeling straitened by circumstances and trying to understand it from a religious perspective, sometimes patients expect a miracle specifically for them to prove that their need is being acknowledged or answered.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَى صُحُفًا مُنشَرَةً﴾ (سورة المدثر: ٥٢)

﴿Indeed, each one of them wants to be given an unfurled scroll.﴾<sup>1</sup>  
(*al-Muddath-thir* 74: 52)<sup>1</sup>

The verse exemplifies the expectation of a personal miracle.

## Part 30: Fasting

The mind-body connection is now being scientifically proven to be significant in maintaining physical and psychological health.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ (١٨٣) أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٣-١٨٤)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Muddath-thir* 74: 52: Each of the idolaters expected a Book to be revealed specifically to convince them.

﴿O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those who came before you, that you may become pious, [fasting] for a specific number of days: but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days. For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty, there is a way to compensate, which is to feed a needy person [for each day]. But whoever gives more than that, of his own accord, that is better for him. And it is better for you to fast, if only you knew.﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 183-184*)<sup>1</sup>

‘Alqamah (رضي الله عنه) narrated: While I was walking with ‘Abdullāh, he said: We were in the company of the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: «He who can afford to marry should marry, because it will help him lower his gaze (from looking at forbidden things and women) and save his private parts (from committing illegal sexual intercourse); he who cannot afford to marry is advised to observe fasting, as fasting will diminish his sexual power.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Science is only now highlighting the practical and physical benefits of fasting on the mind and body as indicated in the verse and hadith above.

## Part 31: Feeling there is no way out

Patients feeling emotionally trapped can forget to use physical space to reconsider and address their problem. Often the benefit of the

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 183-184*: The command to fast was revealed with its benefits, including cleansing the body and soul and reducing influence by Satan on thoughts and behaviour. The fast is fixed for a certain number of days to prevent weakness and promote endurance. People who may take dispensations are identified and also include elderly adults and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, since the time period may prove to be too difficult to sustain. However, some may be required to make some form of compensation.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Fasting is recommended for those who fear committing illegal sexual acts, that is, those who are unmarried.



therapy room is that it is a space which is disconnected (through association) from the patient's everyday life and so enables them to be free to express themselves. This is because, at one level, once the problem has been disclosed and resolved, it can be left behind without negative connotations related to a physical space.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ١١٨)

﴿[And He also turned in mercy to] the three who were left behind, until the land, despite its vastness, seemed to close in on them and their very souls closed in on them, and they realised that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them in mercy, so that they might repent, for Allah is the Acceptor of repentance, the Most Merciful.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 118)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«This life is a prison for the believers and a paradise for the disbelievers.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

The verse and hadith both encourage hope in situations where patients may feel socially isolated and suffocated by their circumstances and consequently lose hope, since they feel there is nowhere to turn.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 118: This verse refers to the three Companions (رضي الله عنهم) who did not attend the Battle of Tabuk. Upon returning, various people came and offered their excuses, but these three men did not lie. The men were completely shunned, even by their families, until Allah decided their case with the revelation of this verse, and they were forgiven.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of asceticism and softening of hearts.

## Part 32: Filtering conversations (for relevant information)

Distress may be perpetuated for patients when they (actively choose to) hold on to unhelpful information in conversations; this is especially the case for patients with anger problems or in situations where patients are given bad news. For example, patients who are diagnosed with illness often hear that they have the illness (and explore the internet, magazines, and books for details of the potential suffering) but not that there may be a cure available.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حِطَّتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٦٩)

﴿[O hypocrites, you are] like those who came before you, who were more powerful than you and more abundant in wealth and children. They enjoyed their share [of worldly pleasures], and you have been enjoying your share just as those who came before you enjoyed their share; and you have been indulging in idle talk just as they did. Such are the ones whose deeds will come to nothing in this world and in the hereafter; such are the ones who are the losers.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 69)<sup>1</sup>

Individuals commonly engage in conversations which have no benefit or direction, simply for the sake of discussion. The verse

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Tawbah 9: 69*: Allah says that these people were affected by torment in the worldly life as well as in the hereafter, just as the Children of Israel, to whom they have been likened, were afflicted before them. They also indulged in fruitless conversation, hence their deeds were nullified and they lost all chance at receiving a reward from Allah.

reminds us of the futility of this type of talk, since it only leaves the individual unfulfilled and frustrated rather than positive and content.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَهُۥ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلَهُ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۗ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُتُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ ﴾  
(سورة الرعد: ١٧)

﴿He sends down water from the sky and the watercourses flow, each according to its measure, and the torrent carries with it a rising foam. And from that [ore] which they heat in the fire to make ornaments and utensils rises a similar foam. Thus Allah depicts truth and falsehood: the foam is cast away as a worthless thing, while that which is of benefit to people remains in the earth. Thus does Allah set forth comparisons.﴾ (*ar-Ra'd 13: 17*)<sup>1</sup>

Patients are repeatedly reminded to discard irrelevant information, especially whatever contributes to negative thought patterns. The verse offers an analogy which may be used as a technique for hypnotic imagery when implementing this suggestion.

## Part 33: Firmness in justice to self and others

Justice to oneself is part of maintaining one's self worth. It is when one feels any value for themselves that they feel they are worth defending.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, ar-Ra'd 13: 17*: This verse presents two parables that prove the characteristics of truth and falsehood. The human heart's ability to retain knowledge is likened to the capacity of rainwater that a valley may hold. The second example refers to metal and its remnants; when both exist together, the falsehood (the scum) vanishes and what remains, the truth (metal and gold), is retained for the benefit of humans. Allah reminds us that there are examples to be learnt in these parables, if humankind considers them carefully.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ  
لِّلصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ... ﴿١٢٧﴾﴾ (سورة النحل: ١٢٦-١٢٧)

﴿If you retaliate, let your retaliation be commensurate with the wrong that has been done to you. But if you endure patiently, it is indeed better for those who are patient in adversity. And be patient and steadfast, for your patience can only be by the help of Allah...﴾  
(*an-Nahl* 16: 126-127)<sup>1</sup>

﴿... وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدَّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ  
الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا ۗ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٢)

﴿...But when you come out of *ihrām* [following Hajj or ‘umrah], then you may hunt. Do not let your hatred of those who prevented you from reaching the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgress. Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and transgression. Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment.﴾  
(*al-Mā'idah* 5: 2)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Juhayfah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) made a bond of brotherhood between Salmân and Abu ad-Dardâ'. Salmân paid a visit to Abu ad-Dardâ' and found Umm ad-Dardâ' dressed in shabby clothes. He asked her why she was in that state. She replied: Your brother, Abu ad-Dardâ', is not interested in (the luxuries of) this world.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl* 16: 126-127: This verse contains the command for equality in punishment. The command for patience is also advised as an alternative response.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah* 5: 2: This verse focuses on the necessity for justice. The verse commands justice, irrespective of the situation.

In the meantime, Abu ad-Dardâ' came and prepared a meal for Salmân. Salmân requested Abu ad-Dardâ' to eat (with him), but Abu ad-Dardâ' said: I am fasting.

Salmân said: I am not going to eat unless you eat.

So Abu ad-Dardâ' ate (with Salmân). When it was night and (a part of the night passed), Abu ad-Dardâ' got up (to offer the night prayer), but Salmân told him to sleep and Abu ad-Dardâ' slept. After some time, Abu ad-Dardâ' again got up (to offer the night prayer), but Salmân told him to sleep and Abu ad-Dardâ' slept. After some time Abu ad-Dardâ' again got up, but Salmân told him to sleep. When it was the last hours of the night, Salmân told him to get up then and both of them offered the prayer.

Salmân told Abu ad-Dardâ': Your Lord has a right on you, your own self has a right on you, and your family has a right on you, so you should give the rights of all those who have a right on you.

Abu ad-Dardâ' came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and narrated the whole story. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Salmân has spoken the truth.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«We said to the Prophet (ﷺ): You send us out and it happens that we have to stay with such people who do not entertain us. What do you think about it?

He said to us: If you stay with some people and they entertain you as they should for a guest, accept their hospitality, but if they do not do so, take the right of the guest from them.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

These verses and hadiths are reminders that one must be just to oneself as well as to others. It is often the case that patients' stresses and depression are reactive to particular situations or certain types of behaviour directed towards them. However, they often lack the

<sup>1</sup> Theme: If someone forces his Muslim brother to break his (*nawâfil* [supererogatory]) fast by swearing.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The retaliation of the oppressed person if he finds the property of his oppressor.

confidence to have a conversation about this as they feel that they have no right to defend themselves.

## Part 34: Flexibility

Flexibility towards oneself is important in reducing the tensions of daily life. However, it is even more significant for patients with mental health problems, whose distress may be tied in with the pressure they put on themselves regarding expectations of behaviour. They may often be very unforgiving about any mistakes, either their own or those of other people.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۖ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۖ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

(سورة البقرة: ١٨٥) ﴿١٨٥﴾

﴿Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was sent down, as guidance for humankind, and as clear signs that show the right way and distinguish between right and wrong. So every one of you who is present [at his home] during that month should spend it in fasting, but if anyone is ill, or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days. Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. [He wants you] to complete the prescribed number of days, and to glorify Him for His having guided you, and so that you might give thanks.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 185)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 185*: The virtues of the Qur'an are described: guidance for those who chose to follow it, distinguishing between truth and falsehood and between what is permissible and what is prohibited.

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْمَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾ (١٣٤) ﴿ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ شَرٍّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (١٣٥) (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٤-١٣٥)

Those who spend [in Allah's cause] in times of both ease and hardship, who control their anger, and pardon people, for Allah loves those who do good; and those who, if they do something shameful or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins – for who can forgive sins except Allah? – and do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (Al 'Imrān 3: 134-135)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ۚ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا ۚ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ ۗ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴾ (٦) (سورة المائدة: ٦)

O you who believe, when you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands [and arms] to the elbows; wipe over your heads [with wet hands]; and [wash] your feet to the ankles. If you are in a state of major impurity [*janābah*], then purify yourselves [*ghusl*]. If you are ill, or on a journey, or have relieved yourselves, or you have touched women, and cannot find water, then find some clean earth, and wipe your faces and hands with it [*tayammum*]. Allah does not

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrān* 3: 134-135: These verses contain the encouragement to do good with the promise of the reward of paradise. The believers who spend do so for Allah's sake, refraining from responding to harm with anger; and who forgive and repent before death. This behaviour is termed *ihsān* (attaining excellence in the religion).

wish to impose any hardship on you, but to purify you, and complete His favour to you, so that you may give thanks. ﴿ (al-Mā'idah 5: 6)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٥٤)

﴿When those who believe in Our revelations come to you, say: Peace be upon you. Your Lord has taken it upon Himself to be merciful: whoever among you commits a sin out of ignorance, and after that repents and mends his ways, then verily He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿ (al-An'ām 6: 54)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ ادْعُوهُمْ لِآبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانَكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ، وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٥)

﴿Call them [adopted sons] after their [real] fathers; that is more appropriate before Allah. If you do not know who their fathers are, then they are your brothers in faith and your allies. There is no sin on you if you make a mistake in that regard, but [you are accountable] for what your hearts deliberately intend. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿ (al-Ahẓāb 33: 5)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah 5: 6*: This verse contains the order to perform ritual ablution before praying and related details. Allah (ﷻ) gave the leniency and ease of tayammum when there is difficulty in finding water.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'ām 6: 54*: This verse encourages the spreading of the greeting of *salām* ('peace be upon you') amongst the Muslims with the good news of Allah's mercy. In case they commit a sin out of ignorance, the believers are commanded to repent and make the intention not to repeat it but to perform good deeds instead.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Ahẓāb 33: 5*: This verse contains the rules of adoption. The mistake referred to here is naming someone after a man=



Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Religion is very easy and whoever overburdens himself in his religion will not be able to continue in that way. So you should not be extremists, but try to be near to perfection and receive the good tidings that you will be rewarded; and gain strength by offering the prayers in the mornings, afternoons, and during the last hours of the night.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh said:

«Mu‘âdh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) used to offer ṣalâh with the Prophet (ﷺ) and then go to lead his people in ṣalâh. Once he led the ‘*ishâ*’ (evening) prayer and recited Soorat al-Baqarah. Somebody left the ṣalâh and Mu‘âdh criticised him.

The news reached the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said: Mu‘âdh, you are putting the people to trial, and repeated it thrice (or said something similar) and ordered him to (recite) two medium soorahs of *mufaṣṣal* (any soorah from the Qur’an between Soorat Qâf to Soorat an-Nâs).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

‘Â’ishah narrated:

«Whenever Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was given the choice of one of two matters, he would choose the easier of the two, as long as it was not sinful to do so; but if it was sinful to do so, he would not approach it. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) never took revenge (on anybody) for his own sake but (he did so) only when Allah’s laws and boundaries were violated, in which case he would take revenge for Allah’s sake.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

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=who is not his father. In this case, there is no sin attached if the mistake was unintentional.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Religion is very easy.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: When the imam prolongs the ṣalâh and somebody has an urgent job or need and so he leaves the congregation and prays alone.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The description of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Abu Moosâ narrated:

«We, a group of al-Ash'ariyoon (the tribe of Abu Moosâ), went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him to give us something to ride, but the Prophet (ﷺ) refused. Then we asked him a second time to give us something to ride, but the Prophet (ﷺ) took an oath that he would not give us anything to ride. After a while, some camels of booty were bought to the Prophet (ﷺ), and he ordered that five camels be given to us. When we took those camels, we said: We have made the Prophet (ﷺ) forget his oath, so we will never be successful after this! So I went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah! You took an oath that you would not give us anything to ride, but you have given us.

He said: Yes, for if I take an oath and later see a better solution than that, I act on the latter (and gave the expiation of that oath).

In another quotation it is said that the Prophet (ﷺ) expiated (that oath).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

It was related that Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Beware of committing oppression, for oppression is a darkness on the Day of Resurrection. Beware of being narrow-minded, for narrow-mindedness destroyed those who were before you, as it incited them to shed blood and make lawful what was unlawful for them.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

These verses and hadiths are reminders that if the Creator does not wish to create hardship – and His right as *al-Qahhâr* (the Dominator) is to impose what He sees fit – then the creation must question themselves as to why they bind themselves so tightly, especially at times of stress. Distress may not allow patients to think beyond an immediate solution to crisis situations and a dire 'need' for this approach to work, whether it is successful or not.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The arrival of al-Ash'ariyoon and the people of Yemen.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of oppression.

The verses and hadiths above also encourage flexibility through forgiveness when a situation cannot be controlled or managed successfully. Similarly and additionally, the hadiths highlight the lack of flexibility or extreme manifestations of behaviour sometimes displayed and how this can be a productive solution. Being near perfection allows for flexibility and development of ongoing aims; however, many patients confuse this with actual perfection, which is not possible due to natural human frailties.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «A believer is not stung twice (by something) out of one and the same hole.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Patients often fail to see that a given suggestion is not working and become increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress. The hadith is a good reminder to be flexible in one's approach to problem solving and take lessons from failures. It points to a maxim used in the Solution-Focused Therapy approach: "If at first you don't succeed, try something different." Although this is a reference to trying different solutions, it is the bridge between learning from past mistakes and not repeating them.

## Part 35: Forgiveness

In therapy, forgiveness is as much about forgiving oneself as it is about forgiving others in order to enable progress in recovery.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَسْقُوقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٧٤)

<sup>1</sup> Theme: A believer is not to be stung twice (by something) out of one and the same hole.

﴿Then after that, your hearts were hardened, and became like a rock or even harder. For among rocks there are some from which rivers spring forth; others which, when they cleave asunder, send forth water; and others which tumble down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 74)<sup>1</sup>

In many situations, anger prevents the patient from forgiving and they can develop a very bitter world view, becoming hard-hearted. The verse above can be used as an analogy to reflect this reaction.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قَالَ يَنْقُومِ لِمَ اسْتَعْجَلُونَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾ (سورة النمل: ٤٦)

﴿He said: O my people, why do you seek to hasten on the evil [divine punishment] rather than the good [divine mercy]? Why do you not seek forgiveness from Allah, so that you may be shown mercy?﴾ (an-Naml 27: 46)<sup>2</sup>

﴿إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يَضْعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة التغابن: ١٧)

﴿If you lend to Allah a goodly loan, He will multiply it for you and forgive you. Allah is Appreciative, Most Forbearing.﴾ (at-Taghâbun 64: 17)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 74: Allah criticised the Children of Israel, who rejected any form of admonishment in spite of the miracles and signs from Allah.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 46: This verse contains an account of the people of Thamood and how they refused to respond to the call of Prophet Sâlih (ﷺ) to worship Allah. The people are asked why they seem to want the punishment to come upon them (for rejecting the message) instead of requesting mercy.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Taghâbun 64: 17: This verse encourages charity and showing kindness to Allah's creation as He shows kindness to you. Giving charity is considered a loan to Allah and whatever is spent in the way of Allah will be replaced by Him.

Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) sent (a messenger) to the Prophet (ﷺ) requesting him to come as her child was dying (or was gasping), but the Prophet (ﷺ) returned the messenger and told him to convey his greetings to her and say: Whatever Allah takes is for Him and whatever He gives is for Him and everything with Him has a limited, fixed term (in this world) and so she should be patient and hope for Allah's reward.

She again sent for him, swearing that he should come. The Prophet (ﷺ) got up and so did Sa'd ibn 'Ubâdah, Mu'âdh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zayd ibn Thâbit, and some other men. The child was brought to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) while his breath was disturbed in his chest (the sub-narrator thinks that Usâmah added) as if it was a leather waterskin. On seeing this, the eyes of the Prophet (ﷺ) started shedding tears.

Sa'd asked: O Messenger of Allah, what is this?

He replied: It is mercy which Allah has lodged in the heart of His slaves, and Allah is merciful only to those of His slaves who are merciful (to others).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«When Allah completed the creation, He wrote in His Book which is with Him on His Throne: My mercy has overcome my anger.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

'Abdullâh ibn az-Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): «The deceased is punished because of the weeping (with wailing) of some of his relatives if wailing was the custom of that dead person.»

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is mentioned in the statement of Allah: «{It is He Who originates creation then repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him...}» (ar-Room 30: 27)

«Allah ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to forgive the people their misbehaviour (towards him).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:  
«Allah has accepted my invocation to forgive what whispers in the hearts of my followers, unless they put it into action or utter it.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:  
«Allah forgives my followers those (evil deeds) their own selves may suggest to them as long as they do not act (on them) or speak.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The verses and hadiths make the connection between forgiveness and mercy and how the manifestation of mercy through the act of forgiveness, whether forgiving oneself or others, empowers the individual. The final hadith also reminds us how human emotion contributes towards mistakes when emotion rather than intention dominates the situation.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَعَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَادٍ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِنْ سَبِيلِ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾  
(سورة الشورى: ٤٣-٤٤)

﴿But whoever shows patience and forgives, that is indeed something that is recommended by Allah. Whomever Allah causes to go astray, he will have no protector thereafter. And you will see the wrongdoers,

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿Be gracious, enjoin what is right and turn away from the ignorant.﴾ (*al-A'râf* 7: 199)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is said about manumission and divorce by mistake or by forgetfulness.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: If someone does something against his oath due to forgetfulness should he make expiation? And the statement of Allah: ﴿...There is no sin on you if you make a mistake in that regard, but [you are accountable] for what your hearts deliberately intend...﴾ (*al-Ahzâb* 33: 5)

when they behold the punishment, saying: Is there any way to go back [and make amends]? ﴿ash-Shoorâ 42: 43-44﴾<sup>1</sup>

The verses remind us that where there is no forgiveness, there is an increased possibility for humiliation and suffering, thus causing escalation of unhelpful behaviour.

## Part 36: Freedom to walk away

Patients can unnecessarily add to their distress by putting themselves in situations which compound their mental illness. This is particularly when their problem is a reaction to an environmental stimulus such as bullying at work or abusive neighbours, for example. In such situations, it can be helpful to simply leave the situation, since it is the situation alone that is causing or exacerbating the problem, rather than force oneself to stay in that situation and prolong further suffering, thus causing one's health to deteriorate. It is a harsh reality, but in some cases it is the only option and should necessarily be considered as a practical option (where possible).

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَظْفِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا لَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَنَعْنَا مِنْ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾ فَأُولَئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُوًّا غَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾﴾

(سورة النساء: ٩٧-٩٩)

﴿Verily, when the angels take [in death] the souls of those who have wronged themselves, they ask them: What was the matter with you?

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ash-Shoorâ 42: 43-44: There is a great reward for those people who bear insults with patience. The state of the idolaters on the Day of Judgement is described because of their insolence towards Allah (ﷻ). They will wish to return to the worldly life.

They reply: We were weak and oppressed in the land. They say: Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate to some other place? For those, their ultimate abode is hell, an evil journey's end. Except those who are [really] weak and oppressed – men, women, and children – who have no means in their power and do not know where to go. For these, there is hope that Allah will forgive them, for Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving. ﴿an-Nisâ' 4: 97-99﴾<sup>1</sup>

The verse points to the freedom a person has to move away from difficulties, and how not doing so causes self-suffering.

## Part 37: Giving Satan his due

Understanding Satan is of paramount importance. His name is, disturbingly, mentioned regularly and rather casually as 'the one who leads astray'. However, if his true nature is understood and the level of his destruction and deception were considered in the world around us, the significance of his name and its associations would be revised drastically.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا آدْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْعِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٨)

﴿O you who believe! Enter into Islam whole-heartedly; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, for he is to you an avowed enemy.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 208)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Nisâ' 4: 97-99*: These verses contain the prohibition of living among the disbelievers where one is unable to practice their faith, while one is able to migrate. The verse presents the excuse which these people will give and how they will be punished, except the weak whom Allah will forgive.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 208: This verse commands to enter into complete submission to Allah and the message of Islam. It advises not to follow Satan and not to rebel against Allah's commands.



﴿قَالَ يَبْنَىٰ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ  
عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥﴾﴾ (سورة يوسف: ٥)

﴿His father said: O my son, say nothing of this dream to your brothers, lest they plot evil against you, for verily Satan is to man an avowed enemy.﴾ (Yoosuf 12: 5)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبَتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ  
قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا وَقَدْ أَحْسَنَ بِي إِذْ أَخْرَجَنِي مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَاءَ بِكُمْ مِنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْ  
بَعْدِ أَنْ نَزَغَ الشَّيْطَانُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْوَتِي إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِمَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ  
الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾﴾ (سورة يوسف: ١٠٠)

﴿He seated his parents in the highest place of honour, and they fell down in prostration before him. He said: O my father, this is the fulfilment of my dream of old. My Lord has made it come true. He has indeed been gracious to me, when He rescued me from prison and brought you here from the desert, after Satan had sown discord between me and my brothers. Verily, my Lord is gracious to whomever He will, for He is the All-Knowing, Most Wise.﴾ (Yoosuf 12: 100)<sup>2</sup>

﴿إِنِّي وَجَدْتُ أُمَّرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾  
وَجَدْتُهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ  
عَنِ السَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾ (سورة النمل: ٢٣-٢٤)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoosuf 12: 5: This verse is part of the account of the dream of Prophet Yoosuf (Joseph) about the vision he saw indicating that one day his brothers would be under his authority. Prophet Ya'qoob (Jacob), his father, advised him to keep the information to himself in case he fell victim to envy and subsequent danger.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoosuf 12: 100: This was the outcome of the account of the dream that Prophet Yoosuf saw, where his parents and brothers prostrated before him (an acceptable action at that time). Allah made the dream come true, bringing about the circumstances that would fulfil it. Allah does only what benefits His servants.

﴿I found a woman reigning over them, who has been granted everything [that a ruler is expected to have], and she has a splendid throne. I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah. Satan has made their deeds fair-seeming to them and has barred them from the right path, so they are not guided.﴾ (an-Naml 27: 23-24)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٩٨﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٧-٩٨)

﴿And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the goading of the devils. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me.﴾ (al-Mu'minoon 23: 97-98)<sup>2</sup>

These verses are reminders to take Satan seriously, not combating him with knowledge alone (since his knowledge is intact and not lacking) but challenging him by actions. Therein lies his defeat. This final verse also motivates us to be active in improving our character. It is actually only these deeds that please Allah and from Whose mercy and reward comes the help to overcome Satan, in spite of one's intentions.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوِيَنِي لِأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمَسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَا يَتَّبِعُهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٥-١٧)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 23-24: This is a description of Bilqees, Queen of Sheba, and her people and their way of worship. They are described as being led by Satan and turning away from guidance and the way of truth, because their behaviour was considered acceptable to them.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mu'minoon 23: 97-98: This is a command to call on the Creator (ﷻ) in difficult times, since one's plans may not work against Satan and in such instances being kind to them will not help. 'Coming near' refers to any issue in one's life. A Muslim is commanded to seek this refuge at the start of most behaviours.

﴿[Allah] said: You are among those who are granted respite. [Iblees] said: Because You have caused me to be misguided, I will certainly lie in wait for them on Your straight path. Then I will certainly come at them from before them and from behind them, from their right and from their left. And You will find most of them ungrateful.﴾  
(*al-A'râf* 7: 15-17)<sup>1</sup>

The verses highlight the influence of Satan on our behaviour and how his expertise or skill cannot be underestimated. It also acknowledges the overwhelming and all-encompassing effect he can have on behaviour.

﴿يَتَابَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ يَتَابَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَمْسَكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَكُونَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٤٤-٤٥)

﴿O my father, do not worship Satan, for Satan has ever been disobedient towards the Most Gracious. O my father, indeed I fear lest a punishment from the Most Gracious befall you so that you become a companion of Satan [in hell].﴾ (*Maryam* 19: 44-45)<sup>2</sup>

﴿يَتَابَتِهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٢١)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-A'râf* 7: 15-17: When Satan refused to bow to Prophet Âdam (ﷺ), he asked for respite till the Day of Judgement. Allah gave him what he had asked, out of His wisdom and divine decree. When Satan (Iblees) was granted his request, he began to rebel in defiance of the Creator and claimed that he would lead astray as many of the creation as he could from the path of truth; he would surround them with temptation to sin, and most of the creation would succumb to this.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Maryam* 19: 44-45: This was a conversation between Prophet Ibrâheem and his father, in which he advised him not to worship Satan through idol worship. If he did so, only Satan would be his adviser but even then, not before the Creator.

﴿O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of Satan; whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, he only enjoins indecency and wickedness. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, not one of you would ever have been purified. But Allah purifies whomever He wills, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴾ (an-Noor 24: 21)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَانُ الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة لقمان: ٢١)

﴿When it is said to them: Follow what Allah has revealed, they say: Nay, we will follow the ways of our forefathers. [Would they do that] even if Satan is calling them to the punishment of the raging fire?﴾ (Luqmân 31: 21)<sup>2</sup>

﴿يَتَّبِعُهَا النَّاسُ أُنْقَارًا رَبِّكُمْ وَأَخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَنِ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ ﴿٣٣﴾﴾ (سورة لقمان: ٣٣)

﴿O humankind, fear your Lord and dread a day when no father will avail his child and no child will avail his father at all. Verily, the promise of Allah is true, so do not let the life of this world deceive you, or let any deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.﴾ (Luqmân 31: 33)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Noor 24: 21*: This is a warning against following Satan, be it in action or a vow to commit a wrong. The verse also reminds that Allah alone wills the creation to repent and purify themselves and only He knows who deserves to be misguided.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Luqmân 31: 21*: This verse is a reminder of blessings to those people who disputed the oneness of Allah and who followed their forefathers under the misguided opinion that they were guided. The invitation of Satan is to the fire alone.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Luqmân 31: 33*: This is a command to fear Allah and remember the Day of Judgement, when no one will be sacrificing themselves for another, no matter what the relation. Advice is given to not=

The verses are reminders that any unhealthy or bad behaviour is from Satan. He does not have to be worshipped overtly to lead people astray, since worship of him exists in a much more powerful and subtle form through thoughts about others and Allah. They also warn that Satan's invitation leads only to destruction of one's own life and soul irrespective of how great the temptation to follow him is.

## Part 38: Guilt

Guilt tends to serve two purposes. It either contributes to a problem since it is a destructive feeling if not acted upon, or it motivates one to resolve the problem if only to alleviate its effects. This is related to forgiveness and action to resolve difficult relationships or situations, or to be realistic about one's part in any event, considering what was avoidable and what was not.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ٢٢٥) ﴿٢٢٥﴾

﴿Allah will not call you to account for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will call you to account for that which is intended in your hearts; and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 225)<sup>1</sup>

﴿إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾  
(سورة النساء: ١٧) ﴿١٧﴾

=let the contentment of this life make one forget about the hereafter. The deceiver refers to Satan, who makes false promises without any substance.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 225: Allah does not hold the creation accountable for those unintentional oaths they make (words said through habit or anger but not intended) but for those oaths which are sworn whilst the individual is aware that they are lying.

﴿Allah only accepts the repentance of those who do evil in ignorance and repent soon afterwards; to them will Allah turn in mercy, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.﴾ (*an-Nisā' 4: 17*)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«There was a man from Bani Isrā'eel who murdered ninety-nine people. Then he set out asking (whether his repentance could be accepted). He came to a monk and asked him if his repentance could be accepted. The monk replied in the negative and the man killed him. He kept on asking until a man advised him to go to such-and-such a village. (So he left for it) but death overtook him on the way. While he was dying, he turned his chest towards that village (where he hoped his repentance would be accepted), so the angels of mercy and the angels of punishment quarrelled amongst themselves regarding him. Allah ordered the village (towards which he was going) to come closer to him, and ordered the village (from where he had come) to go far away, and then He ordered the angels to measure the distance between his body and the two villages. He was found to be one span closer to the village (he was going to), so he was forgiven.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

«I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying: Somebody commits a sin and then says: O my Lord! I have sinned; please forgive me!

His Lord says: My slave knows that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for it? I therefore have forgiven my slave (his sins).

Then he remains without committing any sin for a while and then again commits another sin and says: O My Lord, I have committed another sin; please forgive me.

Allah says: My slave has known that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for it? I therefore have forgiven my slave (his sin).

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 17*: Repentance is accepted until one faces death.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What has been said about Bani Isrā'eel.

Then he remains without committing any other sin for a while, then commits another sin (for a third time) and says: O my Lord, I have committed another sin; please forgive me.

Allah says: My slave has known that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for it? I therefore have forgiven My slave (his sin); he can do whatever he likes.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Patients often suffer excessively from guilt about incidents which were unintentional: things said or done in anger or distress. Their greatest difficulty can be an inability to forgive themselves for such incidents in spite of them being inadvertent. This may hinder the therapeutic process. The verses are reminders of the Creator's mercy to the creation. If He can forgive them for an accident, they should feel encouraged to forgive themselves and move on with their lives. The hadiths are reminders of hope in Allah's forgiveness, provided there is regret and a request for forgiveness. They also remind us that if the Creator forgives great sins, the creation can follow, be it forgiveness of oneself or of others. This liberates the individual from the guilt they are carrying and enables them to become more proactive in overcoming it. This, of course, does not trivialise any harm done nor does it negate reparative actions; the forgiveness is to alleviate psychological stagnation towards active problem resolution.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا  
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (سورة

المائدة: ٩٣)

﴿For those who believe and do righteous deeds, there is no blame on them for what they ate [and drank, in the past], so long as they fear

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿...They want to change the word [promise] of Allah...﴾ (al-Fath 48: 15)

Allah, believe and do righteous deeds, then fear Allah and believe, then fear Allah and do good, for Allah loves those who do good. ﴿۹۳﴾  
(*al-Mā'idah* 5: 93)<sup>1</sup>

Apart from encouraging forgiveness and relief from guilt for past mistakes, the verse encourages consistency in behavioural change.

## Part 39: Having hope

The relationship between losing hope and feeling defeated is obvious, be it reciprocal or consequential. However, this is often based on negative predictions of a situation rather than the reality or even an exception to a rule: where hope often tends to lie.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اعْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلْكُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا مَنَ نَفْسَهُ قَلِيلًا غَلَبَتْ فِئَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿۹۳﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ۲۴۹)

﴿When Ṭālūt set out with the troops, he said: Allah will test you with a river: whoever drinks from it does not belong with me, but whoever does not drink from it does belong with me; and anyone who scoops up a little with his hand [will be excused]. But they all drank of it, except a few. When they crossed the river, he and those who believed with him, they said: We do not have the strength to face Jālūt and his troops today. But those who were certain that they would meet Allah

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah* 5: 93: The revelation of this verse is related to a question asked to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) after the command of the prohibition of drinking alcohol and gambling was sent, since some Muslims had died before the revelation of the command. The answer was that there is no sin for what they ate or drank in the past.



said: How often has a small group overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave. And Allah is with those who are steadfast. ﴿*al-Baqarah 2: 249*﴾<sup>1</sup>

While in the midst of any difficulty, it is understandable that one may feel defeated. However, it is important to remember the occasions and numerous examples where the apparently weak have defeated the strong. The above verse instils hope by this reminder and so motivates the individual to keep trying to overcome their situation against the odds.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِلَّا نَصْرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَابِتًا ثَمِينًا  
 إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا نَرَى اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ  
 اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ  
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ  
 حَكِيمٌ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٠)

¶If you do not help him [the Prophet], Allah indeed helped him, when the disbelievers drove him out, and he was one of two, and when they were in the cave, as he said to his companion: Do not worry; verily Allah is with us. Thereupon Allah sent down His reassurance to him, supported him with troops that you did not see, and made the word of those who disbelieve the lowest. And it is the word of Allah that is supreme. And Allah is Almighty, Most Wise. ﴿*at-Tawbah 9: 40*﴾<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 249*: The army of Tālūt, the king of the Children of Israel, marched with his soldiers and the Israelites and were tested when they came to a river which flowed between Jordan and Palestine. They were given a command about drinking from the river. Those who followed the command were strengthened in their resolve by the scholars amongst them who reminded them that Allah's promise is true and that success and victory come from Him alone.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Tawbah 9: 40*: During the year of migration to Madinah, the idolaters attempted to imprison and expel the Prophet=

Help and support will often come from the most unexpected places. This encourages hope in problem resolution.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«The heart of an old man remains young in two respects: that is, his love for the world (its wealth, amusements, and luxuries) and incessant hope.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«Had a disbeliever known of the mercy which is in the Hands of Allah, he would not lose hope of entering paradise, and had a believer known of all the punishment which is present with Allah, he would not consider himself safe from the hellfire.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah also narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: The invocation of the servant of Allah will be fulfilled as long as he does not invoke for aggression or to sever the womb relations and as long as he does not hasten it.

It was asked: O Messenger of Allah, what is hastening?

He said: That you say: I have invoked Allah and my request has not been fulfilled, then you abandon invocation.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

These hadiths indicate that hope is part of the human being's existence and an essential part of being alive. Indeed, this is testament

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=(ﷺ) and the Companion, Abu Bakr. The two escaped and hid in the cave of Thawr and remained there for three days, putting their pursuers off-track. However, whilst in the cave, Abu Bakr was afraid that they may be discovered; his only worry being not for himself but that some harm might come to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) consoled him.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: If somebody reaches sixty years of age, he has no right to ask Allah for a new lease on life.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Hope (that Allah will forgive one's sins and will accept one's good deeds) with fear (of Allah).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of supplication.

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that the patients who are most suicidal are those who have lost hope. The final hadith clearly encourages hope in spite of the difficulty in circumstances.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Allah says: I am just as My slave thinks I am (that is, I am able to do for him what he thinks I can do for him); if he remembers Me in himself, I too remember him in Myself; if he remembers Me in a group of people, I remember him in a group better than them; if he comes one span nearer to Me, I go one cubit nearer to him; if he comes one cubit nearer to Me, I go a distance of two outstretched arms nearer to him; if he comes to me walking, I go to him running.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The hadith is a reminder to be positive about overcoming difficulties. Allah is the Lord of the Worlds, and this fact encourages the greatest hope in His mercy and power to control all affairs. It is also a major part of one's *tawakkul* (trust) in Allah.

## Part 40: Healthy lifestyle choices

The relationship between mood and food, sleep, and exercise is becoming increasingly acknowledged by the medical community, though their benefits have long been used in a range of alternative therapies. It is important during any stressful time that patients maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, since deficiencies here only complicate and add to physical and emotional energy being reduced. The impact of food choices on mood (and vice versa) should not be underestimated.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﷻ...Allah admonishes you to fear Him, for to Allah is the return [of all]. ﷻ (Al 'Imrān 3: 28) – and the statement of Allah: ﷻ...You know all that I know, whereas I do not know what You know. Verily, You alone are the Knower of the unseen. ﷻ (al-Mā'idah 5: 116)

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦٨)

﴿O humankind, eat whatever is lawful and good on earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, for he is to you an avowed enemy.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 168)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُّوْا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالْدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ ءَلْغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُوٌّ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٧٢-١٧٣)

﴿O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship. He has only forbidden you the meat of animals found dead, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any name has been invoked other than that of Allah. But if one is forced by necessity, without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 172-173)<sup>2</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُّوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥١)

﴿O Messengers, eat of that which is wholesome and do righteous deeds, for I am well aware of all that you do.﴾  
(*al-Mu'minoon* 23: 51)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 168: Allah created all that exists and commanded what is lawful to eat. He also forbade the creation to follow the footsteps of Satan, who leads people astray in this same matter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 172-173: Allah (ﷻ) commands the believers to eat from what is pure and to be grateful to Him for this blessing. Eating from lawful sources is a cause for acceptance of supplications and acts of worship, and the opposite is the case with eating from impure sources.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mu'minoon* 23: 51: This verse commands to eat lawful food and indicates its relationship to doing good deeds.

Health services are constantly reminding patients about the importance of healthy eating and the push for organic, non-genetically modified food. It is often the case that dietary changes occur with change in mood and circumstances; the verses make direct connections between this and encourage a return to a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مَخْذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٥)

¶This day all good things are made lawful to you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful to you and yours is lawful to them. [Lawful to you in marriage] are chaste women who are believers and chaste women among those who were given the scripture before you, provided that you give them their dowries, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication or illicit relationships. Whoever denies the faith, his deeds will come to nothing and in the hereafter he will be among the losers. ¶ (al-Mā'idah 5: 5)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً لَتُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ قَرْنٍ وَدَمٍ لَبْنَا خَالِصًا سَائِبًا لِلشَّرْبِ ۖ وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ لَتَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah 5: 5*: This verse permits the slaughtered animals of the People of the Book, since they also believe that slaughtering for other than Allah is prohibited. The case is also applicable for the Muslims to feed the People of the Book from their slaughtered animals. Chaste women from the People of the Book are also allowable in marriage to Muslim males. Just as women are expected to be chaste and honourable, so too are men, and they are prohibited from committing or approving of adultery, as some individuals do regarding sexual permissibility.

فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ  
 وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا  
 شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ، فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ (سورة  
 النحل: ٦٦-٦٩)

And verily in livestock animals too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that [fluid] which is in their bellies, produced alongside faeces and blood: pure milk, palatable to those who drink it. And from the fruits of date palms and grapevines, you obtain intoxicants, and good provision. Verily, in that there is a sign for people of understanding. And your Lord inspired the bee [saying]: Make your homes in the mountains or in the trees or in the [hives] that [humans] construct. Then feed on all kinds of fruit and follow the ways made easy for you by your Lord. There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying colours, in which there is healing for people. Verily, in that there is a sign for people who reflect. (an-Nahl 16: 66-69)<sup>1</sup>

Depression is often associated with changes in weight, which may either increase or decrease as a result of physiological changes as well as attitude towards food (depending on one's emotional state). At such times patients tend to eat food which is not necessarily good for their body (or barely eat at all) and convince themselves that psychologically, food (be it an increase or absence) is making them feel better.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl 16: 66-69*: These verses point out the lessons in the blessing of food from cattle as well as the fruit of date palms and grapes. There is also a lesson in the creation of the bee and its honey for health purposes, since there are many cures from illnesses in honey.

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴾ (سورة الروم: ٢٣)

«Among His signs is your sleep at night and in the daytime, and your seeking of His bounty. Verily, in that there are signs for people who listen [attentively].» (ar-Room 30: 23)<sup>1</sup>

The verse highlights how healthy behaviour requires a balanced lifestyle in order to maintain good psychological and physical health. It points out the importance of not losing a daily routine, since this in itself adds to the ability to manage emotional distress, where patients may stay awake all night and sleep during the day. Oftentimes, this basic routine is the first behaviour that changes and its impact has a knock-on effect on the problem.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«There is no disease that Allah has sent down, except that He has also sent down its treatment.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Science is only now appreciating and borrowing from the prophetic medicine of Muhammad (ﷺ), even though such treatment has existed in Muslim countries for centuries and remains in effective use today. The hadith is a response to many Muslim patients who feel that illness and cure are from Allah and therefore they need not try to seek a cure. It encourages patients not only to have hope (especially when their illness appears 'untreatable') but also to engage fully in any treatments offered as a right that their body has over them. (Note: Islam does not deny the benefits of modern medicine; indeed, individuals are encouraged to seek a cure for their ailments as indicated in the above hadith.)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Room 30: 23: Among the signs of Allah is the cycle of sleep where the creation may rest and cease activity, thus enabling activity in the daylight hours.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: There is no disease that Allah has sent down except that He has also sent down its treatment.

Ibn 'Abbās narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«There are two blessings which many people lose: (they are) health and free time for doing good.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Ibn 'Umar said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took hold of my shoulder and said: Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveller.

(The sub-narrator added:) Ibn 'Umar used to say: If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning; and if you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening; take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The above hadiths point out the place of health in one's life. It also suggests that a balance between psychological, social, physical, and spiritual needs is required to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

## Part 41: Helpful role models

Patients often see examples of good problem management around them but may fail to take relevant advice. One obvious option in identifying solutions is to identify model behaviours.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ١١٣-١١٤)

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Health and leisure (free time for doing good deeds). There is no life worth living except the life in the hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): «Be in this world as if you were a stranger.»



﴿Not all of them are alike. Among the People of the Book are some who are upright; they recite the revelations of Allah [in prayer] during the night, and they prostrate. They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin what is right, and forbid what is wrong; and they hasten to do good deeds. They are among the righteous.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 113-114)<sup>1</sup>

Oftentimes individuals will not take examples of behaviour from people who they do not know or do not connect with due to differences in religion or culture, finding it difficult to separate their actions from the person. The verse reminds us through direct advice as well as analogy of this option of modelling behaviour rather than the person. It also suggests basic principles of good behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٤٨)

﴿And We have sent down to you [O Muhammad] the Book with the truth, confirming the scripture that came before it and superseding it. So judge between them according to what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires by turning away from the truth that has come to you. To each [community] among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single community, but [He willed it otherwise] in order to test you in what He has given you. So hasten to do good deeds. To Allah you

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 113-114: These verses indicate the virtues of the clergy from the People of the Book who embraced Islam; no good deed ever escapes Allah's knowledge.

will all return, then He will inform you about the matters concerning which you differed. ﴿ (al-Mā'idah 5: 48)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مَوَلِّهَا فَاَسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ اِنَّ مَا تَكُونُوا يَاتِ بِكُمْ اللهُ جَمِيعًا  
اِنَّ اللهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٨)

﴿Each community has its own direction to which it turns, so hasten to do good deeds. Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together, for Allah has power over all things.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 148)<sup>2</sup>

It is usually only when asked about successful attempts at problem resolution that patients may refer to situations where they saw others manage a situation successfully and wish that they could emulate this. The verses are motivators towards a position of initialising change and to follow in the best behaviours. This is because competitiveness is a natural human trait, and although some competition tends to become unhealthy, the verse encourages a healthy form. Such positive reinforcement and encouraging healthy competition are common techniques specifically used in therapy to encourage good behaviour in children with behavioural difficulties. Parents are often advised to notice their children being good and the idea of healthy competition in good deeds is certainly a creative one for children. Of course, the idea can be applied to adults where hostility or lack of forgiveness is hindering progress in treatment.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللهَ  
كَثِيرًا ﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٢١)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah 5: 48*: This is a command to refer to the Qur'an for judgement on matters and praise for the Torah, Gospel, and Qur'an. The verse commands ruling between all people according to the Qur'an.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 148*: Every religion has its own qibla (direction faced in prayer). Allah's qibla is the one that the believers face. He will gather the creation to judge them, even if the bodies are buried and disintegrated.

Verily, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for those who look with hope to Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah much. ﴿*al-Aḥzāb* 33: 21﴾<sup>1</sup>

The Sunnah of Muhammad (ﷺ) is the epitome of the best behaviour. This is not simply because he was the Prophet of Islam but also because his lifestyle was a model of good living. Indeed, contemporary science is inadvertently reiterating the lifestyle of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the standard for healthy maintenance of mind and body simply due to its moderation in all aspects of life.

## Part 42: Helping yourself

The essence of any therapy is that the individual is active in helping themselves and until they themselves choose to participate in their own lives, there can be no progress.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٥٣)

That is because Allah would never change the blessings He has bestowed upon a people unless they themselves changed their own attitude and conduct. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿*al-Anfāl* 8: 53﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿لَهُ، مَعْقَبَتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ، يُحْفَظُونَهُ، مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ﴾

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Aḥzāb* 33: 21: The believers were advised to take Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as an example on the day of the Battle of al-Aḥzāb, with regard to patience, guarding, striving, and waiting for Allah to send ease and solutions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Anfāl* 8: 53: Allah will not alter the blessings He has given a person unless they commit an evil and He decides to respond in this way, since He is always perfectly just and fair in all matters.

حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا مَرَدَ لَهُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ ﴿١١﴾ (سورة الرعد: ١١)

﴿For each [person], there are angels in succession, before him and behind him, watching over him by the command of Allah. Verily, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they themselves change their own attitude and conduct. But once Allah has intended ill for a people, then it cannot be averted, nor will they find, besides Him, any protector.﴾ (ar-Ra'd 13: 11)<sup>1</sup>

﴿لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا كِبْسًا إِلَىٰ الْآمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ ۗ وَمَا دَعَا الْكٰفِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلٰلٍ ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة الرعد: ١٤)

﴿To Him alone should all supplication be addressed, for those to whom they offer supplication besides Him will never respond in any way. They are like a man who stretches out his hands towards water, [hoping] that it will come to his mouth; but it will never reach it. The supplication of those who disbelieve is all in vain.﴾ (ar-Ra'd 13: 14)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Wāqid al-Laythi (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«While Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting in the mosque with some people, three men came. Two of them came in front of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and the third one went away. The narrator added: The two persons kept on standing before Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) (for a while). And then one of them found a place in the circle while the other sat behind them (the gathering) and the third one went away. When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) finished his preaching, he said: Shall I tell you about these three persons? One of them betook himself to Allah, so Allah took him into His grace and mercy and accommodated

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Ra'd 13: 11: Each believer is assigned two guardian angels who protect them from accidents and harm. This is in addition to those angels who are recording our good and bad behaviour.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Ra'd 13: 14: This verse presents a parable to highlight the weakness of the false gods of the polytheists.

him. The second felt shy from Allah, so Allah sheltered him in His mercy (and did not punish him), while the third turned his face from Allah and went, so Allah turned His Face from him (likewise).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «My example and the example of the other prophets is that of a man who has built a house completely and excellently except for a place of one brick. When the people entered the house, they wondered at its beauty and said: But for the place of this brick (how splendid the house would be)!» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

These verses and hadiths offer analogies for use with patients who are not making an effort. It is often the case that patients only attend therapy because a health professional or family member has coerced them into attending, which has obvious issues for treatment compliance. A basic therapeutic requirement is that the individual themselves must want to change. If this intention is not there, the effort they make will be fruitless. No matter how hard they try, the solution will be incomplete.

«‘Â’ishah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to her about ‘umrah that the reward of ‘umrah is according to your expenses or the hardships (which you encounter while performing it).» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

This hadith makes the simple and obvious point that achievement depends on the effort exerted.

It was related that Abu Dharr said:

«I asked the Prophet (ﷺ): What is the best deed?

He replied: To believe in Allah and to fight in His cause.

I then asked: What is the best kind of manumission (of slaves)?

<sup>1</sup> Theme: To read or recite something in the presence of a scholar.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The last (that is, the end) of all the prophets (Muhammad ﷺ).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The reward of ‘umrah is according to the hardship which one encounters performing it.

He replied: The manumission of the most expensive slave and the most beloved by his master.

I asked: If I cannot afford to do that?

He said: Help the weak or do good for a person who cannot work for himself.

I asked: If I cannot do that?

He said: Refrain from harming others, for this will be regarded as a charitable deed for your own good.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

It was related that Hudhayfah and Abu Shaybah (رضي الله عنهما) said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Every good deed is charity.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

These hadiths emphasise how helping oneself is connected to helping others and so empowers the individual to increase their self-esteem and build upon these actions.

Abu Hurayrah related that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «Fortune is not the wealth of the world but the wealth of the soul.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

The hadith makes the powerful point that the most potent way of helping oneself is protecting oneself not only physically but also spiritually. A content soul is true wealth, since it is able to make sacrifices for its betterment. This is an aspect of the character which is often given peripheral importance but is one of the core elements needed to help oneself.

## Part 43: Human frailties

Patients can sometimes expect that no matter what their trauma is, they should be able to deal with the difficulty. They can easily feel anxious that they are having problems coping at all. It is important

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: Faith and its definition.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of zakat.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of zakat.

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at this point to remind them to grant themselves their humanity and that distress in difficult circumstances is a human reaction.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٨)

«Allah wants to lighten your burdens, for man was created weak.»  
(*an-Nisâ* '4: 28)<sup>1</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to invoke Allah (saying):

«أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْبُخْلِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَأَزْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ، وَعَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ، وَفِتْنَةِ الدَّجَالِ، وَفِتْنَةِ الْمَحْيَا وَالْمَمَاتِ»

«A 'oodhu bika min al-bukhli wal-kasali, wa ardhal il-'umur; wa 'adhâb il-qabr; wa fitnat id-Dajjâl, wa fitnat il-mahyâ wal-mamât.

(I seek refuge with you from miserliness, from laziness, from geriatric old age, from the punishment of the grave, from the *fitnah* [trial and affliction] of the *Dajjâl* [the Antichrist]; and from the *fitnah* of life and death.)» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

This verse reinforces that humans are not invincible and that they will be overcome by certain situations and that this is part of being a human; all that is made by humans is also susceptible to this. The hadith points out that mere ageing can weaken the individual. It is, therefore, also an explanation on occasions for misunderstandings and the supplication in the hadith highlights this natural human vulnerability.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِنْ أَمْرَأَةٌ خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا﴾

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisâ* '4: 28: Allah has ordained what is prohibited and what is not, so there is no burden on the creation.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: «...Among you are some who are sent back to a feeble age...» (*an-Nahl* 16: 70)

صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنفُسُ الشُّحَّ وَإِن تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٨)

¶ If a woman fears ill treatment or indifference on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they settle the matter amicably between themselves [by compromising on their rights], for reconciliation is better, even though avarice is ever-present in human souls. If you do good and practise self-restraint, Allah is well aware of all that you do. ¶ (*an-Nisā' 4: 128*)<sup>1</sup>

As above, the verse tells of how individuals may find it hard to forgive during difficult times, not remembering that the other person is simply human and is also capable of making mistakes.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَمَا أُنزِلُ نَفْسِي إِلَّا أَن النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا رَجَعْتَنِي إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾ ﴿٥٣﴾ (سورة يوسف: ٥٣)

¶ Nor do I absolve my own self [of blame], for verily the human soul constantly prompts one to do evil, except for those on whom my Lord bestows His mercy. Verily, my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ¶ (*Yoosuf 12: 53*)<sup>2</sup>

Anas narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whosoever said *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah) and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a barley grain will be taken out of hell. And whoever said

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 128*: The ruling concerning desertion on the part of the husband allows the woman to forfeit her rights and the husband is allowed to accept this if it inclines him towards her again. This strategy exists because of the narrow-minded nature of the creation who will succumb to such things.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Yoosuf 12: 53*: This verse relates the incident where the king investigates what happened between the minister's wife, the women of the city, and Prophet Yoosuf. His innocence is established. The verse is the reply of the minister's wife and her defence of her actions.



*lā ilāha illā Allāh* and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a wheat grain will be taken out of hell. And whoever said *lā ilāha illā Allāh* and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of an atom or a small ant will be taken out of hell.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib narrated that one night, Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came to him and Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ).

«He said: Do you (both) not offer the (*tahajjud*) prayer (at night)?

‘Ali said: O Messenger of Allah, our souls are in the Hands of Allah and if He wants us to get up (we get up).

When I (‘Ali) said that, he left us without saying anything and I heard that he was hitting his thigh and saying:

﴿... وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٥٤)

﴿...but man is more than anything argumentative.﴾ (*al-Kahf 18: 54*)» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

It was related that Ibn ‘Abbās said that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Had the people been rewarded on the strength of their assertions, they would claim the lives and property of the people, so the defendants must swear an oath.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

This verse points out that humans are prone to evil. This phenomenon is most noticeable when individuals express anger, since this is when primitive instincts are shown. It also exemplifies how mistakes can be made when one is angry, suggesting that forgiveness should be shown in such cases since no one is invincible. The hadiths are also a reminder that as faith fluctuates and people make mistakes, be it

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Faith increases and decreases.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The Prophet’s exhorting (the people) to *tahajjud* (supererogatory night prayer) and *nawāfil* (supererogatory acts of worship) without making them compulsory.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of judicial decisions.

through overconfidence in their assertions or simply bad behaviour, it is part of human nature and so necessitates forgiveness at some point.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ خَلِقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَجَلٍ سَأُورِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٣٧)

﴿Man is a creature of haste. I will show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten.﴾ (al-Anbiyā' 21: 37)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْمِكَ إِلَىٰ نَعْمِهِ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخَالِطَاءِ يُبْنِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۗ وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ ۗ ﴾ (سورة ص: ٢٤)

﴿[Dāwood said]: He has certainly wronged you by demanding that your ewe be added to his flock. Indeed, many associates [or partners] wrong one another, except those who believe and do righteous deeds – and how few they are. Then Dāwood realised that We were only testing him, so he asked his Lord for forgiveness, fell down in prostration and turned to Allah in repentance.﴾ (Ṣād 38: 24)<sup>2</sup>

The above verses highlight that it is a natural human failing to give advice before gathering all the available information, albeit with the best of intentions. It illustrates how even a good intention can have a negative effect when imbalanced in view.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خَلِقٌ هَلُوعًا ۗ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ۗ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ۗ ﴾ (سورة المعارج: ١٩-٢١)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Anbiyā' 21: 37: Whenever Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was mocked by the hypocrites, the believers were swift to avenge this and protect him. Allah either delays or hastens the punishment.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Ṣād 38: 24: This verse refers to the test for Prophet Dāwood (ﷺ) in deciding upon a matter between people. This acts as a filter for unhealthy relationships.

﴿Verily, man was created fretful; if misfortune befalls him, he panics, but when good fortune comes his way, he becomes stingy.﴾ (*al-Ma'ârij* 70: 19-21)<sup>1</sup>

﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ﴾ (سورة البلد: ٤)

﴿We have indeed created man in toil and hardship.﴾ (*al-Balad* 90: 4)<sup>2</sup>

Impatience in waiting for results or outcomes of our actions is one of the most psychologically challenging situations for individuals. When one is suffering, this becomes even harder and truly at this point despair may override any positive view. However, when things are going well, good fortune is ignored or taken for granted. This is manifest when patients are asked to identify successful strategies regarding solutions and they are often unable to do this. Also, many of the struggles are related simply to being alive, as the final verse clearly states.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَالْعَصْرِ﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكْفُورٍ﴾ (سورة العصر: ١-٢)

﴿By Time, verily man is in a state of utter loss.﴾ (*al-'Asr* 103: 1-2)<sup>3</sup>

This verse summarises the often-seen problem of having no direction in life and the destruction this causes to self-esteem and self-worth.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Ma'ârij* 70: 19-21: Human beings were created impatient; when misfortune touches them, they feel that no good will ever come to them and despair easily, yet when a blessing touches them, they will not share it with others.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Balad* 90: 4: This is a reference to how people were created in hardship. It refers to the process of embryonic development, the mother's pregnancy, then childhood development and the search for livelihood.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-'Asr* 103: 1-2: This refers to the time in which humans exist, where they are in loss and destruction.

All the verses highlight that the human being is vulnerable and liable to make mistakes for all of the above outlined reasons. The realisation of this is important in enabling individuals to 'let problems go', thus enabling them to cope with everyday misunderstandings.

## Part 44: 'Ifs and buts' – making excuses

Patients commonly avoid attempts at behavioural change by making excuses about why they cannot try.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَتَّيِبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا غُزًى لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَاقْتُلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ يُبْصِرُ وَيُمِيتُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٦)

﴿O you who believe, do not be like those who disbelieve, who say of their brethren, when they are travelling through the earth or go forth on a military campaign: If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain, for Allah will make such thoughts a source of anguish in their hearts. It is Allah Who gives life and causes death, and Allah sees well all that you do.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 156)<sup>1</sup>

﴿لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّفَرَةُ وَسَيَعْلَمُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوْ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٢)

﴿If there had been easy gains and a short journey, they would certainly have followed you, but the distance seemed too far to them. They will swear by Allah: If we had been able, we would have gone forth

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 156: This verse prohibits the ideas of the disbelievers about death and predestination. Allah (ﷻ) creates anguish so that their sadness and grief would increase. Allah reminds them that He gives life and death.

with you. They destroy their own souls; and Allah knows that they are indeed lying. ﴿at-Tawbah 9: 42﴾<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The strong believer is more beloved to Allah than a weak believer and there is good in everyone; cherish what gives you benefit, seek help from Allah, and do not lose heart; if anything comes to you, do not say: If only I had not done that, it would not have happened, but say: Allah ordained what He has ordained. For 'if' opens the way for Satan.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

The regret caused by the thought 'If only...', as a reaction to trauma, can be more destructive than the problem itself. It gives patients the impression that they can avoid any disaster if they attempt to cover all aspects of any event. Clearly, this is not realistic. The verse and hadith are reminders of the distinction between 'cannot' and 'will not', again reiterating the idea of active participation.

## Part 45: Implementing behavioural change

Changing one's behaviour is not simply a matter of doing things differently. It is related to contextualising the mistakes of previous behaviour so as to increase the likelihood that the new changes will be permanent.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿مَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾  
(سورة المائدة: ٣٩) ﴿٣٩﴾

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Tawbah 9: 42*: This verse explains why the hypocrites would not join in jihad. Allah admonishes those men who did not join the Battle of Tabuk and gave false excuses.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of fate.

﴿But whoever repents after having thus done wrong and mends his ways, Allah will accept his repentance, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ (*al-Mā'idah* 5: 39)<sup>1</sup>

The verse highlights the core components of maintaining behavioural change: regret at previous actions and alteration of behaviour. When one of these components is missing, it is common that change will not be maintained.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَبْنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ اِمًا يٰٓاَيُّهَا رُسُلُ مِنْكُمْ يَقُصُوْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِيْ فَمَنْ اٰتَقَىٰ وَاَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٣٥)

﴿O children of Ādam, when there come to you Messengers from among you, reciting My revelations to you, then whoever fears Allah and mends his ways will have no fear nor will they grieve.﴾ (*al-A'rāf* 7: 35)<sup>2</sup>

When individuals do the right thing (that is, exhibit the healthiest and correct behaviour), they automatically feel reassured and confident about their behaviour. They are thus more consistent and confident in maintaining it.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَسَأَلْتَهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ حَاضِرَةَ الْبَحْرِ اِذْ يَعْذُوْنَ فِي السَّبْتِ اِذْ تَاْتِيهِمْ حِيَتَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَعًا وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُوْنَ لَا تَاْتِيهِمْ كَذٰلِكَ نَبْلُوهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿١٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٦٣)

﴿Ask them about the town which was by the sea and how they broke the Sabbath. Their fish would come to them on their Sabbath,

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Mā'idah* 5: 39: The repentance of the thief is accepted, after the punishment has been implemented for theft (the cutting of the hand).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-A'rāf* 7: 35: Righteousness refers to abandoning the prohibited behaviours and being obedient to Allah.

appearing on the surface of the water, but when it was not their Sabbath, they did not appear. Thus We tried them, because of their defiant disobedience. ﴿ (al-A'râf 7: 163)<sup>1</sup>

The verse makes the connection between the transgression of behaviour and the increased probability of temptation towards unhelpful or unhealthy strategies. It is a common phenomenon for patients to get trapped in a downward cycle of destruction, where one unhealthy behaviour or belief leads to another.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْأُمْرِ لَعَنَتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ  
الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الرَّاشِدُونَ﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ٧)

﴿Know that the Messenger of Allah is among you; if he were to listen to you in many cases, you would surely suffer for it. But Allah has made faith dear to you and has made it beautiful in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief, wickedness and sin. Such are the rightly guided.﴾ (al-Hujurât 49: 7)<sup>2</sup>

The verse is a reminder that change comes from within and highlights the connection between the natural disposition of human beings (that is, the *fiṭrah*) and what is good.

It was related that Ṭāriq ibn Shihāb (رضي الله عنه) said:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-A'râf 7: 163: This verse describes how the Jews of the town of Aylah transgressed the Sabbath, so they were punished for their actions by Allah. They would attempt to trick Allah. By casting their nets before the Sabbath, resting on that day, and collecting the fish the day after, they made a prohibited action seem acceptable on the surface. For this, Allah punished them.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Hujurât 49: 7: Allah commands the people to follow the Prophet's decision, since he is more knowledgeable and is more concerned for the followers than they themselves. Allah made the faith dear to the hearts of the followers and made all forms of sin hateful to them. Those who have such qualities are rightly guided.

«The one who initiated giving the speech before the prayer on Eid was Marwân. A man rose up and told him: The prayer should be before the speech.

So he said: This practice has been abandoned.

Then Abu Sa'eed said: That man has fulfilled his responsibility. I have heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: If any of you sees something wrong, he must try and change it with his hand; if he is unable to, then with his tongue; and if he is unable to, then with his heart, and that is the weakest (level) of faith.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The hadith offers three identifiable forms of intervention for the patient which may be used as a baseline when attempting to implement behavioural change. They allow for a range of individual levels of confidence and empowerment.

## Part 46: Individual capacity in practicalities

Individuals often suffer unnecessarily by pressurising themselves to live beyond their financial, social, physical, and psychological capacities.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنْمِيَ الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بَوْلِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ ۗ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ ۗ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۗ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِضُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَالْقَوْلُ اللَّهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴾ (سورة

البقرة: ٢٣٣)

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Faith and its definition.



﴿Mothers may breastfeed their children for two whole years, for those who wish to complete the full term of breastfeeding. It is the obligation of the one to whom the child belongs to provide food and clothing for them [the mothers] on an equitable basis. No soul should have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother should be made to suffer harm on account of her child, nor any father on account of his child, and the same duty is incumbent on the [father's] heir. If they both decide on weaning, by mutual consent, and after due consultation, there is no blame on them. And if you wish to provide wet nurses for your children, there is no blame on you, provided you pay [the wet nurses] what you agreed upon, on an equitable basis. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well all that you do.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 233)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَابَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا  
 الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ  
 إِن كَانَ ءَابَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ  
 اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَبِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ  
 وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ  
 الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٢٣-٢٤)

﴿O you who believe, do not take as allies your fathers and brothers, if they prefer disbelief to faith; whoever among you takes them as allies, such are wrongdoers. Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your clan, the wealth that you have acquired, the merchandise which you fear will not be sold, and the dwellings in

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 233: This verse details the process of divorce when the wife is pregnant. The suckling period is only two years and monetary compensation is allowable according to what is affordable. There is also guidance on avoiding harm or revenge during this time. The information indicates that weaning occurs by mutual consent.

which you delight, are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving and fighting in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decree [of punishment]. For Allah does not guide disobedient people. ﴿at-Tawbah 9: 23-24﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿أَسْكِنُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ سَكُنْتُمْ مِنْ وُجْدِكُمْ وَلَا تُضَارُّوهُنَّ لِتُضَيِّقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ وَإِنْ كُنَّ أُولَاتٍ حَمِلٍ فَأَنْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّى يَضَعْنَ حَمْلَهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَرْضَعْنَ لَكُمْ فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَأَتَمِرُوا بِهِنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَإِنْ تَعَاَسَرْتُم فَاسْتَضِعْ لَهُ أُخْرَى ﴿٦﴾ لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِنْ سَعَتِهِ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ٦-٧)

﴿Accommodate them [during their waiting period] where you also reside, according to your means, and do not harass them in order to make their lives difficult. If they are pregnant, then spend on them until they give birth, and if they breastfeed your offspring for you, then give them their recompense and settle the question of recompense between yourselves on an equitable basis. But if it is too difficult for you to reach an agreement [concerning that], another woman may breastfeed the child [in return for recompense]. Let the wealthy man spend according to his means, and let the man whose resources are limited spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah does not place on any soul a burden beyond what He has given it. Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease. ﴿at-Talâq 65: 6-7﴾<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 23-24: These verses command not to take the idolaters as allies, even if they be among one's relatives, if they choose disbelief over faith.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Talâq 65: 6-7: This verse contains details on divorce when the wife is pregnant, highlighting that the wife has the right to live comfortably according to what is reasonable, that she must not be ill-treated, and that she has the right of maintenance until delivery (if the divorce is irrevocable). The wife is also given an option to take compensation for suckling the child. The verses emphasise spending according to one's means.

Abu Dharr narrated:

«I abused a man by calling his mother bad names. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: O Abu Dharr! Did you abuse him by calling his mother bad names? You still have some characteristics of ignorance. Your slaves are your brothers, and Allah has put them under your command. So whoever has a brother under his command should feed him of that which he eats and dress him of that which he wears. Do not ask them (slaves) to do things beyond their capacity (power) and if you do so, then help them.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Anas narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray a short ṣalâh (prayer) (in congregation) but used to offer it in a perfect manner.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abi Qatâdah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«When I stand for the ṣalâh, I intend to prolong it but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut it short, as I dislike to trouble the child's mother.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

It was related that Ibn 'Umar said:

«We used to swear allegiance to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to hear and obey and he used to say to us: As far as you are able.» (Muslim)<sup>4</sup>

It was related that 'Abdullâh ibn Shikh-kheer (رضي الله عنه) said:

«I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was reciting:

﴿الْمَهْمُ الْكَافِرُ﴾ (سورة التكاثر: ١)

﴿Competition for worldly gain distracts you.﴾ (at-Takâthur 102: 1)

He said: The son of Âdam says: My wealth, my wealth.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Sins are from ignorance and a sinner is not a disbeliever unless he or she worships others along with Allah (ﷻ).

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Short but perfect ṣalâh (in congregation).

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Whoever cuts short the ṣalâh on hearing the cries of a child.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The book on government.

He (then) said: O son of Ādam: What is there for you out of your wealth except what you have eaten and wasted, or what you wore and wore out, or what you gave in charity and it has been saved for you with Allah?» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

Practical capacity, be it financial or otherwise, is often a source of mental health problems, where expectations are beyond what is available. These verses and hadiths remind that in all circumstances, it is important to work with reality and to maintain some form of fair play. The hadiths specifically call on the individual in the more powerful position to consider that responsibility carefully, empowering the other to do as much as they can. This has implications for their relationship beyond the experience as well as each person's view of themselves.

## Part 47: Individual differences

Considering individual differences in behaviour is important in enabling patients to think about managing disparities whilst maintaining successful relationships (since when under stress, they may work on the basis that everyone shares their views and when variations become manifest, they cannot deal with differences).

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَىٰ بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يُوسُفًا﴾ ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ كُلُّ  
يَعْمَلُ عَلَىٰ شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ سَبِيلًا﴾ ﴿سورة الإسراء: ٨٣-٨٤﴾

﴿When We bestow Our blessings upon man, he turns away and draws aside, but if misfortune befalls him, he is filled with despair. Say: Everyone acts according to his own disposition. But your Lord knows best who is more rightly guided as to the way.﴾ (*al-Isrā' 17: 83-84*)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of prophetic commentary on the Qur'an.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrā' 17: 83-84*: This verse refers to turning away from Allah (ﷻ) at times of ease and loss of hope during difficult=

It was related that Ṭāwoos (رضي الله عنه) said:

«I have heard some of the Companions of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: Everything is created according to measure.

And I heard 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar say that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: There is a measure for everything, even for incapacity and capability.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbour. I command you to take care of women, for they are created from a rib and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part; if you try to straighten it, you will break it; and if you leave it, it will remain crooked, so I command you to take care of women.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The verse and hadiths are important reminders that each person is as individual as another regarding psychological processes and that individual differences are part of everyday interactions. The final hadith emphasises the importance of allowing others to maintain their individuality and personal characteristics and not to force change.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَجَدُّ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٤٦)

{Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in the most courteous manner, unless it be with those of them who transgress [against you]. And say: We believe in that which has been sent down to

=times. Everyone has their individual intentions according to their nature.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of fate.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The exhortation of taking care of women.

us, and in that which was sent down to you, for our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit [as Muslims].» (*al-'Ankaboot* 29: 46)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ood narrated:

«I heard a man reciting a verse (of the Qur’an) but I had heard the Prophet (ﷺ) reciting it differently. So I caught hold of the man by the hand and took him to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), who said: Both of you are right. Do not differ, for the nations before you differed and perished (because of their differences).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Asmā’ bint Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«My mother came to me in the lifetime of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and she was a polytheist. I asked Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) (seeking his verdict): My mother has come to me and she desires to receive a reward from me. Shall I keep good relations with her?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Yes, keep good relations with her.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The verse and hadiths remind us that in certain situations it is better to agree to differ than to argue, since forcing change will not alter reality. The latter hadith is a good example of how relationships can be maintained across changes in character and behaviour.

## Part 48: Influence of friends

A patient’s problems can be accentuated and progress to change hindered by the influence of friends or relatives. Adherence to these influences can oftentimes reinforce the problem by normalising the behaviour and such friendships tend to be a source of ultimate regret.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-'Ankaboot* 29: 46: When the believers talk to people who want to find out about the religion, they should debate with them in a good manner.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is mentioned about people and quarrels between the Jews and the Muslims.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Giving presents to *mushrikeen* (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, and disbelievers in the oneness of Allah and in His Messenger, Muhammad [ﷺ]).

It is known that with addictive-type behaviours, the key to giving up the addiction is partly to change one's circle of friends. The work here can be around re-defining the role of a friend, moving from unconditional acceptance to moral guidance. Of course, this is not to say that ultimately the individual has the right to make their own decisions, but merely to consider the content of advice given as being active, not passive.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ هَآأَنَّمْ أَوْلَآءَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَآبِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا الْقَوْمُ قَالُوا ءَأَمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُّوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَنَآئِلَ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ قُلْ مُؤْتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٩)

﴿O you who [take them as close friends], you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the scriptures. When they meet you, they say: We believe, but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips in their rage against you. Say: Perish in your rage; Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 119)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُونَ سَوَآءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءَ حَتَّىٰ يَهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ... ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٩)

﴿They wish that you would disbelieve as they have disbelieved, so that you will be all alike. Therefore do not take any of them as allies [or friends] until they migrate for the sake of Allah...﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 89)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 119: This verse addresses the believers who loved the hypocrites because they believed them to be Muslims. It describes how the beliefs of the Muslims encompassed all earlier revelations. The revelations of Islam were rejected and disliked by the hypocrites, and Allah was aware of their intentions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Nisā' 4: 89: Since the disbelievers harbour enmity and hatred towards the Muslims, they hope that they (the Muslims) will also fall into misguidance.

﴿يَدْعُوا لِمَنْ ضَرَّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ لَيْسَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَلَيْسَ الْعَشِيرُ﴾ (سورة الحج: ١٣)

﴿They call upon that which is more likely to harm them than benefit them. What a wretched protector and what a wretched associate!﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 13)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا وَلنَحْمِلَ خَطَايَكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ خَطَايَهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ١٣) ﴿وَأَنفَالًا مَعَ أَنفَالِهِمْ وَلَيْسَتُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ١٢-١٣)

﴿The disbelievers say to the believers: Follow our path, and we will bear the burden of your sins. But they will never bear any of their sins. They are surely lying. They will surely bear their own burdens, and other burdens along with their own, and on the Day of Resurrection they will surely be questioned about the lies they fabricated.﴾ (al-Ankaboot 29: 12-13)<sup>2</sup>

﴿... فَأَنْجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة النجم: ٢٤) ﴿وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا أَخَذْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا وَمَأْوَنُكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٢٤-٢٥)

﴿...But Allah saved him from the fire. Verily, in that are signs for people who believe. Ibrâheem said: You have only taken idols [for

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Hajj 22: 13: The verse refers to calling on false gods and idols for help. These are more likely to be harmful than beneficial, and will cause harm in the hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Ankaboot 29: 12-13: The disbelievers claim to carry the sins of others if they return to disbelief. Allah answers them, saying that on the Day of Resurrection none will avail another but indeed they will bear an extra burden for those they led astray.



worship] instead of Allah to cement the bonds among you in the life of this world, but on the Day of Resurrection you will disavow one another and curse one another. Your abode will be the fire, and you will have no helpers. ﴿ (al- 'Ankaboot 29: 24-25)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ وَإِن تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ إِلَىٰ جِمْلَيْهَا لَا يَحْمِلُ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَمَن تَزَكَّىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّىٰ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ (سورة فاطر: ١٨)

¶ No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. If a heavily-laden soul calls another for help to bear its load, nothing of it will be carried, even if he is a close relative. You [O Muhammad] can only warn those who fear their Lord unseen and establish prayer, for whoever purifies himself only does so for his own benefit. And unto Allah is the return [of all]. ﴿ (Fâṭir 35: 18)<sup>2</sup>

‘Ali narrated:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) sent me along with az-Zubayr and al-Miqdâd and then narrated the hadith of Ḥaṭīb ibn Abu Balta‘ah, and in the end the verse was revealed:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تَلْقَوْنَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ ... ﴿١﴾ (سورة الممتحنة: ١)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al- 'Ankaboot 29: 24-25: The people of Prophet Ibrâheem were so rebellious against the message of Allah that they plotted to kill him by throwing him into a fire, but Allah saved him by cooling the fire and he was unharmed. Ibrâheem warned the people that their idols could do nothing to him and reminded them that what united them in the world would be a source of regret in the hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Fâṭir 35: 18: Allah is in need of no one, while the creation is in need of Him; each person will carry their burdens on the Last Day irrespective of how close they are to others and they will be preoccupied only with themselves and their actions. Therefore, whoever does good will benefit only himself or herself.

﴿O you who believe, do not take My enemies and yours as allies, offering them friendship...﴾ (*al-Mumtahinah* 60: 1)» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Moosâ narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The example of a good and righteous companion and an evil one is that of a person selling musk and another blowing bellows. The one who is selling musk will either give you some perfume as a present or you will get a good smell from him, but the one who is blowing bellows will either burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

One of the hardest aspects of challenging patient cognitions and behaviours is related to the influence of friends, since their impact is far-reaching. It is often the case that upon exploration, it is clear that each person has their own emotional agenda (though not necessarily a malevolent one, just one to suit their own needs and emotional stability). Additionally, on occasion, the reasons for holding on to the relationship is not only love but may also involve some form of secondary gain through maintenance of the behaviour. The verses remind of how friends will not take ultimate responsibility for the decisions made, so consideration of the content of their advice is important. The hadiths support this idea, warning how friendships with individuals who deny the haq – which includes Islamic directives towards the best character and behaviour (see the section on effective social interaction/communication styles) – are far from beneficial. The final hadith offers a helpful analogy to consider the type of friendships one has as well as the type of friendship one offers.


Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿O you who believe, do not take My enemies and yours as allies, offering them friendship...﴾ (*al-Mumtahinah* 60: 1)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Musk (a kind of perfume).

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﴿ وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا مَثَلُهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٤٠)

﴿He has already revealed to you in the Book that when you hear the revelations of Allah being rejected and ridiculed, do not sit with them until they begin to talk of other things; otherwise, you would be like them. Verily, Allah will gather all the hypocrites and disbelievers together in hell.﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 140)<sup>1</sup>

Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The people used to ask Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) about good, but I used to ask him about evil for fear that it might overtake me.

Once I asked: O Messenger of Allah! We were in ignorance and in evil and Allah has bestowed upon us the present good; will there be any evil after this good?

He said: Yes, but it would be tainted with *dakhan* (evil).

I asked: What will be its *dakhan*?

He said: There will be some people who will lead (people) according to principles other than my Sunnah (legal ways). You will see their actions and disapprove of them.

I asked: Will there be any evil after that good?

He said: Yes, there will be some people who will invite others to the gates of hell, and whoever accepts their invitation will be thrown into it (by them).

I said: O Messenger of Allah! Describe those people to us.

He said: They will belong to us and speak our language.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 140*: Sitting in circles where the revelation is mocked legitimises the behaviour; these witnesses will share the burden of those who mock.

I asked: O Messenger of Allah! What do you order me to do if such a thing should take place in my life?

He said: Adhere to the group of Muslims and their chief.

I asked: If there is neither a group (of Muslims) nor a chief, (what shall I do)?

He said: Keep away from all those different sects, even if you have to bite (that is, eat) the root of a tree till you meet Allah while you are still in that state.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Patients often complain that they are uncomfortable in the company of some of their friends but do not feel confident to leave the gathering, even though they are aware that these relationships are not healthy or giving them any support or benefit. The verse and hadith above are reminders of the problems of good people keeping silent, and they also direct towards social responsibility to protect the self.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ ۖ آبَاءَنَا أَوْلَىٰ لَنَا أَوْلَىٰ كَانَ ءَابَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ ؕ إِلَىٰ اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٠٤-١٠٥)

﴿And when it is said to them: Come to the Revelation that Allah has sent down, and to the Messenger, they say: Sufficient for us is what we found our forefathers following. [Would they do that] even though their forefathers did not know anything and were not guided? O you who believe, take care of your own selves. If anyone else goes astray it will not harm you so long as you follow true guidance. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you about what you used to do.﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 104-105)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The signs of prophethood in Islam.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah 5: 104-105*: When the disbelievers=

﴿ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْيِكَ إِلَيَّ نِعَاجِهِ ۗ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۗ وَظَنَّ دَاوُدُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ ﴾ (سورة ص: ٢٤)

{[Dâwood] said: He has certainly wronged you by demanding that your ewe be added to his flock. Indeed, many associates [or partners] wrong one another, except those who believe and do righteous deeds – and how few they are. Then Dâwood realised that We were only testing him, so he asked his Lord for forgiveness, fell down in prostration and turned to Allah in repentance.} (Sâd 38: 24)<sup>1</sup>

This acts as a filter for unhealthy relationships. The above verse also highlights that it is a natural human failing to give advice without listening to all the available information.

Behavioural influences of any form should never be inherited through relationships, but should be actively absorbed (and clarified, not assumed, as the final verse highlights) into the character or rejected. Often the impact of unhealthy friendships is not acknowledged since the company is kept with little thought about the influence they are having. When the effort is greater than the gain, then, of course, the relationship needs to be reviewed. One should work hard at one's relationships, but relationships should not be hard work.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَن يَبْدُوا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ، قُلِ اللَّهُ يَسْبُدُّ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ، فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ أَفَمَن يَهْدِي

=are called to the commands of Allah, their response is that they are satisfied with the inherited knowledge of their forefathers even though they were not people of knowledge. The individual is required to reform himself or herself first.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Sâd 38: 24: This refers to a test for Prophet Dâwood in deciding upon a matter between people.

إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يَنْبَغَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَا  
يَنْبَغُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ إِلَّا ظَنًّا إِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يَغْنَى مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾  
(سورة يونس: ٣٤-٣٦)

¶ Say: Is there any among your [so-called] partners who can originate creation then repeat it? Say: Allah originates creation then repeats it; how then are you turned away [from the truth]? Say: Is there any among your [so-called] partners who can guide to the truth? Say: Allah guides to the truth. Is then One Who guides to the truth more worthy of being followed, or one who cannot find the way unless he himself is guided? What is the matter with you, that you judge as you do? Most of them follow nothing but mere conjecture. But conjecture is no substitute for certain truth. Verily, Allah has full knowledge of all that they do. ﴿Yoonus 10: 34-36﴾<sup>1</sup>

It is important to be clear about what friends advise you (in accordance with the ḥaq) and look at the success of the lives (in religious terms) of those people we are influenced by.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَّ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتَكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُمُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِي إِيَّيْ كَفَرْتُمْ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ ﴾  
(سورة إبراهيم: ٢٢)

¶ And Satan will say, when the matter is decided: Verily, Allah gave you a true promise; I also gave you promises, but I betrayed you. I had no power over you, except that I called you and you responded

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 34-36: These verses invalidate the claims for committing *shirk*. The disbelievers are questioned about their misguidance and the beliefs and people they follow.

to me. So do not blame me; blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I disavow your erstwhile association of me with Allah. Verily, for the wrongdoers there will be a painful punishment. ﴿Ibrâheem 14: 22﴾<sup>1</sup>

Failing to take responsibility and following others blindly tends to let the individual down when it comes to explaining or justifying the behaviour, since they are unaware or do not 'own' the thinking behind the act. The betrayal that individuals will feel is well highlighted in this verse.

## Part 49: Influential self

Whilst it is common to be aware of the influence of other people, it is less common for patients and individuals to be aware of the influence they have on others.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٨٥)

﴿Whoever mediates in a good cause will have a share in the reward thereof, but whoever mediates in a bad cause will have a share in the burden of sin thereof. And Allah has control over all things.﴾ (an-Nisâ' 4: 85)<sup>2</sup>

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا أُنَبِّئُكُمْ قَدَ سَلَكَتُمْ إِذَا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَمِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٥٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Ibrâheem 14: 22*: This verse mentions what will transpire between Iblees (Satan) and his followers on the Day of Judgement, acknowledging that only Allah is the Truth and the creation must blame themselves, not Satan.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisâ' 4: 85*: Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a share in the reward and the same is applicable for anyone who intercedes for a bad cause.

﴿Say: I am forbidden to worship those you call upon besides Allah. Say: I will not follow your vain desires; if I did, I would go astray and I would not be one of the rightly guided.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 56)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَٰكِنْ ذِكْرِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٦٩)

﴿Those who fear Allah are in no way accountable for them. However, it is [their duty] to admonish them, so that they may desist from their mockery.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 69)<sup>2,3</sup>

﴿فَقَالُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٨٥)

﴿They said: In Allah we put our trust. Our Lord, do not make us subject to the persecution of the wrongdoing people.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 85)<sup>4</sup>

It is a well-known saying in the Solution-Focused Therapy world that, “The job of the psychologist is to point out the elephant in the room” – that is, to point out that there is a problem. In recognising the influence one has on others, patients need to be encouraged to develop this skill and the verses are reminders of their responsibility to do so.

‘Abdullâh narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whenever a person is murdered unjustly, there is a share from the burden of the crime on the first son of Âdam, for he was the first to start the tradition of murdering.» (Bukhari)<sup>5</sup>

It was related that Jareer ibn ‘Abdullâh said:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'ām 6: 56: The signs to the path of guidance are clear and the Prophet (ﷺ) is clear about the path of the criminals.

<sup>2</sup> The order of this verse was cancelled (abrogated) by verse 4:140.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'ām 6: 69: When the believers avoid sitting with the disbelievers, there will be no blame on them for what they (the disbelievers) say or do and they will save themselves from sin.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 85: Do not give the unbelievers authority over us as they might make the believers fall into error.

<sup>5</sup> Theme: The creation of Âdam and his offspring.



«Some Bedouins wearing garments of wool came to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). He perceived their needy predicament. He urged the people to give charity, but they were reluctant until his face showed signs of anger. Then one of the Anṣâr came with a purse of silver, then another came, and then others followed them one after the other until his (the Prophet's) face showed signs of joy.

Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: If anyone introduced a good custom in Islam and it is followed after him, he will be assured of the reward like those who followed it, without any diminishment of their own reward. And if anyone introduces an evil custom in Islam and it is followed thereafter, he will be made to bear the like burden of those who followed it without any diminishment of their own burden.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The hadiths are good reminders to all individuals of the benefit of setting a good example, as well as of avoiding setting a bad precedent in behaviour and thereby further avoiding the guilt one feels when they see their suggestion manifest in others' behaviour.

## Part 50: Intentions

The significance of the intention in therapy is fundamental. If the intention to change is for anything other than problem resolution for the benefit of one's own health or relationships, then the implementation of advice may be not only difficult but also unsuccessful or short-lived.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَأَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأُ ابْنِي آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَئِن بَسَطْتَ

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of knowledge.

إِلَىٰ يَدِكَ لِنَقْلُنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطِ يَدِي إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٢٧-٢٨)

﴿Recount to them the true story of the two sons of Ādam, when each offered a sacrifice [to Allah]. It was accepted from one, but not from the other. [The latter] said: I will surely kill you. [The former] said: Verily, Allah only accepts from those who fear Him. Even if you raise your hand against me to kill me, I will not raise my hand against you to kill you, for I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds.﴾ (*al-Mā'idah* 5: 27-28)<sup>1</sup>

﴿لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ ۖ فَكَفَرْتُمْهُ ۖ إِطْعَامَ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ ۖ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ كَفْرَةُ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ ۗ وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يبينُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ ۗ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٨٩)

﴿Allah will not call you to account for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will call you to account for the oaths which you swear in earnest. The expiation thereof is to feed ten poor persons with the average type of food that you give to your own families, or to clothe them, or to free a slave. If that is beyond your means, then fast for three days. That is the expiation for the oaths you have sworn.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah* 5: 27-28: This is the story of Hābeel and Qābeel. Allah tells of the consequences of envy and injustice in the story of the two sons of Prophet Ādam. Every child born to Prophet Ādam was born as a twin. For the purposes of necessity, Prophet Ādam allowed marriage between the siblings (since, of course, the only parents were Ādam and Ḥawwā' [Eve]). He would give one of the daughters to the other of the sons in marriage. Qābeel's sister was beautiful, but Hābeel's sister was not, so Qābeel wanted to keep her for himself. Prophet Ādam refused unless each brother offered a sacrifice. Hābeel offered a sheep and his sacrifice was accepted, but Qābeel offered some other inferior produce. His sacrifice was not accepted, so he killed his brother.

But fulfil your oaths. Thus Allah makes clear to you His revelations, so that you may give thanks. ﴿*al-Mâ'idah 5: 89*﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِمْتِنَانًا تَكُنَّ ءَامَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا قُلِ انظُرُوا أَنَا مُنظِرُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٥٨)

﴿What are they waiting for, but for the angels to come to them, or for your Lord to come, or for some of the signs of your Lord to come? On the day when some of the signs of your Lord come, no good will it do to a soul to believe then, if it did not believe before or earn some good through its faith. Say: Wait then; we too are waiting.﴾  
(*al-An'âm 6: 158*)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا بِهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ نَطْبَعُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٧٤)

﴿Then after him, We sent Messengers to their [own] peoples; they came to them with clear signs, but they would not believe what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal up the hearts of the transgressors.﴾  
(*Yoonus 10: 74*)<sup>3</sup>

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا﴾ (١١٣) ﴿الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعِيَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾ (١١٤) ﴿أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٣-١٠٥)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah 5: 89*: The detail of expiations for breaking deliberate oaths is outlined and their fulfilment is compulsory. The clothing refers to those clothes which one may pray in (which, of course, will not be of poor quality).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'âm 6: 158*: The disbelievers await the commencement of the hereafter or some of its signs.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Yoonus 10: 74*: Clear proofs are given to the disbelievers who refuse guidance since they had rejected it previously. Consequently, Allah (ﷻ) has set a seal on their hearts.

﴿Say: Shall we tell you who will be the greatest losers in terms of deeds, those whose efforts in the life of this world are wasted, while they think that what they do is right? They are the ones who reject the signs of their Lord and deny the Meeting with Him. Their deeds will come to nothing and on the Day of Resurrection, We will not give them any weight.﴾ (al-Kahf 18: 103-105)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ آتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾﴾ (سورة الشعراء: ٨٨-٨٩)

﴿The day when neither wealth nor sons will be of any avail, but only he who comes to Allah with a pure heart [will be saved].﴾ (ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 88-89)<sup>2</sup>

'Umar ibn al-Khattâb said that he heard the Messenger (ﷺ) say: «The reward of deeds depends on the intention and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So if anyone emigrates for worldly benefits or for a woman to marry, his emigration will be for what he emigrated for.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

An-Nu'mân ibn Basheer (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«What is lawful is clear, and what is unlawful is clear, but in between them, there are doubtful things which many people do not know. So whoever guards himself from doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless, but whoever indulges in doubtful things indulges in fact in unlawful things, just as a shepherd who grazes his cattle near a

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Kahf 18: 103-105*: The greatest losers in this life are all those people who do not worship Allah in the accepted ways, yet all the while think that what they are doing is right.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 88-89*: Neither one's wealth nor children will save them from Allah, no matter who they are prepared to ransom or how great a ransom they are prepared to pay.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: This was said during a conversation with a man who wanted to emigrate from Makkah to Madinah for marriage purposes. The principle here is that it is the intention behind one's deeds and not only the actual deed for which one is rewarded.

preserve (private pasture) will soon stray into it. Beware! Every king has a preserve, and the preserve of Allah consists of the things he has made unlawful. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, but if it is corrupt, then the whole body is corrupt – and that is the heart...» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Mas'ood narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If a man spends on his family with the intention of having a reward from Allah, sincerely for Allah's sake, then it is a (kind of) almsgiving (in reward) for him.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Anas narrated:

«A man asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the Hour (that is, the Day of Judgement) saying: When will the Hour be?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: What have you prepared for it?

The man said: Nothing, except that I love Allah and His Messenger.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: You will be with those who you love.

(Anas said:) We had never been so happy as we were on hearing that saying of the Prophet (ﷺ), that is: You will be with those who you love. Hence, I love the Prophet, Abu Bakr, and 'Umar, and I hope that I will be with them because of my love for them, though my deeds are not similar to theirs.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Samurah ibn Jundab (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Tonight two (visitors) came to me (in my dream) and took me to a town built with gold bricks and silver bricks. There we met men who, (on) half of their bodies, looked like the most handsome human

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The superiority of that person who leaves all doubtful (unclear) things for the sake of his religion.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is said regarding the statement: «The reward of the deed depends upon the intention.»

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The merits of 'Umar ibn al-Khattâb.

beings you have ever seen and (on) the other half, the ugliest human beings you have ever seen. Those two visitors said to those men: Go and dip yourselves in that river.

So they dipped themselves therein and then came to us, their ugliness having disappeared and they were in the most handsome shape.

The visitor said: This first is the *'Adn* (Eden, paradise) and that is your dwelling place.

Then they added: As for those people who were half ugly and half handsome, they were those who have mixed deeds that were good with deeds that were evil, but Allah forgave them.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«There will appear some people among you whose *ṣalâh* will make you look down upon yours, and whose fasting will make you look down upon yours, and whose (good) deeds will make you look down upon yours, but they will recite the Qur'an and it will not exceed their throats (they will not act on it). They will go out of Islam as an arrow goes through game, whereupon the archer would examine the arrowhead but would see nothing, and look at the unfeathered part of the arrow but see nothing, and look at the arrow feathers but see nothing, and finally he expects to find something on the lower part of the arrow.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Jundab (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:


«If anyone lets the people hear of his good deeds intentionally, to win their praise, Allah will let the people know his real intention (on the Day of Resurrection); if anyone does good things in public to show off

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ﴿And there are others who have admitted their sins...﴾ (*at-Tawbah* 9: 102)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The sin of the person who recites the Qur'an to show off or to gain some worldly benefit (or to feel proud).

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and win the praise of the people, Allah will disclose his real intention (and humiliate him).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

It was related that Abu Hurayrah said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Oaths are considered according to the intention they were made with.» (Muslim)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah also narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «Allah does not look at your form or your wealth, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.» (Muslim)<sup>3</sup>

These verses and hadiths all point to being clear about the motivation behind one's behaviour and intentions to change or act. If there is a problem (misappropriation) with the motivation, there will also be a problem with the outcome and satisfaction with that behaviour. Further, the hadiths highlight that even if the actions are not successful, the importance of good intentions remains. The final hadith offers a useful benchmark when assessing one's intention, which may be used to clarify motivation.

Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said about his Lord: «Allah ordered (the appointed angels over you) that the good and the bad deeds be written, and He then showed (the way) how (to write). If somebody intends to do a good deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write for him a full good deed (in his account with Him); and if he intends to do a good deed and actually did it, then Allah will write for him (in his account) with Him (its reward equal) from ten to seven hundred times to many more times; and if somebody intended to do a bad deed and he does not do it, then Allah will write

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Worshipping Allah in public just for showing off and talking or hinting about one's own deeds of worship, or letting the people hear of one's good deeds to win their praise for the same purpose.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The book of oaths.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The book of virtue and joining the ties of relationship.

a full good deed (in his account) with Him, and if he intended to do it (a bad deed) and actually did it, then Allah will write one bad deed (in his account).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This hadith makes a powerful point about how hard Allah makes it for the creation to do bad deeds and how easy He makes it to do good deeds. Patients are often reminded that it takes great effort to maintain and actualise some of the destructive behaviours displayed. At the same time, many individuals find it difficult, even embarrassing, to do the better thing. The paradox here is self-explanatory.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ يَا مُوسَىٰ أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ ۗ إِنَّ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة القصص: ١٩)

﴿Then when he was about to strike the one who was an enemy to them both, he said: O Moosâ, do you intend to kill me as you killed a man yesterday? Your aim is only to become a tyrant in the land; you do not intend to be one of those who put things right!﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 19)<sup>2</sup>

It is often the case that individuals make accusations, imputing negative intentions about others to gain one-upmanship in their relationships and deflect from their own wrong behaviour or in favour

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Whoever intended to do a good deed or a bad deed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 19*: This verse explains how the information regarding the killing of a man by Prophet Moosâ became known. An Israelite and a Copt had been fighting and the Israelite asked Prophet Moosâ for help. Moosâ intervened and struck the man, who died as a result of the injury. The next day, the same Israelite was fighting with another man. Moosâ again tried to help him, but the Israelite thought that he was trying to attack him so he made this accusation. No one but Moosâ and the Israelite had earlier known of this incident. When he mentioned it in front of the Copt, he took the information to Pharaoh, who subsequently resolved to kill Moosâ.



of their own needs, as is the case in the above verse. Clearly the intention here is counterproductive.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَةٌ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِمِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ، وَاسْتَقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ، وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ، وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٨٣)

¶ If you are on a journey, and cannot find a scribe, then something should be handed over as collateral. But if you trust one another [and there is no need for collateral], let the one who is trusted fulfil his trust, and let him fear Allah his Lord. Do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it has a sinful heart. And Allah is well aware of all that you do. ¶ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 283)<sup>1</sup>

The verse highlights the importance of admitting guilt. Individuals may dismiss more negative intentions in favour of a beneficial outcome and not acknowledge the impact this has on their overall character. (This is commonly justified as the ‘means to an end’ strategy. This is prohibited in Islam, since Sharia requires that the methodology of change be as equally halal as the aim.)

## Part 51: Learning to listen to conversations

It is often the case that individuals do not hear what has been said and what was intended is not understood. This is usually due to differences in interpretation, moderated by individuals’ differences of character and mood, such that two people may hear the same conversation and

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 283: When an individual borrows money whilst travelling and it is to be returned later, the debt should be recorded by someone. We are commanded not to hide or refuse to announce the pledge, as false testimony is one of the worst sins.

understand it differently. The point here is to focus on the content of the conversation and not the delivery or the speaker, as is often the case.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعِجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفٰسٰدَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٤-٢٠٥)

﴿Among people are those whose speech pleases you in this world, and they call Allah to witness as to what is in their hearts, yet they are the most contentious of opponents. When [such a person] leaves you, he strives to spread mischief in the land and to destroy crops and livestock. But Allah does not like mischief.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 204-205)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شٰيْطٰنِيْنَ الْاِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ اِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفَ الْقَوْلِ عَرُورًا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوْهُ ۗ فَذَرْهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الانعام: ١١٢)

﴿And similarly We appointed for every Prophet enemies, devils from among humankind and jinn, whispering to one another fancy words in order to deceive. If your Lord had so willed, they would not have done that. So leave them to their fabrications.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 112)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 204-205: These are the characteristics of the hypocrites who pretend to be Muslims but deny Allah (ﷻ) by the disbelief in their hearts. They are quarrelsome opponents and lie, altering the truth and deceiving people.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'âm 6: 112: Every prophet had enemies from the worlds of humans and jinn. They inspire each other with beautiful speech that deceives people. Allah commands patience in the face of harm.

﴿ وَقَسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لِنَاصِحٍ ﴿٦١﴾ فَذَلَّهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ ۖ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن زُرِّ الْجَنَّةِ ۖ وَفَادَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا آتَرَهُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُل لَّكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ٢١-٢٢)

﴿And he swore to them both [saying]: I am to you a sincere adviser. So he led them on by deceit. Then when they had tasted [the fruit] of the tree, their private parts became visible to them, so they began to put together leaves from the garden to cover themselves. Their Lord called unto them: Did I not forbid that tree to you and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 21-22)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ أَفَمَن يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَن هُوَ أَعْمَىٰ ۖ إِنَّمَا يَنْذَرُ أَكْثَرًا ۖ لَوْ أَن لَّكُم مَّا عَدَّتْ الْجَنَّتُوتُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ عَاذِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة الرعد: ١٩)

﴿Is then the one who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth like one who is blind? It is only people of understanding who will pay heed.﴾ (ar-Ra'd 13: 19)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٦)

﴿Do not pursue [beliefs, rumours, slander and the like] of which you have no certain knowledge, for verily, the hearing, the sight and the heart, all of these will be asked about.﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 36)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-A'raf 7: 21-22: These verses describe how Satan deceived Prophet Ādam and Ḥawwā' to eat from the forbidden tree. They became victims of his deceit because he told them that he had greater knowledge of the place and its produce than they did.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Ra'd 13: 19: The believer and the disbeliever are never equal. It is only those with sound minds who learn lessons and understand.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Isrā' 17: 36: This verse explains the importance of not speaking unless one has knowledge, avoiding suspicion and imagination.

﴿ وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ كَأَنْتُمْ حُشْبٌ مِّنْ مَّسِينَةٍ يُحْسِبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِمَا يُؤْتِكُونَ ﴾

(سورة المنافقون: ٤)

﴿When you see them, their outward appearance pleases you; when they speak, you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up pieces of wood [devoid of all understanding]. They think that every cry is against them. They are the enemy, so beware of them. May Allah destroy them; how could they have gone so far astray?﴾  
(*al-Munâfiqoon* 63: 4)<sup>1</sup>

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها), the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), narrated: «Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) heard some people quarrelling at the door of his dwelling. He came out and said: I am only a human being and opponents come to me (to settle their problems); maybe someone amongst you can present his case more eloquently than the other, whereby I may consider him true and give a verdict in his favour. So if I give the right of a Muslim to another by mistake, then it is only a portion of (hell) fire; he has the option to take or give up (before the Day of Resurrection).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Ibn ‘Umar narrated:

«Two men came from the east and addressed the people, who wondered at their eloquent speeches. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Some eloquent speech is as effective as magic.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Munâfiqoon* 63: 4: The hypocrites would come and pretend to believe in the Prophet (ﷺ) and the message of Allah. Some Muslims were deceived by what they said. Allah pronounced them as hypocrites because they turned from faith to disbelief.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The sin of a person who quarrels unjustly over something while they know it is wrong.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Some eloquent speech is as effective as magic.

These verses and hadiths allude to the hypnotic speech of some people, which inspires others and motivates them to implement unhealthy behaviours. This is simply because of the beauty of their speech and seemingly convincing arguments. Again, the emphasis should be on encouraging patients to focus on the content of conversations and implications for their own lives, especially in the case of addiction problems where peer pressure is very powerful in maintaining the behaviour (though the case can be applied to other situations as well).

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَسْتَفْزِزْ مِنْ أَسْطَعَتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْكَ وَرَجْلِكَ وَشَارِكِهِمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعَدَّهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿٦٤﴾ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا ﴿٦٥﴾﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٦٤-٦٥)

﴿Entice whomever among them you can with your voice; mobilise your cavalry and infantry against them, share with them in their wealth and their children, and make promises to them. But Satan makes promises to them only in order to deceive them. Verily, you will have no power over My slaves, and sufficient is Allah as a guardian.﴾<sup>1</sup>  
(*al-Isrā' 17: 64-65*)<sup>1</sup>

This verse alludes to the influence of wider society, such as the various forms of media, which affect our thinking: something which in itself contributes to many societal problems by promoting misunderstandings and ideas of unhealthy living.

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«Once the Prophet (ﷺ) was riding his camel and a man was holding its reins. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked: What is the day today?  
We kept quiet, thinking that he might give the day another name.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrā' 17: 64-65*: The seductive voice refers to idle entertainment and singing.

He asked: Is it not the day of *nahr* (slaughtering of the animals of sacrifice)?

We replied: Yes.

He further asked: Which month is this?

We kept quiet again, thinking that he might give it another name.

Then he asked: Is it not the month of Dhul-Hijjah?

We replied: Yes.

He said: Verily! Your blood, property, and honour are sacred to one another (that is, Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours. It is incumbent upon those who are present to inform those who are absent, because those who are absent might comprehend it better than the present audience.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The above hadith is a pertinent reminder of how simply being present in a conversation does not necessarily suggest that its content was best understood, and that seeking advice from others is a helpful means of clarifying information and advice given.

## Part 52: Life events as a trial


Life events such as bereavement, divorce, disagreements, serious illness, and accidents are all part of everyday life. Life itself necessitates an encounter with at least one of these events. However, when they occur, it is common for patients to feel that they are somewhat out of the ordinary: that is, “These things only happen to other people.” Clearly, normalisation of the experience is central to enable patients to develop distance and adjustment to these situations and so deal effectively with them.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of the Prophet (ﷺ): «It is probable that a person who receives a piece of information indirectly may comprehend it better than those who have heard it directly from its source.»

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﴿وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنَ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُم بِسُوءِ الْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَٰلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٩)

And [remember] when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh, who were subjecting you to grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and letting your womenfolk live; in that was a great trial from your Lord. ﴿*al-Baqarah* 2: 49)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٣)

Thus We have made of you an Ummah [nation, community] justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over humankind, and the Messenger might be a witness over you; We prescribed the qibla towards which you used to face only in order to know those who would follow the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels. It was indeed difficult, except for those whom Allah guided. Allah will never let your faith go to waste, for Allah is to all people Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. ﴿*al-Baqarah* 2: 143)<sup>2</sup>

The commitment to anything in life is tested when it is the reason for difficulties. The challenges may feel overwhelming, but the above verses exemplify how individuals adhered to their beliefs in spite of challenges to them and their lives.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 49: This is a reminder to the Children of Israel of how Allah not only saved them from the excessive torment of Pharaoh but also saved their children from being slaughtered. In the blessing of being saved from the torment of Pharaoh was also a test as there was in it hardship.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 143: This is an account of when the direction of prayer was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah during the prayer itself.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالسَّمَرَاتِ  
وَنَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٥)

﴿We will certainly test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives and crops, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 155)<sup>1</sup>

﴿أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ  
الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٤٢)

﴿Did you think that you would enter paradise when Allah has not yet seen who among you will strive hard [in jihad] and has not seen who will remain steadfast?﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 142)<sup>2</sup>

﴿لَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا  
الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيراً وَإِن تَصْبِرُوا  
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٦)

﴿You will certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your persons; and you will certainly hear much that is hurtful, from those who were given the scripture before you and from those who ascribe partners to Allah. But if you are patient and fear Allah, that is something that must be adhered to [as it is enjoined by Allah].﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 186)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 155*: The believer is patient in the face of adversity and so gains a reward.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl 'Imrān 3: 142*: The believer cannot earn paradise unless he or she struggles and strives for Allah's cause.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl 'Imrān 3: 186*: The Muslims will be tested and hear words – from their own families as well as others – that will cause them distress. The harder the test, the stronger the believer becomes. But the command is always to be patient and forgiving in these situations.



﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالَهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٩٤)

﴿O you who believe, Allah will certainly test you with game that comes within reach of your hands and spears [when you are in ihram], so that He may know who will fear Him unseen. Whoever transgresses after this will have a painful punishment.﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 94)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَأَتَقُوا فِتْنَةَ لَا تُضَيِّبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنكُمْ خَاصَّةً ۖ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ (سورة الأنفال: ٢٥)

﴿Beware of retribution that will not only befall the wrongdoers among you, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.﴾ (al-Anfāl 8: 25)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٣﴾ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٢-٤)

﴿Do people think that once they say: We believe, they will be left alone and not be tested? Indeed, We tested those who came before them. For Allah will surely make known those who are sincere and will surely make known those who are liars. Do those who do evil deeds think that they can outwit Us? How ill they judge.﴾ (al-'Ankaboot 29: 2-4)<sup>3</sup>

﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾ (سورة الملک: ٢)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mā'idah 5: 94: This is a reference to the prohibition of hunting game in the sacred area of al-Masjid al-Harām while in a state of ihram. Allah (ﷻ) tests His servants in public and in secret.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Anfāl 8: 25: Trials are not just for sinners but will reach all people if the wrongdoing is not prevented from spreading.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-'Ankaboot 29: 2-4: Tests are given to identify those who are sincere in faith.

«Who has created death and life, so that He may test you [and see] which of you is best in conduct, and He is the Almighty, Oft-Forgiving.» (al-Mulk 67: 2)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ﴾ (سورة الانشقاق: ٦)

«Then, O man who toils constantly until you meet your Lord, you will surely see the outcome of your deeds.» (al-Inshiqâq 84: 6)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«If Allah wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Anas reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Going about in the cause of Allah is much better than the life of the world and all that is in it.» (Muslim)<sup>4</sup>

These verses highlight how faith can be tested. They make the link between commitment to faith and life trials. Truly, if there were no point to our behaviour because good and bad were not measured, there would be no striving in life, since all actions would become meaningless. It is precisely this striving that gives meaning. The hadiths also suggest that – as in our worldly life – the better the student, the harder the examination. This can empower the individual to overcome their difficulties and strengthen their character and so make firm their resolve to address other difficulties. Indeed, people who survive such experiences are usually role models for others.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mulk 67: 2: Allah brought creation into existence to test them. This verse also proves that both life and death have been created by Allah.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Inshiqâq 84: 6: The creation will meet Allah with whatever good or evil they have done.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The saying that sickness is expiation for sins.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The book of fighting for the cause of Allah.

﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ  
 وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي  
 الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَأَبْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ  
 الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ  
 وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ ؕ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴾ (سورة

البقرة: ١٧٧)

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; rather righteousness is to believe in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Prophets; to spend from your wealth, despite your love for it, on kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, wayfarers and those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to establish prayer and give zakat; to fulfil the covenants you make; to be patient in the face of hardship and adversity, and in times of conflict. Such are the true believers, and such are the pious. (al-Baqarah 2: 177)<sup>1</sup>

This verse not only outlines qualities to aim for but also hints at being steadfast in one's goals and not giving up during times of adversity. Again, the greatest challenge is to maintain the best behaviour at times of stress, since this is when we most regret what we say and do.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كَرْهٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ  
 وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (سورة

البقرة: ٢١٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 177*: This verse refers to the changing of the qibla from Jerusalem to Makkah. The direction was not significant except that there was obedience to the order of Allah since the essence of faith would be in its implementation. The qualities of the righteous person are described in differing circumstances.

﴿Fighting is prescribed for you, even though you dislike it. But it may be that you dislike a thing although it is good for you, and that you like a thing although it is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 216)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِي مَا رَزَقْتَكُمْ فَأَنْتُمْ فِيهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَقْدِرْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا يَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة الروم: ٢٨-٣٠)

﴿He makes this comparison, drawn from your own lives: do you have partners among those slaves whom you own, who share as equals in the wealth We have bestowed on you, so that you fear them as you fear one another? Thus We explain the revelations in detail for people of understanding. Nay, the wrongdoers follow their own desires, without any knowledge. But who can guide those whom Allah has caused to go astray? And they will have no helpers. Adhere exclusively and sincerely to the true faith of monotheism, the natural disposition that Allah instilled in humankind. There can be no change in what Allah has created. This is the right religion, but most people do not realise.﴾ (ar-Room 30: 28-30)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 216: The command for jihad was made obligatory, even though fighting was a heavy burden on some believers. This was because of the natural fears of death, striving against the enemy, and the hardships of travel to places of battle.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Room 30: 28-30: These verses present a parable to explain *tawḥeed* (monotheism), making a comparison between the sharing of one's wealth amongst one's servants. Yet the idolaters worship false gods without knowledge. The parable is followed by the command to adhere to *tawḥeed*. Allah created humankind upon the natural disposition of Islam.

It was related that Ibn 'Umar said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The Muslim has to hear and obey in what he likes and dislikes, unless he is ordered to wrongdoing; if he is ordered to wrongdoing then there is neither listening nor obedience.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

It is often the case that patients need to be reminded that what they want is not always what they need. The verses points out this distinction. They also encourage patience and reflection about lessons learnt from difficult situations, since it is the journey that teaches many lessons. Oftentimes, the right thing to do comes from the subconscious or, in fact (as the verse says), the natural disposition of human beings (the *fiṭrah*) and is, therefore, obvious to the individual. The final hadith also serves as a reminder that there is also a moral limit as to the level of needs versus wants.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَن تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَن تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢٦)

¶ Say: O Allah, Lord of all dominion, You grant dominion to whomever You will, and You take away dominion from whomever You will: You grant honour to whomever You will, and You humiliate whomever You will; in Your Hand is all good. Verily, You have power over all things. ﴿ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 26)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of government.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 26: This verse encourages the creation to be grateful to Allah for the favours He has bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Muslims. The prophethood was transferred from the Children of Israel to the Qurayshi Makkan Prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ), who was also given the best character and extra qualities that no other messenger was given before him. This included knowledge of Allah and His law, accounts of past and future events, what will occur in the hereafter as well as dominance of His message all over the world, not only to certain areas.

Again, acceptance of any difficult situation greatly ameliorates its negative impact, motivating the search for a solution. The verse reminds us that there is ultimately always good in all that Allah plans for our lives. It also tells us of the lessons to be learnt to improve our understanding of life and the world, no matter how it appears to our limited thinking. Gratitude for these experiences comes from what we learn from them.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنَةً نُبَّاسًا يُعَشِّى طَائِفَةً مِنْكُمْ وَطَائِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَان لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَا قَتَلْنَا هَهُنَا قُل لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٤)

﴿After that distress, He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber, while another group cared only about themselves, harbouring thoughts about Allah that were untrue – thoughts of ignorance. They said: Do we have any say in the matter? Say: All matters belong to Allah. They conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you. They say: If we had had any say in the matter, we would not have been killed here. Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death; but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts. For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.﴾ (Āl ‘Imrān 3: 154)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl ‘Imrān 3: 154*: The believers fell into a peaceful sleep when they became distressed during the Battle of Uḥud. The phrase ﴿another group﴾ refers to the hypocrites who were in defiance of the truth. Allah revealed the secrets that were hidden in their hearts: =

The verse highlights the relationship between purification and life trials. This nurtures patience to bear the trial more readily since purification of sins in the worldly life is easier than punishment in the hereafter.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٣٥)

﴿O you who believe, fear Allah, seek the means of drawing closer to Him, and strive hard in His cause, so that you may prosper.﴾ (*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 35)<sup>1</sup>

As the verse suggests, it is because of life struggles that patients can become more successful in their lives. After recovery, when patients are free from their problems, they are able to reflect and realise that the experience, though painful, has helped them grow psychologically, strengthened their character, and increased their understanding in facing future problems.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ﴾  
فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٤٢-٤٣)

﴿We sent [Messengers] to nations before you, and We afflicted them with adversity and distress, so that they might humble themselves. If only they had humbled themselves when Our punishment came upon them! But their hearts were hardened and Satan made fair-seeming to them what they were doing.﴾ (*al-An'âm* 6: 42-43)<sup>2</sup>

=thoughts which they tried to conceal from Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Mâ'idah* 5: 35: Allah commands the creation to fear Him, avoid prohibitions, work towards obedience, and fight against those who disbelieve.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-An'âm* 6: 42-43: The idolaters call to =

This verse points out that life events may allow the individual to grow, but only if the individual is able to reflect on what is happening will they benefit from their experiences. Many times patients do not learn from the mistakes they have made in their lives and hence end up in repeated patterns of negative thinking.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِجَهَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (سورة التوبة: ١٦)

﴿Or do you think that you will be left untested, when Allah has not yet made known which of you will strive in jihad and take none but Allah, His Messenger and the believers as trusted allies and friends? Allah is well aware of all that you do.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 16)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ﴾ (سورة محمد: ٣١)

﴿We will certainly test you so that We may make known those among you who strive [in Allah's cause] and are steadfast, and We will expose your deeds.﴾ (Muhammad 47: 31)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة التغابن: ١١)

=Allah when they suffer torment and distress. The adversities refer to loss of wealth, provisions, illness, disease, and pain. Then Allah asks the creation why they do not learn. He then answers that it is because their hearts are not soft and Satan has led them astray to defiance and rebellion.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 16: Part of the wisdom of jihad is to distinguish between sincerity of intentions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Muhammad 47: 31: Allah will test the creation with commands and prohibitions.



﴿No calamity occurs except by Allah's leave. Whoever believes in Allah, He will guide his heart aright. And Allah has knowledge of all things.﴾ (at-Taghâbun 64: 11)<sup>1</sup>

Patients often feel that their lives should be lived without facing any adverse life events. This is clearly a contradiction in terms, since living means encountering difficult life experiences and trials. The commitment to any way of life is tested when trials arise and the verses clearly make this point.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَلَئِن قُلْتُمْ إِنَّكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ﴾ (سورة هود: ٧)

﴿He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days – and [before that] His Throne was upon the water – so that He may test you [and see] which of you is best in conduct. But if you say to them: Verily, you will be resurrected after death, those who disbelieve will surely say: This is obviously nothing but magic!﴾ (Hood 11: 7)<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned interpretation given for Soorat at-Tawbah (9: 16), the verse hints at gratitude for what one is given and correct utilisation of available abilities and resources. Patients are always encouraged to look at existing strengths and resources when starting to think about psychological interventions.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Taghâbun 64: 11: Everything that occurs does so by the command of Allah, so whoever bears a problem patiently because he or she knows it comes from Allah will be rewarded by guidance being granted to his or her heart.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Hood 11: 7: Allah created the world in six days. The creation was tested to identify those who did the best deeds, not the most. A good deed requires that it was done sincerely for Allah and was in accordance with the legislation set by Him.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ إِذْ جَاءُوكُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ الْأَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظَّنُونَا ﴿١١﴾ هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا ﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ١٠-١١)

That was when they came upon you from above you and from below you, your eyes stared fixedly with horror, and your hearts came up into your throats [out of fear], and you began to entertain various thoughts about Allah. In that situation the believers were tested and severely shaken. ﴿ (al-Aḥzāb 33: 10-11)<sup>1</sup>

The commitment to any idea or belief comes when it is challenged. This is the point at which patients most often retract from agreed goals and treatment: when therapy becomes painful. Patients are encouraged to remain with the issues at this point, since leaving then may hinder, stagnate, or even further complicate the healing process. Clearly, the same is applicable when we live our lives according to what we believe and suffer as a consequence.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Aḥzāb 33: 10-11*: This refers to the account of the Battle of the Trench (*al-Khandaq*). The enemies of the Muslims gathered to plot against them. A group of men from the leaders of the Jews met a group from the leaders of Quraysh in Makkah to incite a war against the Prophet (ﷺ) in return for their promise of support to Quraysh. An agreement was made between the two parties, who then approached a third tribe, the Ghaṭafān. They were nearly ten thousand in number. When the Prophet (ﷺ) heard, he ordered that a trench be built around Madinah from the east on the advice of a Companion, Salmān al-Fārisi (رضي الله عنه). The idolaters came and set up a camp in the north overlooking Madinah. The Muslims came out to face the enemy with the trench between the groups. One group that was under the protection of the Prophet (ﷺ) broke their treaty and joined the enemy. The crisis deepened. The enemy besieged the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions for a month, but no fighting occurred bar a few incidents of one-on-one combat. Then Allah sent a bitterly cold wind with strong gusts against the enemy and they retreated.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِن ءَارْوَادِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ ءَعْدُوًا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ۚ وَإِن تَعَفَوْا وَتَصْفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا ءُمُورُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فَتَنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ ءَاجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾﴾ (سورة التغابن: ١٤-١٥)

«O you who believe, verily among your spouses and your children are some that are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon, overlook and forgive [their misdeeds], then verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and with Allah there is an immense reward. ﴿at-Taghâbun 64: 14-15﴾<sup>1</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated:

«A woman along with her two daughters came to me asking (for some alms), but she found nothing with me except one date, which I gave to her. She divided it between her two daughters and did not eat anything herself. Then she got up and went away.

The Prophet (ﷺ) came and I informed him about this story. He said: If anyone is put to trial by these daughters and he treats them generously (with benevolence), then these daughters will act as a shield for him from hellfire.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The description in these verses and the hadith of children as being a trial are commonly used in therapy by parents of children with behavioural or addiction problems. Parents often feel caught between doing the right thing and supporting their child’s bad

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Taghâbun 64: 14-15*: Love for one’s wife and children can cause a person to sever relations and disobey their Lord. Another interpretation of this verse is that when men embraced Islam they wished to migrate to be with the Prophet (ﷺ), but their wives and children would not let them.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Protect yourself from hellfire, even with half of a date or with a little object of charity.

behaviour, simply because it is their child. (Of course, as mentioned earlier, there is a fine line between forgiving an individual for their behaviour and supporting it. Many patients and relatives do not make this distinction.)

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ ﴿٥﴾ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهْنَنِ ﴿٦﴾﴾ (سورة الفجر: ١٥-١٦)

﴿As for man, when his Lord tests him by bestowing generous bounties upon him, he says: My Lord has honoured me; but when He tests him by restricting his provision, he says: My Lord has humiliated me.﴾  
(*al-Fajr* 89: 15-16)<sup>1</sup>

The verses provide a reflection of trauma situations where the patient's most common question is: "Why did this happen to me?" This results in them feeling unable to actually consider solutions, since they are trapped by the thought that they have been treated unfairly. This reaction limits progress to change, especially in cases where there is no clear answer.

## Part 53: Living without knowing everything and only trusting Allah

Patients can never be guaranteed that they will hear the answers they want. Sometimes they are told that the answer is that there is no answer or they may be given tentative suggestions and conjecture, which in itself can cause complications. This is made more difficult since the patient comes to therapy for answers. However, here the therapist is

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Fajr* 89: 15-16: Wealth and poverty are tests for the believers. They will bring honour or disgrace, depending on the person's reaction.

able to model that it is possible to live without knowing and still find inner peace, since they themselves do not have all the answers and are comfortable modelling that position.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٣٠)

And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels: I am going to place on earth successive generations, they said: Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, whilst we glorify You with Your praises and proclaim Your holiness? He said: I know that which you do not know. (al-Baqarah 2: 30)<sup>1</sup>

﴿قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٣٢)

They said: Glory be to You, we do not know anything except what You have taught us; verily You are the All-Knowing, Most Wise. (al-Baqarah 2: 32)<sup>2</sup>

‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood narrated:

«While I was going with the Prophet (ﷺ) through the ruins of Madinah and he was reclining on a date-palm leaf-stalk, some Jews

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 30: The question posed by the angels referred to humankind in general, not specifically to Prophet Âdam. It was not a form of disobedience or envy but a question for seeking knowledge about this creation since if it was for praising Allah, this role was already fulfilled by the angels. Allah replied that He had knowledge that the angels did not.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 32: The angels affirm the perfection of Allah and his knowledge above all else. They affirm that all knowledge comes from Allah, the All-Knowing, and cannot be acquired without His permission.

passed by. Some of them said to the others: Ask him (the Prophet ﷺ) about the *rooh* (the spirit or soul). Some of them said they should not ask him that question, as he might give a reply which would displease them. But some of them insisted on asking, so one of them stood up and asked: O Abul-Qāṣim! What is the rooh?

The Prophet (ﷺ) remained quiet. I thought he was being inspired divinely. So I stayed till that state of the Prophet (ﷺ) (while being inspired) was over.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said:

﴿ وَسْئَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴾  
(سورة الإسراء: ٨٥)

«They ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is a matter known only to my Lord, and of knowledge you have been granted only a little.»  
(*al-Isrā' 17: 85*)» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Ibn 'Umar narrated Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The keys of the unseen (regarding the tenets of faith) are five, which nobody knows but Allah. Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow; nobody knows what is in the womb; nobody knows what he will gain tomorrow; nobody knows at what place he will die; and nobody knows when it will rain.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The verses remind us that there are many things we will never find the answers to and 'only Allah knows', as patients often say in therapy. It is important to help the patient consider the implications of living with the idea that the human beings' knowledge is not only limited but certain information may never be acquired. The hadiths reinforce this idea. Patients often seek to discover someone else who can give an answer if the therapist cannot; however, this emphasises that in some

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: «...and of knowledge you have been granted only a little.» (*al-Isrā' 17: 85*)

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Nobody except Allah knows when it will rain.

cases there are simply limits to mental ability, irrespective of who a person is: that in many cases, no one knows for certain. This realisation often makes unclear outcomes easier to accept since it involves active acceptance that a Being possessing greater wisdom than the person has the answer and can alleviate worry about controlling this.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَنْ أَدْرِي لَعَلَّهِ فِتْنَةٌ لَكُمْ وَمَتَعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١١١)

﴿For all I know, this may be a test for you and a short reprieve.﴾  
(*al-Anbiyā' 21: 111*)<sup>1</sup>

Often anxiety about a situation is heightened when the patient can (understandably) not work out the reasoning for their situation. It is helpful at such times to ask the patient to imagine a situation where they will never know the reason, as it pushes them to identify an immediate strategy around living without knowing.

## Part 54: Logical thinking: Facts, not fiction

Illogical thinking and behaviour result in increased difficulties. It is often the case that the patient cannot see or does not acknowledge their contribution to the problem since these thoughts have become absorbed without question into their daily life.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿هَاتَانِمْ هَتَوْلَاءَ حَجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَاجُّوْنَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٦٦)

﴿Look at yourselves! You are the ones who disputed about that of which you have [a little] knowledge, but why do you dispute about

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Anbiyā' 21: 111*: Allah (ﷻ) knows the unseen in its entirety. No one other than Him knows when the coming of the Last Hour is.

matters of which you have no knowledge? Allah knows, but you do not know. ﴿ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 66)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ وَقَالَ أَكْذَبْتُمْ بَيَاتِي وَلَمْ تُحِيطُوا بِهَا عِلْمًا أَمَاذَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾ (سورة النمل: ٨٤)

﴿Until, when they come [before their Lord at the place of reckoning], He will say: Did you reject My signs even though you did not comprehend them fully? Or what is it that you were doing?﴾ (an-Naml 27: 84)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَسَبِّحُوا أَنْ تَصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بَجْهَلَةٍ فَذُصِّحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴾ (سورة الحجرات: ٦)

﴿O you who believe, if a wrongdoer comes to you with any news, investigate [and verify the facts], lest you harm people out of ignorance, then come to regret your actions.﴾ (al-Hujurat 49: 6)<sup>3</sup>

These verses remind of how often justifications for behaviour can be based on inferences about a situation or incomplete information rather than actual evidence. The final verse reminds the individual to verify evidence and base their judgement on facts.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفَلَكَ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٦٤)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 66: This verse refers to the disagreements with the Jews and Christians about the religion of Prophet Ibrâheem and how they can question regarding this since he lived before the Torah and Gospels were revealed.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 84: The wrongdoers will be asked about their beliefs and deeds.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Hujurat 49: 6: No comment made.



﴿Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the sailing of the ships on the sea for the benefit of humankind, in the rain which Allah sends down from the sky and gives life thereby to the earth after its death, in the creatures of all kinds that He scatters throughout the earth, in the changing of the winds and clouds that run their appointed courses between heaven and earth -- [here] are indeed signs for people of understanding.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah 2: 164*)<sup>1</sup>

This verse emphasises the importance of considering signs in our surroundings which are often ignored as evidence against assumptions. Again, the process of reflection is advised.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَقُولُوا لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾﴾  
(سورة هود: ٥١)

﴿O my people, no recompense do I ask of you for this; my reward is only with Him Who created me. Will you not then understand?﴾  
(*Hood 11: 51*)<sup>2</sup>

The verse clearly hints at the importance of remaining rational and logical in one's thinking if one is to be sensitive to signs around them to improve understanding of a given situation. The reason behind the tasks must be kept in focus.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَسْتَعِجُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ إِنْ يَسْتَعِجُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾﴾ (سورة يونس: ٦٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 164*: The verse highlights the signs of Allah's oneness in the creation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Hood 11: 51*: This is a reference to the story of Prophet Hood. He was sent to the people of 'Ād to call to a way of life that would benefit them in the hereafter, and he did not ask them for a wage for this effort.

﴿Verily, to Allah belong all those who are in the heavens and on earth. Those who call upon their [so-called] partners besides Allah follow nothing but conjecture and they do nothing but lie.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 66)<sup>1</sup>

This verse is a clear guidance about the limitations of what human beings can achieve and to be realistic about this, since in totality the heavens and the earth belong to Allah, not to humans. It is also a reminder to not only think before one acts, but also to avoid increasing one's problems by one's own behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ بَيَّنَّ الرُّشْدَ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٥٦)

﴿Let there be no compulsion in religion; truth stands out clear from error. Whoever rejects āghoot and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 256)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَرَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٨١)

﴿And say: The truth has come and falsehood has perished. Falsehood is always bound to perish.﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 81)<sup>3</sup>

﴿بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا نَصِفُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١٨)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 66: Only Allah has complete authority over the dominions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 256: Do not force anyone to become Muslim, for the truth is self-evident. Only those whom Allah directs will embrace Islam with commitment and certainty.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Isrā' 17: 81: This is a threat to the disbelievers of Quraysh, for the revelation had come to destroy falsehood, which could not stand firm in the face of the truth.

﴿Nay, rather We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it crushes it, whereupon it perishes. Woe to you for what you ascribe [falsely, to Allah].﴾ (al-Anbiyā' 21: 18)<sup>1</sup>

﴿قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِي الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ﴿١٩﴾ قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّمَا أَضِلُّ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَإِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ فِيمَا يُرْسِي إِلَى رَبِّي إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة سبأ: ٤٩-٥٠)

﴿Say: The truth has come and falsehood can neither initiate anything, nor restore anything. Say: If I go astray, it is only to my own detriment, but if I am guided, it is because of what my Lord reveals to me. Verily, He is All-Hearing, Ever Near.﴾ (Saba' 34: 49-50)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُوبِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّكَ لَنِي قَوْلٍ مُخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾﴾ (سورة الذاريات: ٧-٨)

﴿By the heaven, embroidered with stars, verily you are confused in your beliefs.﴾ (adh-Dhâriyât 51: 7-8)<sup>3</sup>

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَنْوَةَ النَّارِثَةَ الْآخَرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ تِلْكَ إِذًا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمِيئُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمُ الْهُدَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾﴾ (سورة النجم: ١٩-٢٤)

﴿Have you thought about al-Lât and al-'Uzzâ, and Manât, the third and last? Do you choose males for yourselves and for Him females? That is indeed an unfair division. They are no more than names you have named, you and your forefathers, for which Allah has not sent down any authority. They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own selves desire, although guidance has come to them from their Lord. Is man to have everything he wishes for?﴾ (an-Najm 53: 19-24)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Anbiyā' 21: 18*: The truth is explained, thus defeating falsehood, which vanishes.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Saba' 34: 49-50*: Truth and Allah's law have come and falsehood has vanished.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, adh-Dhâriyât 51: 7-8*: No comment made.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Najm 53: 19-24*: This is a refutation of =

﴿... إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا﴾ (سورة النجم: ٢٨)

«... They follow nothing but conjecture, but conjecture is no substitute for certain truth.» (*an-Najm* 53: 28)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«A man praised another man in front of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: Woe to you, you have cut your companion's neck, you have cut your companion's neck – repeating it several times and then added: Whoever amongst you has to praise his brother should say: I think that he is so-and-so, and Allah knows exactly the truth, and I do not confirm anybody's good conduct before Allah, but I think him so-and-so – if he really knows what he is saying about him.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«A man was mentioned before the Prophet (ﷺ) and another man praised him greatly. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: May Allah's mercy be upon you! You have cut the neck of your friend.

The Prophet (ﷺ) repeated this sentence many times and said: If it is indispensable for anyone of you to praise someone then he should say: I think that he is so-and-so – if he really thinks that he is such. Allah is the One Who will take his account (as He knows his reality) and none can sanctify anybody before Allah.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The truth, reality, or evidence that patients are so often asked to look for stands on its own mettle. These verses are powerful challenges to the conjecture and contradiction many patients' false beliefs are

=the idols.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Najm* 53: 28: The idolaters have no correct knowledge testifying to their statements. Conjecture is of no benefit and can never take the place of truth.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: If only one man attests the (good) conduct of another, then it is sufficient.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: What is disliked of praising a person.

based on. The hadiths are reminders of distinguishing (even in our descriptions) between what we assume to know and what we actually know about people, since of course this affects our behaviour and interactions. Taking the above approach may mean avoidance of future disappointment and expectations that individuals feel when others act against their expectations.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا  
وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾ (سورة آل  
عمران: ٣٠)

﴿On the day when every soul will find itself faced with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But Allah admonishes you to fear Him. And Allah is Most Compassionate towards His slaves.﴾  
(*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 30)<sup>1</sup>

This verse captures how individuals wish to distance themselves from their negative behaviours when they examine them closely, highlighting how bad deeds are clear from good, in spite of excuses that may be given. Oftentimes patients may be unclear about this distinction when they are unwell or distressed; therefore, the verse is also a reminder to stop and think before acting, where possible, since it brings to mind the regret subsequently felt at one's behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَيْرُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَيْرِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَى  
الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١٠٠)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 30: This verse mentions matters related to the Day of Judgement and the accounting of deeds. The servants will be happy when they see their good deeds but will be sad and angry when they see their bad deeds and will wish to distance themselves from them.

﴿Say: The bad and the good are not equal, even though the abundance of the bad may appear pleasing to you. So fear Allah, O men of understanding, so that you may prosper.﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 100)<sup>1</sup>

'Abdullâh ibn Mas'ood narrated:

«When the following verse was revealed:

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمَنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ﴾

(سورة الأنعام: ٨٢)

﴿It is those who believe and do not mix their faith with wrongdoing who will be truly safe, and it is they who are truly guided.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 82)

– the Companions of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked: Who amongst us has not done *dhulm* (wrong)?

Then Allah (ﷻ) revealed:

﴿...إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (سورة لقمان: ١٣)

﴿...associating others in worship with Him is indeed grievous wrongdoing.﴾ (Luqmân 31: 13)» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

An-Nu'mân ibn Basheer narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«What is lawful is clear, and what is unlawful is clear, but in between them, there are doubtful things which many people do not know. So whoever guards himself from doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless, but whoever indulges in doubtful things indulges in fact in unlawful things, just as a shepherd who grazes his cattle near a preserve (private pasture) will soon stray into it. Beware! Every king has a preserve, and the preserve of Allah (ﷻ) consists of the things

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mâ'idah 5: 100: Little permissible behaviours are better than abundant evil behaviour. Guidance is given to avoid the forbidden acts and let the permissible be sufficient for you.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: *Dhulm* (wrong) of one kind can be greater or lesser than that of another.

he has made unlawful. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, but if it is corrupt, then the whole body is corrupt – and that is the heart.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The verse and hadiths indicate how distinctions between good and bad, and types of good and bad behaviour, are important. This determines not only the level of forgiveness but also the response to the act.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُودْنَ بِالسِّبْطِ بِالسِّبْطِ لِتُحَسِبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْهُ إِلَّا كَذِبٌ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذُوبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكَفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٨-٨٠)

There are some among them who distort the Book with their tongues, so that you would think it is part of the Book, but it is not part of the Book; and they say: This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly. No human being to whom Allah has given the scripture, wisdom and prophethood would ever say to the people: Be my worshippers rather than Allah's. On the contrary [he would say]: Be perfect in knowledge and in deeds, by virtue of your constant teaching of the scripture and of your constant study thereof. Nor would he instruct you to take angels and Prophets for lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah [as Muslims]? ﴿٧٨﴾ ﴿٧٩﴾ ﴿٨٠﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 78-80)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Legal and illegal things are clearly defined, and in between them are doubtful (unclear) things.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Āl 'Imrān 3: 78-80*: The Jews would distort and alter the apparent meaning of the Qur'an to deceive the ignorant people =

The verses hint at the futility of not utilising or rejecting beneficial information when one is clear that it is true.

## Part 55: Making proper use of our senses/faculties

Making good and proper use of our senses is an obvious yet much underestimated activity. Money and time are spent on maintaining the health of these senses but little consideration is given to how they are subsequently utilised. Oftentimes individuals look but do not see, listen but do not hear. Proper use, then, is about psychological presence in the conversation.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ٧)

﴿Allah has sealed up their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes is a cover; theirs will be a grievous penalty.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 7)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أذُنٌ قُلُّ أذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾  
(سورة التوبة: ٦١)

﴿Among them are some who offend the Prophet and say: He listens to everyone. Say: His listening to everyone is good for you; he believes

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=about what was revealed, though the Book of Allah can never be changed. A prophet of Allah, with the sincerity of his character, would never ask anyone to worship him instead of His Lord. This refers to the ignorant rabbis and priests who made from their scriptures things that were lawful as unlawful and what was lawful as unlawful at their own discretion.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 7*: A covering has been placed on the hearts and eyes of people by Allah so that they neither understand nor hear.



in Allah, trusts the believers, and is a mercy to those among you who believe. But those who offend the Messenger of Allah will have a painful punishment. ﴿ (at-Tawbah 9: 61)<sup>1</sup>

These verses are reminders that unless people are open to listening and looking at the evidence offered, are convinced of it in their hearts, and make use of this for purifying the intention behind these changes, there will be little progress. This means actively using our senses for beneficial purposes. The punishment referred to in the verse (*al-Baqarah* 2: 7) can arguably be considered as the level of self-destruction involved in continuing to reject guidance and the impact this has on one's life.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْكَرُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِينَا هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْتُوهُ فَأَحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

(سورة المائدة: ٤١)

﴿O Messenger, do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief, those who say with their mouths: We believe, but have no faith in their hearts, or those among the Jews who eagerly listen to lies and to those who have not even come to you. They distort the meaning of [revealed] words and say: If you are given this [ruling], accept it, but

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 61: This is a reference to the hypocrites who attempted to question the character of the Prophet (ﷺ). The verse clarifies that the Prophet (ﷺ) knows who tells the truth and who lies.

if you are not, then beware! Whoever Allah wills should be misguided, you cannot help him against Allah in any way. Those are the ones for whom it is not Allah's will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the hereafter theirs will be a grievous punishment. ﴿ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 41)<sup>1</sup>

Again, the emphasis here is on the use of the heart for maximum psychological benefit, to use it with the best intention in mind to allow inner peace. This is evident in the instruction to do things 'wholeheartedly'. Individuals who do not possess this quality, no matter how confident they are, do not experience inner peace and complete satisfaction.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْإِطْرَاقِ بَلْ هُمْ أَصْلٌ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾ (سورة الأعراف: ١٧٩)

﴿We have surely created for hell many of the jinn and humankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, eyes with which they do not see, and ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; nay, they are even more astray, for it is they who are heedless. ﴿ (al-A'râf 7: 179)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah 5: 41*: The believers are comforted and asked not to feel distressed by the behaviour of the Jews and hypocrites. They gain their information from those people who do not even attend the gatherings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They are selective in the laws they obey, depending on the convenience of the punishment. During that time, the Jews would refer cases of adultery to him and ask him to judge according to the Qur'an when the punishments in the Torah were too severe.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-A'râf 7: 179*: The actions of people who will disbelieve have been divinely decreed. Even before Allah created the creation, He knew how their lives would be. They do not use the senses =

﴿وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٣٦)

﴿Do not pursue [beliefs, rumours, slander and the like] of which you have no certain knowledge, for verily, the hearing, the sight and the heart, all of these will be asked about.﴾ (*al-Isrâ' 17: 36*)<sup>1</sup>

﴿قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَنْتَ أَعْيُنَنَا فَتَنْبِئْنَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْشَىٰ ﴿١٢٧﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُجَزِي مَنْ أَشْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَدُّ وَأَبْقَىٰ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٦-١٢٧)

﴿Allah will say: Just as Our revelations came to you and you disregarded them, so will you, on this day, be disregarded. Thus do We requite him who transgresses beyond bounds and does not believe in the revelations of his Lord; and the punishment of the hereafter is more severe and more lasting.﴾ (*Tâ Hâ 20: 126-127*)<sup>2</sup>

﴿أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٤٦)

﴿Have they not travelled in the land so that their hearts might understand and their ears might hear? Verily, it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts in their chests.﴾ (*al-Hajj 22: 46*)<sup>3</sup>

=that Allah has given them for gaining guidance. Those people who obey Allah are more honourable than some angels, while cattle are better than those who do not believe. This is because cattle do what they were created to do, unlike human beings.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Isrâ' 17: 36*: Do not bear false witness or speak about something of which you have no knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tâ Hâ 20: 126-127*: The person who was blind to Allah's message will be made blind in the hereafter for their neglect in the world.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Hajj 22: 46*: The question is asked regarding travel, reflection, and lessons learnt through this by bringing the senses to life. The blind person is not the one whose eyes cannot see; it is the person who has no insight.

﴿فَإِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادٍ الْعَمِيَّ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ إِنْ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾﴾ (سورة الروم:

(٥٣-٥٢)

﴿Verily, you cannot make the dead hear you, nor can you make the deaf hear your call, [especially] if they turn their backs and walk away. Nor can you guide the blind out of their error. You cannot make anyone hear you except those who believe in Our revelations, for they are ready to submit [to the truth].﴾ (ar-Room 30: 52-53)<sup>1</sup>

﴿كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ (سورة الروم: ٥٩)

﴿Thus does Allah seal the hearts of those who have no knowledge.﴾ (ar-Room 30: 59)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِيمَا إِنْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِيهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَآبْصَارًا وَأَفْئِدَةً فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَا أَفْئِدَتُهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِذْ كَانُوا يَجْحَدُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَحَاقَّ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأحقاف: ٢٦)

﴿We gave them power [and prosperity] to an extent to which We did not give it to you [O Quraysh], and We gave them hearing, sight and intellect. But neither their hearing nor their sight nor their intellect was of any avail to them, for they used to reject the signs of Allah. And the very thing [punishment] they used to ridicule overwhelmed them.﴾ (al-Ahqâf 46: 26)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Room 30: 52-53: The disbelievers are likened to the dead, deaf, and blind.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Room 30: 59: The believers are advised to bear the comments and behaviour of the disbelievers towards them with patience since Allah promises them ultimate victory in the world and the hereafter.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Ahqâf 46: 26: Allah declares that the earlier nations were given wealth and offspring in the worldly life yet were punished by the very punishment they denied. The Quraysh are reminded that they should take heed lest a similar punishment befall them.

﴿الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ ﴿٨﴾ وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ ﴿٩﴾ وَهَدَيْتُهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ ﴿١٠﴾﴾ (سورة

البلد: ٨-١٠)

﴿Have We not given him two eyes and a tongue, and a pair of lips, and shown him the two ways [good and evil]?﴾ (al-Balad 90: 8-10)<sup>1</sup>

Ibn 'Abbās narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah has written for the son of Ādam his share of adultery which he inevitably commits. The adultery of the eyes is the sight (gazing at a forbidden thing), the adultery of the tongue is the talk and the inner-self wishes and desires, and the private parts testify to all this or deny it.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

These verses and hadiths are a reminder that use of the senses is a matter of individual choice and that the responsibility and protection of these senses from unhelpful and unhealthy things is part of this.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَرُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالُوا لِمَ لِيُجَادِبَهُمْ رَبُّنَا لَمَّا شَهِدْنَا لَمْ يَشْهَدْتُم عَلَيْنَا فَاَلَوْ أَنطَقْنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة فُصِّلَتْ: ٢٠-٢١)

﴿Until, when they come to it, their hearing, their sight and their skins will testify against them concerning their deeds. They will say to their skins: Why do you testify against us? They will say: Allah has caused us to speak, Who causes everything to speak [that is able to speak]. He created you the first time, and to Him you will be brought back.﴾ (Fuṣṣilat 41: 20-21)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Balad 90: 8-10: The creation is asked how they use the faculties that they have been given by the Creator. The ability to distinguish between good and evil is also a blessing.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: (What is said regarding) the adultery of the body parts other than the private parts.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Fuṣṣilat 41: 20-21: On the Day of =

These verses provide useful questions for patients to ask themselves when monitoring their own behaviour as well as to enable them to consider their own use of body language in disguising their feelings. It is a therapeutic technique in Narrative Therapy to ask, when body language allows: "If that body part could speak, what would it say?"

## Part 56: Making sacrifices

There are often instances when all the steps for progress are in place and the only missing link is that the patient himself or herself is not making the effort, assuming the efforts of others are enough. However, taking the initiative for tasks and change is central to progress, since often there is success in the striving and the lessons learnt therein.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَنْ نَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ نُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا نَحِبُّونَ ۚ وَمَا نُنْفِقُوا مِن شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِوَعْدِهِ عَلِيمٌ ۝﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٩٢)

﴿You will never attain righteousness until you spend [in charity] of that which you love; and whatever you give [in charity], verily Allah knows it well.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 92)<sup>1</sup>

Often patients are on the verge of giving up trying to work on relationships and resolve problems because they feel that their sacrifices are not being noticed and at this point they stop trying. This verse is a reminder that the effort of sacrifice is giving what one values, be that physical or emotional. It is also a reminder that Allah (ﷻ) notices what one sacrifices, though people may not; consciousness of this fact offers great consolation. It enables one to

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=Resurrection, the sinners will try to blame their limbs for their wrongdoing, but on that day their limbs will testify against them.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 92: Righteousness can be attained only if one spends from the best of one's wealth, and this righteousness then leads to paradise.

try for the sake of trying itself and not for the sake of congratulations from others. This process itself encourages self-reliance.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ، هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ مِيرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٠)

Those who covetously withhold what Allah has granted them by His grace should not think that it is good for them; rather it is bad for them, for the things which they covetously withheld will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well aware of all that you do. (Al 'Imrân 3: 180)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«If anyone is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay zakat on his wealth, on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be made like a bald-headed, poisonous male snake with two black spots over the eyes (or two poisonous glands in its mouth). The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say: I am your wealth, I am your treasure.

Then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the verse:

﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ...﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٠)

Those who covetously withhold... (Al 'Imran 3: 180)» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

«A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: O Messenger of Allah, which charity is the most superior in reward?

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 180: The believers are reproached for selfishness and are warned that collecting money will not benefit them in their religion or even in their worldly affairs. The punishment of the miser in the hereafter is described.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The sin of a person who does not pay zakat.

He replied: The charity which you practice while you are healthy, niggardly, and afraid of poverty and wish to become wealthy. Do not delay it to the time of approaching death and then say: Give so much to so-and-so, and so much to so-and-so, and so much to so-and-so. (And it already belonged to so-and-so [his heirs]).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This verse warns that withholding what is easy to give (which includes sacrifices of a behavioural and cognitive nature, such as forgiveness and good behaviour) is likely to leave the individual in a weaker psychological position. Patients often hold on to anger; they refuse to forgive and be charitable to others who have harmed them. This inevitably makes their difficulty harder to overcome. The first hadith offers a useful analogy of the destructiveness of withholding doing good deeds and that it is the individual's life that is restricted by this response. The second hadith reinforces the idea that the greater strength lies in seizing the opportunity, even when one may feel vulnerable and not in a position to give anything. This may come in the form of helpful deeds, support, kindness, and even a smile, as mentioned earlier. All such acts contribute to the self-worth of the individual and others.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴾

(سورة الأنفال: ٦١)

﴿If they incline to peace, then make peace with them, and put your trust in Allah, for verily He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.﴾  
(*al-Anfāl* 8: 61)<sup>2</sup>

Hārithah ibn Wahb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying:

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Which charity is superior?

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Anfāl* 8: 61: This verse commands to advance peace if the enemy seeks a peaceful resolution.



«O people! Give in charity, as a time will come upon you when a person will wander about with his object of charity and will not find anybody to accept it, and one (who will be requested to take it) will say: If you had brought it yesterday I would have taken it, but today I am not in need of it.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

When there have been excessive tensions, it is very difficult to work towards a resolution due to the pain and ill-feeling the problems may have caused. However, there is psychological liberation in letting go of the event, as the verse suggests. That, of course, requires making sacrifices. The hadith also suggests that timing is important and if the opportunity is missed the benefit may not be received and may consequently become a source of regret.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَسَخَّرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٢)

﴿The life of this world is made to appear fair-seeming to those who disbelieve, and they scoff at those who believe. But those who fear Allah will be above them on the Day of Resurrection, for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whomever He will.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 212)<sup>2</sup>

The verse points out the reason why sometimes sacrifice is made difficult. It may be that the existing circumstances have some form of benefit, such as immediate gratification or secondary gain for the patient. Giving up the benefit or sacrificing it may mean an apparent loss. However, it is only with sacrifice that there is ultimate success.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: To practice charity (as early as possible) before a time comes when nobody would accept it.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 212: The disbelievers find the life of this world as the only life and are therefore satisfied with it. They collect wealth but do not spend it on what is commanded, thus not earning Allah's pleasure for He gives without limits.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧١)

﴿Rejoicing in the favours and bounties of Allah, and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost.﴾  
(*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 171)<sup>1</sup>

This verse reinforces the aforementioned connection between sacrifice and success with the promise of Allah's reward.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الْأَنْزِلُ وَالزَّرُّ وَزَّرَ آخَرَىٰ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَأَنَّ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ ثُمَّ يُجْزَاهُ الْجَزَاءَ الْأَوْفَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾﴾ (سورة النجم: ٣٨-٤١)

﴿That that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; that man will have nothing but what he strives for; that his deeds will be examined, then he will be requited in full.﴾ (*an-Najm* 53: 38-41)<sup>2</sup>

This verse clearly points out that success in life is dependent on the sacrifices made.

It was related that Abu Hurayrah said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The most difficult prayers for the hypocrites are the night and dawn prayers. Had they known what their reward is, they would have attended them even if they had to crawl. And I was almost going to order the prayer to begin and indicate a man to lead the people

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 171: This verse refers to an abrogated verse of the Qur'an which preceded this verse. Seventy Companions were killed at Bi'r Ma'oonah and it was revealed that that they had met with Allah and that He was pleased with them. They were delighted because Allah's promise was fulfilled for them and they earned abundant rewards. The verse also refers to all martyrs and believers.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Najm* 53: 38-41: The soul will only benefit from the good that it earns for itself.

in prayer, while I was going to go with a group of people carrying kindling to those who were not attending the prayer and set their houses on fire.

It was also related that he said: Had any of them thought that he would find a meaty bone there, he would have attended the evening prayer.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

This hadith highlights the important point that even for the fundamentals of life (in this case, prayer for Muslims), individuals seek an incentive to make the sacrifice worthwhile; the fact that certain behaviours are the very essence of their existence seems not to be enough. (This specific hadith also points to the secondary position many individuals give to their spiritual state.)

## Part 57: Moderation in all things - keeping the balance

Balance in all areas of one's life is important, be it one's lifestyle, career, attitude, or even rest and relaxation. Life at the extremes of any behaviour is too difficult to sustain and will, of course, be detrimental to other areas of life.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِّعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤٣)

«(Thus We have made of you an Ummah [nation, community] justly balanced, that you might be witnesses over humankind, and the Messenger might be a witness over you; We prescribed the qibla

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of prayers.

towards which you used to face only in order to know those who would follow the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels. It was indeed difficult, except for those whom Allah guided. Allah will never let your faith go to waste, for Allah is to all people Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. ﴿*al-Baqarah 2: 143*﴾<sup>1</sup>

«'Ā'ishah narrated: Once the Prophet (ﷺ) came while a woman was sitting with me. He asked: Who is she?

I replied: She is so-and-so, and told him about her (excessive praying). He said, disapprovingly: Do (good) deeds which are within your capacity (without being overtaxed), as Allah does not get tired (of giving rewards) but (surely) you will get tired and *ad-deen* (good righteous deeds: acts of worship loved most by Allah) is what is done regularly.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Anas ibn Mālik narrated:

«Once the Prophet (ﷺ) entered the mosque and saw a rope hanging between two pillars. He asked: What is this rope?

The people said: This rope is for Zaynab (bint Jaḥsh), who, when she feels tired, holds it (to keep standing for the prayer).

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Do not use it. Remove the rope. You should offer the prayer as long as you feel active, and when you get tired, sit down.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«The good deeds of any person will not make him enter paradise (that is, none can enter paradise through his or her good deeds alone).

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah 2: 143*: This is an account of when the direction of prayer was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah during the prayer itself.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: Ad-Deen (here meaning good and righteous deeds and acts of worship) loved most by Allah is what is done regularly.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: It is disliked to exaggerate in matters of worship.

They (the Prophet's Companions) asked: Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?

He said: Not even me, unless Allah bestows His favour and mercy on me. So be moderate in your religious deeds and do the deeds that are within your ability; none of you should wish for death, for if he is a good-doer, he may increase his good deeds, and if he is an evil-doer, he may repent to Allah.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: The deeds of any of you will not save you (from the hellfire).

They asked: Even you (will not be saved by your deeds), O Messenger of Allah?

He said: No, even I (will not be saved) unless and until Allah protects me with His grace and His mercy. Therefore do good deeds properly, sincerely, and moderately; worship Allah in the forenoon and in the afternoon and during a part of the night; and always adopt a middle, moderate, regular course whereby you will reach your target (that is, paradise).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Note: The Prophet (ﷺ) compares the Muslim to a traveller who should not exert himself or herself at the beginning of the journey, for he or she would become too tired to reach his or her destination. So one should adopt a moderate way of regular and constant worship of Allah whereby one should reach his or her destination (that is, paradise).

'Ā'ishah narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: What deeds are loved most by Allah? He said: The most regular, constant deeds even though they may be few.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The patient's wish for death.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The adoption of a middle course (not going to extremes) and the regularity of one's deeds.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The adoption of a middle course (not going to extremes) and the =

Concerning the saying of Allah:

﴿... وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا﴾ (سورة  
الإسراء: ١١٠)

﴿...Do not raise your voice too loud in prayer, nor say it in too low a voice, but seek a way in between.﴾ (*al-Isrā' 17: 110*)

– it was related that Ibn ‘Abbās said:

«This was revealed while Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was still hiding in Makkah. When he used to lead his Companions in prayer, he used to raise his voice in recitation of the Qur’an. When the unbelievers heard that, they insulted the Qur’an, the One Who sent it, and the one who came with it. So Allah said to His Prophet (ﷺ):

﴿Do not raise your voice too loud in prayer﴾ or the unbelievers will hear your recitation, ﴿nor say it in too low a voice﴾ from your Companions; let them listen to the Qur’an and do not recite it so loudly ﴿but seek a way in between﴾. He said: Between loudly and silently.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The verse and hadiths all point out how balance and moderation are parts of a self-regulatory model that reminds the individual to set a standard for others as well as for the self. Its applicability to all aspects of life, even prayer, demonstrates its importance in life. Its significance lies in the fact that extremes of behaviours are difficult to maintain and may result in feelings of failure where individuals are unable to achieve their aims (due to these unrealistic expectations). Additionally, the final hadith also encourages the individual to expect mercy, since it is not necessarily the quantity of most deeds that count but the quality.

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

=regularity of one’s deeds.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of prophetic commentary on the Qur’an.

«We went with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to the blacksmith, Abu Sayf, and he was the husband of the wet-nurse of Ibrâheem (the son of the Prophet ﷺ). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took Ibrâheem and kissed him and smelled him. Later we entered Abu Sayf's house and at that time Ibrâheem was in his last breaths and the eyes of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) starting shedding tears.

'Abdur-Rahmân ibn 'Awf said: O Messenger of Allah, even you are weeping!

He said: O Ibn 'Awf, this is mercy.

Then he wept more and said: The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord. O Ibrâheem! Indeed, we are grieved by your separation.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

This hadith is a poignant reminder that even at acceptably emotive points of one's life, such as bereavements, the advice is to keep one's reaction in moderation and check oneself. The words of the hadith are a beautiful example and actualisation of this reaction, since it is moderation in one's life that facilitates the emotional management of and coping with trauma.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ، وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدَ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تَطَّعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ، عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٢٨)

Content yourself with [the company of] those who call upon their Lord every morning and afternoon, seeking [to see, in the hereafter] His Countenance, and do not turn your eyes away from them, desiring the adornment of the life of this world. And do not obey him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) (at the death of his son, Ibrâheem): «Indeed, we are grieved by your separation.»

follows his own whims and desires, and is reckless in his deeds. ﴿ (al-Kahf 18: 28)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا ﴿٦٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٦٣-٦٧)

﴿The true slaves of the Most Gracious are those who walk humbly and with dignity on the earth and, when the ignorant address them, they say words of peace; those who spend the night prostrating and standing before their Lord; and who say: Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of hell, for verily its punishment is unrelenting. Indeed, it is an evil halting place and an evil abode; and who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor stingy, but follow a middle path between the [two].﴾ (al-Furqān 25: 63-67)<sup>2</sup>

These verses warn against following the example of living life at the extremes since all events, good and bad, come and go and what remains in the balance forms the foundation of our lives. It is common when things are going excessively well in one area of our lives to neglect or forget responsibilities in other areas.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Kahf 18: 28*: This verse commands to sit with those who remember the Creator and who praise, glorify, and call on Him irrespective of their worldly status. This verse was revealed about the nobles of Quraysh who requested that the Prophet (ﷺ) sit with them unaccompanied by the 'weaker' Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Furqān 25: 63-67*: These verses mention the attributes of the believing servants. They walk with dignity rather than arrogance; they respond with kindness to ignorant people who insult them; and they worship and obey the commands of Allah (ﷻ).



## Part 58: Needing direction

It is a basic human need to have some form of direction. When patients lose sight of this, the problem is, more often than not, corrected only when goals are re-set and direction is re-established.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى﴾ (سورة القيامة: ٣٦)

﴿Does man think that he will be left unchecked?﴾ (al-Qiyamah 75: 36)<sup>1</sup>

This rhetorical question reiterates the importance of being goal-oriented and having direction, especially in considering its consequences in reality.

## Part 59: Negative assumptions

One of the main reasons for anxieties experienced by patients are their negative assumptions about life. These beliefs are largely based on assumptions and conjecture, and the reality is rarely as they see it.

﴿تَمَنَّىٰ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَأَلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ نَبِّئُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٤٣)

﴿Of livestock you have eight in [four] pairs: a pair of sheep and a pair of goats. Say: Has He forbidden the two males, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me on the basis of knowledge, if you are speaking the truth.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 143)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Qiyamah 75: 36: The verse is interpreted as meaning either not resurrected or will not be commanded or prohibited.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'âm 6: 143: The pre-Islamic Arabs would designate certain types of animals for certain uses; for example, only men were allowed to eat some meat and only animals in certain conditions were allowed to be slaughtered. Such (wrongful) innovations =

﴿سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْتُكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٤٨-١٤٩)

Those who ascribe partners to Allah will say: If Allah had so willed, we would not have ascribed partners to Him, and neither would our forefathers, and we would not have introduced any taboos. In like manner did those who came before them reject [their Prophets], until they tasted Our punishment. Say: Do you have any [certain] knowledge? If so, present it to us. You follow nothing but conjecture and you do nothing but lie. Say: Allah alone has the ultimate proof. If He had so willed, He could have guided you all. (al-An'âm 6: 148-149)<sup>1</sup>

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ يُضَعِفُ لَهُمْ الْعَذَابُ مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة هود: ٢٠-٢١)

Such people cannot escape [Allah's punishment] on earth, nor do they have any protector besides Allah. For them the punishment will be doubled. They could not bear to hear, nor did they see. Such are

=were made for cattle, and even fruit and produce. Allah asks for evidence of how the Arabs knew what He had 'prohibited'.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'âm 6: 148-149*: The idolaters claimed that if Allah had full knowledge of their polytheism then He would have led them to faith. They also claimed that He was, therefore, responsible for their polytheism. The argument was highly faulty, since if it were true Allah would not have harmed them and would not have allowed Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) victory over them.

the ones who will have lost their souls and that which they invented will be lost from them.} (Hood 11: 20-21)<sup>1</sup>

The verses are reminders of the dangers of making negative assumptions and how at the point of proof, they do not pose a challenge. Behaviours based on these assumptions ultimately result in loss. The final hadith is also a reference to those people who prevent others from changing their behaviour, not out of concern for the other person, but because it is inconvenient or makes them feel uncomfortable about their own behaviour. Ultimately, they lose on two counts of benefit: earning rewards themselves and helping others.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿فِيمَا نَقَضُوا مِيثَقَهُمْ لَعْنَتُهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَدْسِيَةً يَجْرِفُونَ  
الْكَلِمَةَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهَا وَتَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ، وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ  
مِّنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَأَعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

(سورة المائدة: ١٣)

But because of their breaking of their covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard. They distort the meaning of [revealed] words and have forgotten a portion of what was enjoined upon them. You will not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. So pardon them, and overlook [their misdeeds], for Allah loves those who do good.} (al-Mā'idah 5: 13)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Hood 11: 20-21: This verse refers to those people who prevent others from following truth and guidance, thus keeping them away from paradise. They shall have double the punishment because they did not use their senses to benefit themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mā'idah 5: 13: Those who broke the covenant with Allah were refused guidance. The hardness of their hearts means that they did not take advice and their understanding became corrupted. The best form of forgiveness at the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was to treat those who mistreated the Muslims with the good deeds commanded by Allah so their hearts might become soft.

There are cases when the assumptions are well founded and this tends to justify an increase in belief in other assumptions. However, the verse advises that one should overlook these faults, to reap the benefit of relieving oneself of the tension they cause and the detrimental effect they have on one's own psychological health. It is a reminder not to become what one dislikes in others.

## Part 60: Patience

Patience takes on many meanings, ranging from persistence and actively-silent participation to simply waiting. Life experience tells us that patience in all its forms leads to a strengthening of character and thus practical and psychological success.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٣)

﴿O you who believe, seek help through patience and prayer; for Allah is with those who are patient.﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 153*)<sup>1</sup>

﴿إِنْ مَسَسَكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ فَسُوِّهُم وَإِنْ كُنتُمْ مِنْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ فَفَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ نَصَبُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٢٠)

﴿If anything good happens to you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you; for Allah has full knowledge of all that they do.﴾ (*Āl 'Imrān 3: 120*)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah 2: 153*: Allah ordains patience and prayer for both bounties and calamities in the lives of the believers.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān 3: 120*: The Muslims are commanded not to take advisers from the disbelievers in the running of their affairs. The verse emphasises the enmity that the hypocrites have =

﴿وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۗ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ﴾ (سورة النحل: ١٢٧)

«And be patient and steadfast, for your patience can only be by the help of Allah; do not grieve over them, and do not be distressed because of their plots.» (*an-Nahl* 16: 127)<sup>1</sup>

﴿الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٥)

«Those whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned, who endure with patience whatever befalls them, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.» (*al-Hajj* 22: 35)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated:

«Some of the Anṣār asked for (something) from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and he gave (it to) them. They again asked him for (something) and he again gave them. And then again they asked him and he gave them again till all that was with him finished. Then he said: If I had anything, I would not keep it away from you; (remember,) if anyone abstains from asking others, Allah will make him contented, and if anyone tries to make himself self-sufficient, Allah will make him self-sufficient. And if anyone remains patient, Allah will make him patient. Nobody can be given a blessing better and greater than patience.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

=towards the Muslims in their changing fortunes. At such times, Allah advises patience and fear of Him since nothing will befall them without His will.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Nahl* 16: 127: The command to be patient is emphasised with the reminder that even then it comes only from Allah.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Hajj* 22: 35: This verse refers to those whose hearts fear Allah and who fulfil the duties enjoined upon them, unlike the hypocrites.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: To abstain from begging (patience here includes perseverance, constancy, and endurance).

It was related that Ma'qil ibn Yasâr (رضي الله عنه) said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Worshipping during the time of calamity is like emigration towards me.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

These verses and hadiths encourage patience in the face of adversity, coupled with a promise that Allah is with the patient people; this is self-reinforcing and gives strength. It also inherently suggests self-preservation and thus a psychological buffer against the vulnerability one feels when suffering any hardship.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ١٥٥-١٥٧)

﴿We will certainly test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of property, lives and crops, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who say, when afflicted with calamity: To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return. They are the ones on whom blessings and mercy from their Lord are [bestowed], and they are the ones who are guided.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 155-157)<sup>2</sup>

In this case, patience is coupled with a reminder of the final accounting: again, a reminder of the consequences of our behaviour. This is linked to those who are rightly guided, reiterating the idea that patience is related to behaving in the best way and hence deserving of the best reward from Allah, if He wills.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of afflictions.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 155-157*: The believer is patient when afflicted and so gains rewards. The believer is described as someone who makes the above statement when facing difficult circumstances, since we always belong to Allah, no matter what our circumstances are.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِنَطْمِئِنَ قُلُوبُكُمْ بِهِ. وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْتُمُهُمْ فَتَنَقِّلُوهُم خَائِبِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٢٦-١٢٨)

﴿Allah ordained this only as glad tidings for you, and to reassure your hearts thereby; there is no victory except from Allah, the Almighty, the Most Wise. [Allah helped you] so that He might cut down a section of the disbelievers or disgrace them, so that they might retreat in utter disappointment. It is not for you [O Prophet] to decide whether He should turn in mercy to them, or punish them, for they are indeed wrongdoers.﴾ (Āl ‘Imrān 3: 126-128)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَإِن يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِن يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة يونس: ١٠٧)

﴿If Allah afflicts you with harm, none can remove it but He; if He wills some good for you, none can avert His bounty, which He bestows upon whomever He will among His slaves. And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 107)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ وَإِن عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ. وَلَئِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَأَصْرٌ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مُحْسِنُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة النحل: ١٢٦-١٢٨)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl ‘Imrān 3: 126-128: Allah commands you jihad from His wisdom and He alone has command over the creation.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 107: Good and evil, benefit and harm come from Allah alone and only He has power over all things.

«If you retaliate, let your retaliation be commensurate with the wrong that has been done to you. But if you endure patiently, it is indeed better for those who are patient in adversity. And be patient and steadfast, for your patience can only be by the help of Allah; do not grieve over them, and do not be distressed because of their plots. Verily, Allah is with those who fear Him and those who do good.» (an-Nahl 16: 126-128)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri and Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«No fatigue, or disease, or sorrow, or sadness, or hurt, or distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were a prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant: from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it; but when the wind becomes quiet, it becomes straight again. Similarly, a believer is afflicted with calamities (but he remains patient till Allah removes his difficulties). And a *fājir* (an impious, wicked evil-doer) is like a pine tree which keeps hard and straight till Allah cuts it down when He wishes.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«If Allah wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl 16: 126-128*: These verses command equality in punishment; patience is more virtuous but comes only with the will of Allah. The believers are told not to be distressed at the enmity of others as Allah will support them and they will eventually prevail over them.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The saying that sickness is an expiation for sins.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The saying that sickness is an expiation for sins.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: The saying that sickness is an expiation for sins.

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Anas ibn Mâlik narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah said: If I deprive my slave of his two beloved things (that is, his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter paradise in compensation for them.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The most difficult part of patience is waiting for justice with determination, persistence, and hope. The verses highlight that these things will come in their own time and place and that the control of all events is in the Hands of the Creator, leaving patience as the only option. (Even the Prophet [ﷺ] is told that he lacks authority over any outcome.) Through use of analogy and explanation, the hadiths are a reminder that there is positive reward for patience: not only in the changing of circumstances but also that the suffering itself expiates for sins. This empowers the individual to cope and persist in straitened circumstances.

## Part 61: Positive interpretations

Making a positive interpretation is essential in facilitating motivation to address difficulties.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ۚ (١٧) الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ الْكُفْرَ فَيَسْمَعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَيْنَاهُمْ اللَّهُ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَالُونَ ۚ﴾ (سورة الزمر: ١٧-١٨)

«Those who shun false gods and do not worship them, and turn to Allah [alone], for them are glad tidings – so [O Muhammad] give glad tidings to My slaves, who listen to what is said, then follow the best of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided and they are the people of understanding.» (az-Zumar 39: 17-18)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The superiority of a person who has lost his sight.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, az-Zumar 39: 17-18: Good news of the =

In situations where distressed patients readily misinterpret interactions as negative, the verses direct to a more constructive approach to ensure a positive outcome. This can also be understood as positive irrespective of the actual outcome as the individual would not be despondent about trying again.

## Part 62: Predicting the future

Patients may refuse or be hesitant to try interventions since they have ‘predictions’ about what will happen regarding their problems. These predictions only create obstacles to realistic expectations and to management strategies.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُحْصِيُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهَا فَلْيَأْتِ  
مُسْتَعْتَبُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة الطور: ٣٧-٣٨)

﴿Or do they possess the treasuries of your Lord? Or do they rule supreme? Do they have a means of ascending [to heaven] in order to listen [to those on high]? Then let their listener produce clear proof.﴾<sup>1</sup>  
(*at-Toor* 52: 37-38)<sup>1</sup>

Sahl ibn Sa'd as-Sâ'idi narrated:

«During one of his battles, the Prophet (ﷺ) encountered the mushrikeen (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, and disbelievers in the oneness of Allah and in His Messenger, Muhammad [ﷺ]), and the two armies fought. Then each of them returned to their army camps.

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=world and the hereafter are for those who avoid idol worship and turn to the worship of Allah.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *at-Toor* 52: 37-38: These verses are affirming tawhîd and nullifying the plots of the idolaters, asking them what they have achieved of the heavens and the earth. He asks them if they have access to the place where the angels are and if the listeners there have any evidence about the truth of their actions and claims.

Amongst the (army of the) Muslims there was a man who would follow every single isolated pagan and strike him with his sword. It was said: O Messenger of Allah! None has fought so satisfactorily as so-and-so (namely, that brave Muslim).

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: He is from the dwellers of the hellfire.

Then a man (who) came from amongst the people said: I will follow him and accompany him in his fast and slow movements.

The (brave) man got wounded and, wanting to die at once, he put the handle of his sword on the ground and its tip in between his breast, and then threw himself over it, committing suicide. Then the man (who had watched the deceased) returned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: I testify that you are the Messenger of Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: What is this?

The man told him the whole story. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: A man may do what seems to the people as the deeds of the dwellers of paradise, but he is of the dwellers of the hellfire, and a man may do what seems to the people as the deeds of the dwellers of the hellfire, but he is from the dwellers of paradise.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sent us towards al-Ḥuraqât and in the morning we attacked them and defeated them. An Anṣârî man and I followed a man from among them and when we overtook him, he said: *Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (there is none worthy of worship except Allah).

When he heard that, the Anṣârî man stopped but I killed him, stabbing him with my spear. When we returned, the Prophet (ﷺ) came to know about that and he asked: O Usâmah! Did you kill him after he said *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*?

I said: But he said so only to save himself.

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The Battle of Khaybar.

The Prophet (ﷺ) kept on repeating that so often that I wished I had not embraced Islam before that day.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated:

«'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib sent a piece of gold not yet taken out of its ore, in a tanned leather container, to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) distributed it amongst four persons: 'Uyaynah ibn Badr, al-Aqra' ibn Hâbis, Zayd al-Khayl, and the fourth was either 'Alqamah or 'Âmir ibn at-Tufayl. When (one of the people there saw this), he said: We are more deserving of this (gold) than these others are.

When that news reached the Prophet (ﷺ), he said: Do you not trust me even though I am the trustworthy man of the One in the heavens, and I receive the news of the heaven (that is, divine inspiration) both in the morning and the evening?

A man got up who had sunken eyes, raised cheekbones, a raised forehead, a thick beard, a shaven head, and a waist sheet that was tucked up and he said: O Messenger of Allah! Fear Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Woe to you! Am I not of all the people of the earth the most entitled to fear Allah?

Then that man went away. Khâlid ibn al-Waleed asked: O Messenger of Allah, shall I chop his head off?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: No; maybe he offers ṣalâh.

Khâlid said: Numerous are those who offer ṣalâh and say by their tongues (that is, mouths) what is not in their hearts.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: I have not been ordered (by Allah) to search the hearts of the people or cut open their bellies.

Then the Prophet (ﷺ) looked at him (that is, that man) while the latter was going and said: From the offspring of this man there will come

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The despatch of Usâmah ibn Zayd by the Prophet (ﷺ) towards al-Huraqât (a place at the tribe of Juhaynah).

out (people) who will recite the Qur'an continuously and elegantly, but it will not exceed their throats. (They will neither understand it nor accept it.) They would go out of the religion (that is, Islam) as an arrow goes through a game's body.

I think he said: If I should be present at their time, I would kill them as the nations of Thamood were killed.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

These verses and hadiths provide challenges to patients in instances where they assume that they can 'read minds' and believe they hold realistic assumptions of what other people are thinking. Of course, such thoughts can never be substantiated. The question posed in the verses (*at-Toor*: 37-38) above and the examples presented in the hadiths make patients return to working with the available evidence.

## Part 63: Problems do go away!

In the midst of their difficulties, patients may forget that their problem will be resolved or at least have less impact in one way or another (acknowledging that it may not be to their satisfaction). Remembering this is important to instil hope and to encourage them to keep trying whilst at the same time acknowledging the seriousness of their situation.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَاهُنَا قُل لَّو كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The sending of 'Ali ibn Abi Tālib and Khālid ibn al-Waleed to Yemen before the Farewell Pilgrimage.

عَلَيْهِمْ الْقَتْلُ إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ ۗ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٤)

¶After that distress, He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber, while another group cared only about themselves, harbouring thoughts about Allah that were untrue -- thoughts of ignorance. They said: Do we have any say in the matter? Say: All matters belong to Allah. They conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you. They say: If we had had any say in the matter, we would not have been killed here. Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death; but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts. For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts. ﴿Al 'Imrân 3: 154﴾<sup>1</sup>

﴿لِيُنْفِقَ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۗ وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا ءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ لَا يُلْكَفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَأْآتَهَا ۗ سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ﴿٧﴾﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ٧)

¶Let the wealthy man spend according to his means, and let the man whose resources are limited spend according to what Allah has given him. Allah does not place on any soul a burden beyond what He has given it. Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease. ﴿at-Talâq 65: 7﴾<sup>2</sup>

﴿فَإِن مَّعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٦﴾﴾ (سورة الشَّرْح: ٥-٦)

¶So truly with hardship comes ease, truly with hardship comes ease. ﴿ash-Sharḥ 94: 5-6﴾<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrân 3: 154*: The believers fell into a peaceful sleep when they became distressed during the Battle of Uhud. The phrase ¶another group¶ refers to the hypocrites who were in defiance of the truth. Allah revealed the secrets that were hidden in their hearts: thoughts which they tried to conceal from Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *at-Talâq 65: 7*: Any wealth spent should be according to the individual's financial means.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *ash-Sharḥ 94: 5-6*: Allah reminds that relief =

﴿وَنُبَشِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ ﴿٩﴾﴾ (سورة الأعلى: ٨-٩)

﴿And We will guide you to the easy path. So remind people, if the reminder will be of benefit.﴾ (*al-A'la* 87: 8-9)<sup>1</sup>

The verses remind that relief from difficulties does come, since no human being can live with an eternal problem; over time, something is bound to change: be it circumstance, attitude, or emotion. Furthermore, as the last verses (*al-A'la* 87: 8-9) suggest, it is often the case that the right thing to do is in fact very simple to achieve. It is only a matter of choice.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ ۗ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمُبْسِلِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة الروم: ٤٨-٤٩)

﴿It is Allah Who sends forth the winds to stir up clouds, then He spreads them in the sky as He wills, or He causes them to break up. Then you see the rain coming forth from their midst, and when He makes it fall upon whomever He wills of His slaves, they rejoice, even though before it was sent down to them, before that [sending of the wind and stirring up of the cloud], they had lost all hope.﴾ (*ar-Room* 30: 48-49)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated:

=will come and reinforces it by repeating the statement.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-A'la* 87: 8-9: There will be no hardship in doing good deeds. The one who knows that they are to meet Allah will receive admonition.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *ar-Room* 30: 48-49: Allah explains the rainclouds, the process towards creating rain, and the emotional effect this has on the creation whilst they are waiting for rain to water their produce.

«While we were sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), a man came and said: O Messenger of Allah! I have been ruined.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked what the matter was.

He replied: I had sexual intercourse with my wife while I was fasting.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him: Can you afford to manumit a slave?

He replied in the negative.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked him: Can you fast for two successive months?

He replied in the negative.

The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him: Can you afford to feed sixty poor persons?

He replied in the negative.

The Prophet (ﷺ) kept silent, and while we were in that state, a big basket full of dates was bought to the Prophet (ﷺ). He asked: Where is the questioner?

He replied: I am here.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: Take this (basket of dates) and give it in charity.

The man asked: Should I give it to a person poorer than I am? By Allah, there is no family between its (that is, Madinah's) two mountains who are poorer than me.

The Prophet (ﷺ) smiled till his premolar teeth became visible and then said: Feed your family with it.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The hadith is a beautiful reminder of how quickly circumstances and emotions change for individuals even when they have lost hope.

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<sup>1</sup> Theme: If somebody had prohibited sexual intercourse with his wife in Ramadan and has nothing, if he is given something in charity he should give it in expiation for that sinful act.

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## Part 64: Punishing yourself

Patients who have low self-esteem can deny themselves many good experiences, be it food (such as anorexic patients) or love (as with victims of abuse) or enjoyable social interaction – often as a form of self-punishment.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحْرَمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٨٧)

﴿O you who believe, do not forbid [to yourselves] the good things that Allah has made lawful for you, and do not overstep the limits; for Allah does not love those who overstep the limits.﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 87)<sup>1</sup>

The verse encourages giving oneself 'permission' to enjoy the benefits of these good experiences and emotions that Allah has put in the hearts of the creation.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«All the sins of my followers will be forgiven except those of the *mujāhireen* (those who commit a sin openly or disclose their sins to the people). An example of such disclosure is that a person commits a sin at night and though Allah screens it from the public, he comes in the morning and says: O so-and-so, I did such-and-such (evil) yesterday, though he spent his night screened by his Lord (none knowing about his sin) and in the morning he removes Allah's screen from himself.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah 5: 87*: There is no monasticism in Islam. Allah guides the believers to a middle way in all aspects of their lives without lack of or excess implementation of the rulings.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: (It is recommended) that a believer should conceal the sins that he or she may commit.

The hadith highlights the instances where patients feel the only way they may move on from their problems is to declare all their mistakes, since they feel criticism from others is deserved. This can obviously leave them more vulnerable than before (though the guilt of their past mistakes prevents them from seeing this). The hadith also encourages the patient not to punish themselves but to protect themselves from further problems.

## Part 65: Saving yourself

In instances when the pressure of a situation is overwhelming, an individual often cannot think beyond their own needs. The significance and acceptance of being able to save oneself should not be dismissed. This is important to consider for patients who feel they are not being supported or not being supported enough.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٩٥)

(سورة البقرة: ١٩٥)

﴿And spend in the cause of Allah, and do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands; but do good, for Allah loves those who do good.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 195)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «A time will come when the best property of a Muslim will be sheep which he will take to the mountaintops and the places of rainfall (valleys) so as to flee with his religion from *fitan* (trials and afflictions).» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 195*: The verse refers to those who do not spend for the sake of Allah and so throw themselves into destruction, to His displeasure.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: To flee (run away) from *fitan* is a part of one's religion.

Usâmah ibn Zayd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «Plague was a means of torture sent on a group of Israelites (or on some people before). So if you hear of its spread in a land, do not approach it, and if plague should appear in a land where you are present, then do not leave that land in order to run away from it (that is, plague).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

Often individuals do not consider the consequences of their actions, feeling that they can prove others wrong by placing themselves in difficulty and then attempting to resolve the situation. The verse and hadiths point out that one's main priority should be to save oneself from problems, not to simply ignore this advice and be rest assured that one will be able to cope, since no one can predict all consequences.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَبْصُرُونَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْمَعْجَمِ لَوْ يَفْقَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَنِيهِ ﴿١١﴾ وَصَاحِبَتَهُ وَأَخِيهِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُؤْوِيهِ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة المعارج: ١١-١٤)

«Even though they will be within sight of one another. The evildoer will wish that he could ransom himself from the punishment of that day, by offering his children, and his wife and his brother, and his kindred who stood by him, and everyone on earth, in order to save himself.» (al-Ma'ârij 70: 11-14)<sup>2</sup>

Though there may be some recognition of others, the terror will be so great that the creation will wish to ransom their closest and most beloved to save themselves.

﴿فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاعِقَةُ ﴿٣٣﴾ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِكُلِّ أُمَّرٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة عبس: ٣٣-٣٧)

«[So when the deafening blast [on the Trumpet] comes, on that day a man will flee from his own brother, and from his mother and his

<sup>1</sup> Theme: What has been said about Bani Isrâ'eel.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Ma'ârij 70: 11-14*: This is a description of the terrors of the Day of Judgement.

father, and from his wife and his children. Every one of them, on that day, will have too many concerns of his own to care about anyone. ﴿ (Abasa 80: 33-37)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَوْمَ لَا تَمَلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ﴾ (سورة الانعطار: ١٩)

﴿It is the day when no soul will have the power to do anything for another, and on that day all command will belong to Allah alone.﴾ (al-Infitâr 82: 19)<sup>2</sup>

The above verses offer powerful analogies of situations where human capacity to care for others reaches its limit. Every individual will have something they are not willing to sacrifice: their Achilles' heel. Of course, the sacrifice will vary from person to person.

## Part 66: Selective advice-taking/ listening

Patients can often be selective in the advice they take, using what is easily attainable though it may be of less benefit than something that is harder though more beneficial to achieve.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَارْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ رُسُلًا كَلَّمَا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٧٠)

﴿We took the covenant of the Children of Israel, and sent Messengers to them. But whenever there came to them a Messenger with something that was not in accordance with their desires, some they disbelieved, and others they killed.﴾ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 70)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 'Abasa 80: 33-37: These verses describe the Day of Judgement and how people will run from their relatives only to save themselves.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Infitâr 82: 19: None will be able to come to another's aid without the permission of Allah.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mâ'idah 5: 70: This is a reference to =

﴿ وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَائِمًا فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَن لَّمْ يَدْعُنَا إِلَى ضُرِّ مَسَّهُ كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ (سورة يونس: ١٢)

﴿When misfortune befalls a person, he calls upon Us, lying on his side, sitting or standing. But when We have relieved him of his misfortune, he carries on with his former ways, as if he had never called upon Us to relieve him of misfortune that had befallen him. Thus the deeds of the transgressors are made fair-seeming to them.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 12)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَإِذَا آذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِن بَعْدِ ضِرَاءِ مَسَّتِهِمْ إِذَا لَهُم مَكْرٌ فِي آيَاتِنَا قُلِ اللَّهُ أَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ (سورة يونس: ٢١)

﴿If We bestow upon the people mercy [prosperity] after some adversity has befallen them, they hasten to plot and plan against Our revelations. Say: Allah is swifter in planning. Verily, Our messengers [the angels] are recording all the plots you make.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 21)<sup>2</sup>

These verses are a reminder to remember the favours of others at times of distress. This is because when individuals become successful, they may also become self-sufficient after help has been given. This awareness is also a reminder to appreciate and utilise available support, especially if things do not work out as expected and further help is needed.

Anas narrated:

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=the pledges and covenants taken by the Children of Israel to follow the messengers and their subsequent rejection of the agreement, based on their own desires.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 12: When the creation suffers adversity, they tend to pray more to the Creator and remember His Majesty, but when the problem is resolved, the creation readily forgets.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 21: The creation changes after they receive Allah's mercy, suggesting a mockery of the blessings given to them.

«When ‘Abdullâh ibn Salâm heard of the arrival of the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madinah, he came to him and said: I am going to ask you about three things which nobody knows except a prophet: What is the first portent of the Hour? What will be the first meal taken by the people of paradise? Why does a child resemble its father and why does it resemble its maternal uncle?

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Jibreel (Gabriel) has just now told me their answers.

‘Abdullâh said: He (that is, Jibreel), from amongst all the angels, is the enemy of the Jews.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: The first portent of the Hour will be a fire that will collect the people from the east to the west; the first meal of the people of paradise will be the extra lobe (caudate lobe) of whale liver. As for the resemblance of the child to its parents: if a man has sexual intercourse with his wife and discharges first, the child will resemble the father, and if the woman discharges first, the child will resemble her.

When he heard this, ‘Abdullâh ibn Salâm said: I testify that you are the Messenger of Allah.

He further said: O Messenger of Allah! The Jews are liars and if they should come to know about my conversion to Islam before you ask them (about me), they would tell a lie about me.


The Jews came to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and ‘Abdullâh went inside the house.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) asked (the Jews): What kind of a man is ‘Abdullâh ibn Salâm amongst you?

They replied: He is the most learned person amongst us, and the best amongst us, and the son of the best amongst us.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: What would you think if he embraced Islam?

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The Jews said: May Allah save him from it.

Then ‘Abdullāh ibn Salām came out in front of them, saying: I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

They then said: He is the most wicked among us and the son of the most wicked among us – and continued talking badly about him.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The hadith is an example of selective listening and how quickly individuals change their allegiances to an idea when it involves greater commitment and challenge.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَجْتَهُمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا بِغَيْرِكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ مَتَّعَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتْنَاهَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَن لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٢٣-٢٤)

¶ Yet when He has delivered them, they spread mischief throughout the land without justification. O people, your mischief only harms your own souls. Take your enjoyment in this life; then to Us you will return, and We will inform you about what you used to do. The likeness of the life of this world is that of the rain that We send down from the heavens; by means of it, all kinds of plants are brought forth from the earth, from which both people and animals eat. Then when the land is at its loveliest and takes on its fairest appearance, and its owners think they have power over it, the fate We have decreed for it comes to pass, by night or by day, and We reduce it to stubble, as if

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The creation of Ādam and his offspring.

it had not been there the day before. Thus We explain the revelations in detail for people who reflect. ﴿ (Yoonus 10: 23-24)<sup>1</sup>

These verses offer a powerful analogy of the ingratitude of individuals for the blessings they have and again of the selective use of guidance, this time after they have received benefit.

## Part 67: Self-accounting/ self-modification

Self-accounting of behaviour is incumbent upon every individual. Even if they are not concerned about the impact of their behaviour on others, society at large will cease to tolerate immoral or unhelpful behaviour (though this is moderated by cultural values). Therefore, monitoring our behaviour is as important to others as it is to oneself.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَيَآخِرَةٌ هُمْ بِرُؤُوفُونَ ﴿٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤-٥)

﴿And who believe in the Revelation sent down to you [O Muhammad], and in what was sent before your time, and believe with certainty in the hereafter. It is they who are following guidance from their Lord and it is they who will prosper.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 4-5)<sup>2</sup>

Through reference to the hereafter, this verse is an obvious reminder of accounting for our behaviour and its positive consequences for our future.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 23-24: After receiving good from Allah, humans beings rebel as if they had never received it nor suffered any difficulties. A parable of this worldly life is offered, likening it to vegetation and its development.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 4-5: This is a description of the God-fearing people, who pray and believe in the unseen.



Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٦)

﴿Who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord, and that to Him they will return.﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 46*)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَأذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَن تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنكُم إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٣)

﴿Remember Allah during the appointed days. But if anyone hastens to leave [Mina] in two days, there is no blame on him, and if any one stays on, there is no blame on him, for him who fears Allah. So fear Allah, and know that you will surely be gathered unto Him.﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 203*)<sup>2</sup>

When patients are suffering as a result of other people's actions, such as assault or abuse, they may forget that this does not mean that the behaviour (of the aggressor) will go unquestioned, since obviously denial does not equate with actual non-occurrence of an event. The wise person will consider that any questioning by the Creator will not be easy. This then instils hope that justice will one day be done and the victims of harm will, *in shā' Allāh*, become the survivors on that day.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿... وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (سورة النور: ٢٣-٢٤)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 46*: Another quality of the people who truly submit to Allah is that they believe with certainty in the hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 203*: The believers are commanded to praise their Creator on the appointed days of the month during the Hajj (eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth of the month of Dhul-Hijjah), reciting the takbeer (the words: Allah is Most Great). The option to stay in Mina for extra time is also granted.

﴿...and theirs will be a grievous punishment on the day when their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them regarding what they used to do.﴾ (*an-Noor* 24: 23-24)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة الحشر: ١٨)

﴿O you who believe, fear Allah, and let every soul consider what it has sent forth for tomorrow. And fear Allah, for verily Allah is well aware of all that you do.﴾ (*al-Hashr* 59: 18)<sup>2</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ood (who related to us two narrations, one from himself and one from the Prophet ﷺ) said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: A believer sees his sins as if he were sitting under a mountain which he is afraid may fall on him; whereas a fājir (wicked evil-doer) considers his sins as flies passing over his nose and he just drives them away like this. (Abu Shihāb [the sub-narrator] moved his hand over his nose in illustration.)

(Ibn Mas‘ood added:) Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than a man who encamps at a place where his life is jeopardised, but he has his riding animal carrying his food and water. He then rests his head and sleeps for a while and wakes to find his riding animal gone. (He starts looking for it) and suffers from severe heat and thirst or what Allah (wished him

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Noor* 24: 23-24: This refers to the idolaters who will attempt to deny their behaviour on the earth on the Last Day and their own limbs will testify against them.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Hashr* 59: 18: A group of men came before the Prophet (ﷺ). They were so poor that the complexion of the Prophet (ﷺ) altered due to distress. He went out and recited this verse and reminded the people to send something ahead of themselves for the hereafter. The Companions donated so generously that the face of the Messenger (ﷺ) was said to have radiated with joy at the sight. Indeed, Allah (ﷻ) knows all the details of what the creation does.

to suffer from). He then says: I will go back to my place. He returns and sleeps again and then (when he gets up), he raises his head to find his riding animal standing beside him.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

It is a well-known fact that individuals are much more conscious about displaying correct behaviour when they are being observed (this is called the Hawthorne Effect). However, it is also known that this behaviour can be maintained only for a certain period of time before the individual returns to their 'original' selves. The emphasis on God-consciousness and awareness – that Allah sees us whether we see or are conscious of Him or not – is a moral reminder to keep our behaviours in check and allow the behaviour to be ongoing. The hadith offers an analogy to help patients reflect on:

- a. Their behaviour and how it relates to the given example;
- b. How behaviours can be built upon each other to form either a help or a hindrance.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ<sup>ع</sup> وَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ<sup>ع</sup> يَأْتِ بِمَا عَمِلَ<sup>ع</sup> يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ<sup>ع</sup> ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى<sup>ع</sup> كُلُّ نَفْسٍ<sup>ع</sup> مَا كَسَبَتْ، وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦١)

﴿It is inconceivable that a Prophet would ever misappropriate anything from the war booty. Anyone who does so will carry it with him on the Day of Resurrection. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned and no one will be wronged.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 161)<sup>2</sup>

When patients feel defeated, they may think there will be no recompense for any wrongs done to them. The verses are a reminder

<sup>1</sup> Theme: *Tawbah* (turning to Allah in repentance).

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 161: This is a response to the accusation of some people that a red robe was missing from the war booty of the Battle of Badr and some wrongdoers accused the Prophet (ﷺ) of taking it. The qualities of the Prophet (ﷺ) were far from taking illegal shares in the spoils of war. A warning is given regarding the seriousness of doing this and the consequences in the hereafter.

that justice will prevail. The reminder serves to facilitate acceptance of a situation where a perpetrator may not admit fault. The verse also warns the ‘victim’ to act justly, since their own behaviour must also be in proportion to the act or better.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أَخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا سَعَىٰ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٥)

﴿For verily the Hour is coming, but My will is to keep it hidden so that every soul will be requited for its endeavours.﴾ (Tā Hā 20: 15)<sup>1</sup>

This verse is a poignant reminder that one should not wait until it is too late to take themselves to account since they have no idea whether that particular behaviour will be the last thing they do.

## Part 68: Self-control

Self-control is required most urgently when the self feels most mistreated. Reactions at this point may contribute to or reduce the problem.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا سَعْتِـرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا ءَامِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَنْتَعُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٢)

﴿O you who believe, do not violate the sanctity of the rites of Allah, or of the sacred month, or of the animals brought for sacrifice, or the garlands that mark out such animals, or those who are travelling

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Tā Hā 20: 15: The Last Day has already been established.

to the Sacred House, seeking bounty from their Lord and to please Him. But when you come out of ihrâm [following Hajj or 'umrah], then you may hunt. Do not let your hatred of those who prevented you from reaching the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgress. Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and transgression. Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment. ﴿*al-Mâ'idah* 5: 2﴾<sup>1</sup>

This verse points to self-control in all matters. When a person feels they are being treated badly by others, it may seem acceptable to react with injustice or disproportionately to the event, creating additional problems.

## Part 69: Self-deceit

Patients often lie to themselves about their actions or understanding of their problems. They do this with a subconscious awareness that this is unhelpful, yet they outwardly continue to deny the problem or issue. This self-deceit tends to be about convincing themselves that their position is correct, even though the truth may be apparent to observers. Of course, the deceit is also a justification so that they would not need to think about modifying their behaviour.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يُخٰدِعُونَ اللّٰهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخٰدِعُونَ اِلَّا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ كَاثُرًا كَاثُرًا وَيَا كٰذِبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَاِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْاَرْضِ قَالُوا اِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ اَلَا اِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلٰكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٩-١٢)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah* 5: 2: This verse commands to observe the sanctity of the symbols of Allah, which include the mounts of Şafâ and Marwah and sacrificial animals, and of those acts that are prohibited.

﴿They seek to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they are not deceiving anyone except themselves, although they do not realise. In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease. Theirs will be a painful punishment for their persistent lying. When it is said to them: Do not make mischief in the land, they say: We only want to put things right. Indeed, they are the ones who make mischief, but they do not realise.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 9-12)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا فَنَتَلَوْا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ اذْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَوَدَّةٌ اقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٧)

﴿And in order to make known those who are hypocrites. They were told: Come, fight in the cause of Allah, or at least defend yourselves. They said: If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly have followed you. They were that day nearer to disbelief than to faith, saying with their lips that which was not in their hearts, but Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 167)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْتَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٢٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 9-12: This is a reference to the hypocrites who made the testimony of faith seeking only to ensure protection of their blood and money, whilst all the time continuing to disbelieve. The disease is considered to refer to the doubt in their hearts. The hypocrites claimed to be making peace between the believers and non-believers. In their ignorance, the hypocrites could not see that the so-called claim for peace was in fact mischief.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 167: This verse refers to the two companions of the hypocrite, 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salool, who went back to the city of Madinah before the Battle of Uḥud commenced. Some believers followed them, encouraging them to return to the battlefield and fight and defend the posts, but they refused. The verse indicates how the creation sometimes wavers between acts of disbelief and belief.

﴿They prevent others from [following] him [the Prophet] and they keep away from him themselves, but they only destroy their own souls, although they do not realise it.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 26)<sup>1</sup>

﴿قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿١٤﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٠٤)

﴿Clear proofs have come to you from your Lord. Whoever sees [the truth], it will be for his own benefit; whoever is blind [to the truth], it will be to his own detriment. I am not your keeper.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 104)<sup>2</sup>

The verses reflect the process and consequences of self-deceit which, once begun, has far-reaching consequences affecting not only the individual but also those around them.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكُنْهُوَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٤٢)

﴿And do not confuse truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth knowingly.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 42)<sup>3</sup>

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ ۚ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'ām 6: 26*: The disbelievers of the Quraysh tribe refused to follow Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and also attempted to hinder others from doing so.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'ām 6: 104*: Rejecting the proofs of the Qur'an and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) means that a person simply blinds himself or herself. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is responsible only for conveying the message.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 42*: This verse contains the prohibition to mix facts and lies, as well as the prohibition to mix Judaism and Christianity.

﴿It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are definitive verses, which are the foundation of the Book; others are ambiguous, but those in whose hearts is deviation follow the part thereof that is ambiguous, seeking [to cause] confusion, and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: We believe in [the Book]; all of it is from our Lord. None will pay heed except people of understanding.﴾ (Al 'Imrân 3: 7)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَتَأْهَلَّ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾  
(سورة آل عمران: ٧١)

﴿O People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?﴾ (Al 'Imrân 3: 71)<sup>2</sup>

﴿قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُدْعِي الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ﴾ (سورة سبأ: ٤٩)

﴿Say: The truth has come and falsehood can neither initiate anything, nor restore anything.﴾ (Saba' 34: 49)<sup>3</sup>

«It was related that 'Ā'ishah said:

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) recited the verse:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 7: There are verses in the Qur'an where the meaning is clear for all to see. They are the basis of the Book since they explain the abrogated rulings and include laws and prohibitions, limits, obligations, and rulings. Alternatively, there are some that are not clear except to some (learned) people since they have many meanings; these include abrogated verses and the parables, oaths, and concepts that should be believed in though they may not be implemented. Some people would focus on the more unspecific verses, since the meanings have room for distortion and conform to their false interpretations.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Al 'Imrân 3: 71: This is a reference to the Jews who plotted against the Muslims by concealing what was in their books about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Saba' 34: 49: Truth and the law of Allah have come and falsehood has vanished.



﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ  
 مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ  
 تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمَّنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ  
 عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧)

¶It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are definitive verses, which are the foundation of the Book; others are ambiguous, but those in whose hearts is deviation follow the part thereof that is ambiguous, seeking [to cause] confusion, and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: We believe in [the Book]; all of it is from our Lord. None will pay heed except people of understanding. ¶ (Al 'Imrân 3: 7)

She said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: If you see those who follow what is metaphorical of it, those are the ones whom Allah has named, so beware of them.» (Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) asked thrice: Should I inform you about the greatest of the great sins?

They (the Companions) said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah!

He said: Joining others in worship with Allah and being undutiful to one's parents.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then sat up after he had been reclining (on a pillow) and said: And I warn you against giving a lying speech (false statement) – and he kept saying that warning till we thought he would not stop.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of prophetic commentary on the Qur'an. The interpretation of Soorat Al 'Imrân: ¶It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are definitive verses, which are the foundation of the Book...¶

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What has been said about false witness.

Patients may be aware (though not actively) of the level of deceit influencing their behaviour. Therapy usually creates a safe environment for them to be honest about this. These verses warn of the dangers of this and other situations where casual lying is considered unharmed.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٨)

«Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done – do not think that they can escape the punishment. Theirs will be a painful punishment.» (Āl ‘Imrān 3: 188)<sup>1</sup>

«Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that it was said to him: If everybody who rejoices in what he has done and likes to be praised for what he has not done will be punished, then all of us will be punished.

Ibn ‘Abbās said: What connection do you have with this case (that is, concerning the meaning of these words)? It was only that the Prophet (ﷺ) called the Jews and asked them about something and they hid the truth and told him something else. (They) showed him that they deserved praise for the favour of telling him the answer and they became happy with what they had concealed.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl ‘Imrān 3: 188: This is a reference to those people who claim to have done what they have not done or are ostentatious in their behaviour and desire praise. Specifically, some hypocrites refused to go into battle with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and gave excuses for their absence in the hope that they would be praised for those excuses. The verse reminds that they cannot escape punishment.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: «Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have done...».

The verse and hadith reiterate how lying to oneself about either intention or behaviour has far-reaching consequences at both intrapersonal and interpersonal level.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾ يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّنُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٨﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٠٧-١٠٨)

﴿Do not plead on behalf of those who betray their own souls, for Allah does not love one who is treacherous and sinful. They seek to hide from people but they do not seek to hide from Allah, for He is with them [by His knowledge] when they make plans to say things that are not pleasing to Him. Verily, Allah encompasses [with His knowledge] all that they do.﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 107-108)<sup>1</sup>

These verses refer to the futility of lying to oneself and/or supporting self-deceit in others, especially since at the point of realisation, there is little defence.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿انظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٢٤)

﴿See how they will lie against themselves. And the [false gods] of their own invention will be lost from them.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 24)<sup>2</sup>

This verse refers to the problems caused for patients when listening to or responding to the lies they tell themselves.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 107-108*: The importance of referring to Allah for all judgements. In spite of their agenda, the hypocrites try to hide their works so they may not be criticised, but Allah sees all they do.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'ām 6: 24*: This is a reminder that the polytheists will be questioned about their wrong beliefs in associating partners with or above Allah (ﷻ).

## Part 70: Small effort – big reward

Patients oftentimes need encouragement to begin their journey of recovery. It is well-established that the first step is the greatest challenge. Even though it may require very little effort, it will often result in the start of significant life changes.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦١)

﴿The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah is that of a grain of corn that produces seven ears, each ear bearing a hundred grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whomever He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 261*)<sup>1</sup>

The verse provides an encouraging analogy to consider at the start of the ‘therapy journey’.

## Part 71: Social responsibility and support

When distressed, patients often relegate their social responsibility and they may end up blaming others for their problem. Whilst this may be true, it is important to encourage them to continue to do the right thing to avoid further problems at an intrapersonal level.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَأْتِيهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمٍ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَنْتُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانَ

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 261*: Spending here refers to obedience to Allah, implying that He ‘grows’ the good deeds of the believers.

اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ  
 أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٌ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ  
 وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ  
 حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٧٠-٧١)

¶ Have the stories not reached them of those who came before them – the people of Nooh, ‘Ad and Thamood; the people of Ibrâheem, and the people of Madyan and the cities overthrown? Their Messengers came to them with clear signs. It was not Allah Who wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves. The believers, men and women, are allies of one another; they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong; they establish prayer, give zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. Such are the ones on whom Allah will have mercy, for Allah is Almighty, Most Wise. ¶ (at-Tawbah 9: 70-71)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَأَعِصُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ  
 أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرٍ مِنَ  
 النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة  
 آل عمران: ١٠٣)

¶ And hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves. Remember the favour that Allah bestowed upon

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Tawbah 9: 70-71*: The hypocrites are reminded of people throughout history who rejected their messengers (peace be upon them all). The People of Nooh were drowned; ‘Ad perished in a barren wind when they rejected Prophet Hood; Thamood were overtaken by sound waves which destroyed them when they denied Prophet Sâlih; the people of Madyan were killed by an earthquake when they denied Prophet Shu‘ayb; and the cities overturned refers to the people of Prophet Loot, who lived in Sodom. The proof was established against each community before their end and they earned the torments they received.

you, for you were enemies then He brought your hearts together, so that by His grace, you became brethren, and you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may be guided. ﴿*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 103)<sup>1</sup>

Anas narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«None of you will have faith until he likes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

An-Nu'mān ibn Basheer narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«You see the believers as regards their being merciful amongst themselves and showing love among themselves and being kind among themselves resembling one body, so that if any part of the body is not well, then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Abu Moosā narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced. (At that time) the Prophet (ﷺ) was sitting and a man came and begged or asked for something.

The Prophet (ﷺ) faced us and said: Help and recommend him and you will receive the reward for it, and Allah will bring about what He wills through His Prophet's tongue.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 103: This verse indicates the necessity of holding on to the rope of Allah and the community of believers and the prohibition of division. The enemies referred to are the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, who held enmity towards each other until the revelation of Islam came. After this, they became firm allies.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: To like for one's (Muslim) brother what one likes for oneself.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: (What is said regarding) being merciful to the people and to the animals.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: Co-operation between the believers.

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'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim, so he should not oppress him, nor should he hand him over to an oppressor. If anyone fulfilled the needs of his brother, Allah will fulfil his needs; if anyone brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection; and if anyone screened a Muslim, Allah will screen him on the Day of Resurrection.» (Bukhari and Muslim)<sup>1</sup>

The verses and hadiths point clearly to one's social responsibility towards the wider community, whether this be practical or emotional. It also suggests a higher degree of sincerity and concern for one's fellow human being.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسْكِنَكُم لَّا يَحْطَمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾ (سورة النمل: ١٨)

«And when they came to the valley of the ants, one ant said: O ants, enter your dwellings lest Sulaymān and his armies crush you unwittingly.» (an-Naml 27: 18)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Bakrah narrated:

«I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying: When two Muslims fight (meet) each other with their swords, both the murderer and the murdered will go to the hellfire.

I said: O Allah's Messenger, it is all right for the murderer but what about the murdered one?

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied: He surely had the intention to kill his companion.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The book of oppression.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 18: This is an account of when Prophet Sulaymān and his army crossed the valley of ants.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Regarding the statement of Allah: «If two groups among the =

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one.

People asked: O Messenger of Allah! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: By preventing him from oppressing others.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

The verse is a reminder of how even in the animal kingdom, there is a sense of social responsibility to the wider community. The supporting hadiths encourage onlookers to not be impartial and inactive in the presence of the plight of others.

## Part 72: Source of guidance and justice/trust in Allah

The availability of behavioural advice and guidance within one's religious scriptures is the greatest of favours since, of course, it will unquestionably be correct.<sup>2</sup> When the creation is aware that the Creator is ultimately the One to give guidance and justice (two significant psychological needs), the creation cannot help but be comforted and follow what is advised.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَنْ رَضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ آيَةٍ فَلَا يَصِيرُ ۗ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ١٢٠)

=believers fight one another, then make peace between them... ﴿  
(*al-Hujurat* 49: 9)

<sup>1</sup> Theme: Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or oppressed.

<sup>2</sup> This is so provided that their text is unaltered. (Editor)



﴿The Jews and the Christians will never be pleased with you until you follow their religion. Say: Verily, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance. If you were to follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you would have neither protector nor helper against Allah.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 120)<sup>1</sup>

﴿يَأْتِيَا النَّاسَ قَدْ جَاءَ نَكْمَ مَوْعِظَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءً لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٥٧)

﴿O humankind, there has come to you an admonition from your Lord and a healing for [the ills] in your hearts, a guidance and mercy for the believers.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 57)<sup>2</sup>

Many Muslims tend to forget that Allah's guidance is not simply one option of many but is, in fact, the **only** option and the best guidance since He alone knows what is best for the creation. The wisdom behind this can only be surmised, though often the benefits of following this guidance are abundantly clear. The verses are a reminder that Allah is the Source of all guidance and what is beneficial and harmful is clearly laid down. This, then, offers very practical guidelines for living for patients, for whom it is so often the general lifestyles they have created which compound their difficulties.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمِنَ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ ۚ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ ۚ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنْهُمْ ۚ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي ۚ وَلَا تَمَّ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٥٠)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 120: The believers are warned to adhere to the commands of Allah. They should not negotiate them to try and appease the Jews and Christians, since their ultimate wish is for the Muslims to leave their religion.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 57: The Qur'an is a shield against shameful deeds, and from suspicion and doubt. The creation can attain guidance only through its teachings.

﴿And wherever you set out from, turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque [when you pray], and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it, so that the people will not have any argument against you, except for the wrongdoers among them. So do not fear them, but fear Me. And [it is] so that I may complete My blessing upon you and that you may be guided.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 150)<sup>1</sup>

In difficult times, individuals may seek to identify the correct behaviour, and this stems from *taqwa* (Allah-consciousness). This, in turn, leads them to see and make the correct choices, resulting in them being on the right path and therefore able to deal effectively with life's trials. It is important to remind the patient that sometimes success is not in solving the problem; if it is not possible to solve the problem, success is in living with it without letting it destroy their character or lives.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۗ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِلِعْلَهُمْ يُرْشَدُوا﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٦)

﴿When My slaves ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close [to them]; I answer the call of the caller when he calls on Me. So let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, that they may be rightly guided.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 186)<sup>2</sup>

It is often the case that when an individual is under stress or suffering from trauma, they may feel that there is no solution and that their prayers for help are not being heard – this is a very

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 150: This is the command to change the direction of prayer. The reasoning behind this is that the Jews recognised from their scriptures that a characteristic of the Muslims would be that they would face Makkah. If the direction of prayer had not been altered, this would have been evidence for them to deny the message.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Baqarah 2: 186: This verse reassures that Allah hears the servants' supplications.

difficult challenge for their trust in Allah. The verse instils hope in the individual that their distress or need is never ignored and that the response will come at the best time, when the individuals involved are best able to benefit from it.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ٢٠١-٢٠٢)

﴿But there are others who say: Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and protect us from the torment of the fire. They will have their due share [in this world and the hereafter] according to what they earn. And Allah is swift in reckoning.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 201-202)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ فَلَمَّا أَفْعَوْا قَالَ مُوسَىٰ مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السِّحْرُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَابِطٌ لَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَيُحِقُّ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٨١-٨٢)

﴿When they had thrown, Moosâ said: What you have brought is magic; Allah will surely show it to be false, for verily Allah does not allow the work of the mischief-makers to thrive. Allah vindicates the truth by His words, even though the evildoers hate it.﴾ (*Yoonus* 10: 81-82)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 201-202*: Allah praises those people who ask for the affairs of this worldly life as well as the hereafter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Yoonus 10: 81-82*: This refers to the account of Moosâ and the magicians who challenged him under the order of Pharaoh to display his miracles versus their magic. But Prophet Moosâ became successful and the magicians also turned to his message, rejecting Pharaoh.

﴿ أَفَأَمِنَ الَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ اللَّهُ بِهِمُ الْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ  
 حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِي تَقْلُيبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَى  
 تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة النحل: ٤٥-٤٧)

﴿Do then those who devise evil plots feel sure that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up, or that the punishment will not come upon them from a direction they do not expect? Or that He will not seize them suddenly in the midst of their comings and goings, and they can never escape it? Or that He will not seize them when they are apprehensive of the impending calamity? Verily, your Lord is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.﴾ (an-Nahl 16: 45-47)<sup>1</sup>

‘Ā’ishah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Do not abuse the dead because they have reached the destination of what they have forwarded.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:  
 «When the believers pass safely over (the bridge across) hell, they will be stopped at an arched bridge between hell and paradise where they will retaliate against each other for the injustices done among them in the world, and when they get purified of all their sins, they will be admitted into paradise. By Him in whose Hands the life of Muhammad is, everybody will (recognise) his dwelling in paradise better than he recognises his dwelling in this world.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

When our difficulties are a result of other people’s behaviour, what compounds the distress is the belief that the other person has somehow managed to avoid blame or take responsibility for their actions. The verses and, more particularly, the hadiths give hope; they remind the

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Nahl 16: 45-47: Allah describes how the wrongdoers can feel secure from His punishment because it is delayed, though when it eventually comes it may be from unexpected sources.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is forbidden about abusing the dead.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Retaliation on the Day of Judgement in cases of oppression.

individuals that Allah will settle all accounts of behaviour; even if this is not witnessed by the one harmed, it does not suggest that justice will not be done one day.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٠)

﴿What are they waiting for, but for Allah to come to them in the shadows of the clouds, together with the angels? But then the matter would already have been decided. It is to Allah that all things will return.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 210)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٥٩)

﴿O you who believe, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority. If you are in dispute over any matter, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you [truly] believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and more seemly in the end.﴾ (*an-Nisâ* 4: 59)<sup>2</sup>

﴿ لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِي أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٢٣)

﴿It will not be in accordance with your wishes or the wishes of the People of the Book; whoever does evil will be requited for it, and he will not find, besides Allah, any protector or helper.﴾ (*an-Nisâ* 4: 123)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Baqarah* 2: 210: This is a warning not to delay embracing the faith.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Nisâ* 4: 59: The verse commands to obey the rulers but only in obedience to Allah.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Nisâ* 4: 123: Success will be truly achieved only through performing good deeds, not hopes without action.

﴿قُلْ يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٣٥)

﴿Say: O my people, carry on as you are, and so will I; you will come to know who it is whose end will be [best] in the hereafter. Verily, the wrongdoers will never prosper.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 135)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفْلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٤٢﴾ مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُءُوسِهِمْ لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ وَأَفْئِدَتُهُمْ هَوَاءٌ ﴿٤٣﴾﴾ (سورة إبراهيم: ٤٢-٤٣)

﴿Never think that Allah is unaware of what the evildoers are doing; He is only giving them respite until a day when the eyes will stare fixedly [in horror]. They will rush headlong, heads raised, eyes unblinking and hearts void.﴾ (Ibrâheem 14: 42-43)<sup>2</sup>

﴿... قُلْ إِنْ أَفْتَرَيْتُهُ، فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ... ﴿٨﴾﴾ (سورة الأحقاف: ٨)

﴿...Say [O Muhammad]: If I did fabricate it, then there is nothing you can do to shield me from the punishment of Allah. He knows best what you utter against it. Sufficient is He as a witness between me and you...﴾ (al-Ahqâf 46: 8)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'âm 6: 135: The disobedient people will ultimately perish. The disbelievers are told to await the outcome of their way of life. The Prophet (ﷺ) eventually gained success and prevailed over Makkah and his enemies. Indeed, during the Prophet's lifetime, Islam spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen, and Bahrain – all within twenty-three years of his prophethood.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Ibrâheem 14: 42-43: Although Allah gives respite to the unbelievers, He is always aware of their actions. He keeps an account of their behaviour until the Last Day, when they will be terrified at the experience and finally seek refuge in Allah. Their hearts will be empty from the fear of the happenings.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Ahqâf 46: 8: Allah advises Prophet =

Again, these are reminders that justice will be done and that any accounting by the creation themselves resulting in a verdict of lack of guilt does not necessarily mean that the decision was acceptable in the sight of the Creator.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلًّا مُبِينًا﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٣٦)

It is not fitting for any believing man or believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided concerning a matter, to have any choice in that matter. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has clearly gone astray. (al-Ahẓāb 33: 36)<sup>1</sup>

﴿مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٣٨)

There is no blame on the Prophet with regard to what Allah has made lawful for him. Such was the way of Allah with those [Prophets] who came before. And the command of Allah is a decree determined. (al-Ahẓāb 33: 38)<sup>2</sup>

=Muhammad (ﷺ) how to respond to the claims of the idolaters regarding the Qur'an and himself.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Ahẓāb 33: 36: Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) arranged the marriage of a number of Companions. He went to request the hand of the daughter of a man on behalf of one Companion: Julaybeeb (رضي الله عنه). The mother, however, upon discovering that the proposal was for Julaybeeb and not the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, declined, but her daughter advised her not to go against the command of the Prophet (ﷺ). The father then went to the Prophet (ﷺ) to ask him to make the decision for them and the daughter was married to Julaybeeb.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Ahẓāb 33: 38: This is a reference to the marriage between Zaynab (the wife of the Prophet's adopted son, Zayd) and the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah reminds that the Prophet (ﷺ) does only what is permissible and what is commanded by Allah.

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَظِيرِ بْنِ إِنَّهُ وَلَنْ يَكُنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَأَدْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَعِينِينَ لِحَدِيثِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحِي، مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحِي، مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْأَلُوهُنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ، مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٥٣)

﴿O you who believe, do not enter the houses of the Prophet, unless you are given permission [and are invited] to come for a meal; and do not enter in hopes of getting a meal and waiting for it to be prepared. But if you are invited, then enter, and when you have eaten, then disperse, without lingering for conversation. Such [behaviour] causes annoyance to the Prophet; he is too shy to ask you to leave, but Allah is not too shy [to tell you] the truth. And when you ask them [his wives] for anything, ask them from behind a screen; that is more pure for your hearts and for theirs. It is not proper for you to cause annoyance to the Messenger of Allah or to ever marry his wives after he is gone, for that would be a grievous offence before Allah.﴾ (*al-Aḥzāb* 33: 53)<sup>1</sup>

The verses are stark reminders of Allah's word being the last word.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Aḥzāb* 33: 53: The verse was revealed during the Prophet's wedding to Zaynab. After the wedding feast (which consisted of meat and bread) the Companions did not disperse and stayed for longer than necessary; the Prophet (ﷺ) was too shy to ask them to leave and the verse of hijab was subsequently revealed. The requirements upon the Companions when entering the house of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) are given in this verse. This command for hijab was previously suggested by 'Umar, one of the close Companions, since both righteous and immoral people were able to enter their quarters in the mosque, which were all in the same vicinity.



## Part 73: Standing by one's principles

Standing by one's principles requires great patience and strength of character. It is at this point that people may be made to suffer simply because they are not changing their position. This is often the case for victims of bullying during the disclosure of their experiences (since there is often pressure from the abuser's family). This is usually the point at which individuals stop pursuing their goals.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ؕ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللّٰهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ١٣٥)

﴿O you who believe, be steadfast in justice and bear true witness for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your kinsfolk. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah can best take care of both. So do not follow your emotions, lest you swerve from justice. If you distort your testimony or decline to give it, then verily Allah is well aware of all that you do.﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 135)<sup>1</sup>

Again, the verse is reminding the individual not to lose sight of justice in the interactions they are involved in, irrespective of the behaviour or status of the other person. Justice is for the strong as well as the weak, for both the right-givers and the right-takers.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَكَايَٰٓةٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيِّ قُتِلَ مَعَهُ رَيْثُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا ءَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا ءَسْتَكَاثَرُوا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الصّٰبِرِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٤٦)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 135*: This verse commands justice without compromise (irrespective of the consequences to oneself, one's family, or one's friends) and reminds to not be swayed.

﴿How many of the Prophets fought [in Allah's cause], and multitudes of devout men fought alongside them, but they never lost heart because of the suffering they endured in Allah's cause, nor did they weaken [in resolve] nor yield. And Allah loves those who are steadfast.﴾  
(*Al 'Imrân* 3: 146)<sup>1</sup>

The verse is applicable to all those patients who begin to despair of their situation. It encourages them to have hope. Hope does not necessarily prevent hardship, but of course it sustains productive management of difficulties.

## Part 74: Stop and think

Simply stopping and thinking before acting is the key for patients when they are entering any form of therapy. This is because its essence is based on reflection on one's behaviour. It is a habit for which little room is made in life, but its omission has significant consequences.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هِينًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (سورة النور: ١٥)

﴿When you were propagating it with your tongues and saying with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You regarded [your talking about it] as a trivial matter, whereas with Allah it was a grievous offence.﴾ (*an-Noor* 24: 15)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrân* 3: 146: Allah comforts the believers for their suffering in the Battle of Uḥud. The verse has two interpretations: it refers either to the previous prophets and companions who were killed in earlier battles or to the prophets who witnessed the death of their companions before their very eyes.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *an-Noor* 24: 15: This refers to the slander of the hypocrites against the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). The interpretation also adds that even if the charge had been made against another woman, and not the Prophet's wife, it would still have been a significant matter.

﴿أَمَّن يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ  
 أُولَئِكَ مَعَ اللَّهِ قَلِيلًا مَا نَذْكُرُونَ﴾ (سورة النمل: ٦٢)

﴿Is He not [better] Who responds to the desperate one when he calls on Him and relieves his suffering, and Who has made you successive generations on earth? Can there be another god besides Allah? Little is it that you pay heed!﴾ (an-Naml 27: 62)<sup>1</sup>

﴿... كُلَّمَا أَلْقَى فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلْتُمْ خَزَنَتَهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾ قَالُوا بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا  
 وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِن أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي  
 أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٠﴾﴾ (سورة الملك: ٨-١٠)

﴿... Every time a group is flung into it, its keepers will ask them: Did no warner come to you? They will say: Yes indeed, a warner did come to us, but we disbelieved and said: Allah has not sent down anything; you are no doubt in grave error. And they will say: If only we had listened or understood, we would not be among the inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ (al-Mulk 67: 8-10)<sup>2</sup>

These verses are for every patient to ponder over. The final verses from Soorat al-Mulk raise an issue which patients are encouraged to consider.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَوْ تَقُولُ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنِّي لِي كَرَّةٌ فَأَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ (سورة الزمر: ٥٨)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 62: Allah reminds us that He is the One to Whom the creation turns in times of difficulty and distress, and He is the only One Who can relieve them from their difficulties.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Mulk 67: 8-10: These verses indicate Allah's justice in dealing with the unbelievers. No one shall be punished unless the burden of proof is against them and a messenger has been sent. Then there will be no one to blame but themselves. They will feel nothing but remorse that they did not use their senses for their benefit and did not listen to the message.

﴿Or he should say when he sees the punishment: If only I could have another chance, then I would be among the doers of good.﴾  
(az-Zumar 39: 58)<sup>1</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«A slave (of Allah) may utter a word which pleases Allah without giving it much importance, and because of that Allah will raise him in degrees (of reward). A slave (of Allah) may utter a word (carelessly) which displeases Allah without thinking of its gravity, and because of that he will be thrown into the hellfire.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

The verse and hadith are reminders of how regret about behaviour can be averted simply by avoiding the behaviour itself and considering what we are saying at the beginning.

## Part 75: Strong foundations

Without a doubt, the basis of any behaviour must have clear and firm foundations upon which to build ideas and healthy relationships.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ تَقْوَىٰ مِن اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَن أَسَّسَ  
بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَفَا جُرْفٍ هَاكِرٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ  
﴿١٠٩﴾ لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَن تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ  
حَكِيمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾﴾ (سورة التوبة: ١٠٩-١١٠)

﴿Who then is better – the one who lays his foundation on piety and fear of Allah, and [pursuit of] His good pleasure, or the one who lays

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, az-Zumar 39: 58: This is a call to repent before the punishment comes.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: To protect one's tongue (from illegal talk such as abusing, lying, backbiting, and so forth). And the Prophet's statement: «He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say what is good (sense) or keep quiet.» (Bukhari) And the statement of Allah: ﴿Not a word does he utter but there is with him a watcher, ready to record it.﴾ (Qaf 50: 18)

his foundation on the brink of a crumbling precipice, which then collapses with him into the fire of hell? And Allah does not guide people who are given to wrongdoing. The structure they have built will remain a cause of doubt in their hearts until their hearts are cut to pieces. And Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 109-110)<sup>1</sup>

This verse exemplifies the importance of strong foundations based on character.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُغُوا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ ۗ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتُرُونَ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٣٠)

﴿There every soul will come to know what it had done in the past, and they will be brought back to Allah, their true Lord; the [false gods] of their own invention will be lost from them.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 30)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If anyone does not give up lying speech (false statements) and acting on those lies and evil actions, Allah is not in need of his leaving his food and drink (that is, Allah may not accept his fasting).» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Any beliefs and behaviours built on weak foundations will eventually fail to be productive for the individual. Indeed, it is often the case in therapy that patients come precisely because their belief systems are built on this basis and are no longer functional in addressing their difficulties.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, at-Tawbah 9: 109-110: Allah describes the difference between a mosque built based on fear of Him and one built with the intention of causing harm to the Muslims. Just as those who worshipped the calf adored it, the hypocrites also adore their acts and inherit hypocrisy until their deaths.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Yoonus 10: 30: All matters will be brought to Allah and everyone shall know what they have sent ahead.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Whoever does not give up lying speech (false statements; that is, telling lies) and acting on those lies and evil actions in Ramadan.

## Part 76: Suddenly finding faith

It is a common phenomenon that patients who have no faith or weak faith will call to the Creator when they face problems. They surrender to the fact that ultimately they have limited power, even though throughout their lives they may have felt that they were in total control of their situation.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَاكُمْ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٤٠)

﴿Say: What do you think, if the punishment of Allah or the Hour came upon you, would you then call upon anyone other than Allah? [Answer that,] if you are truthful!﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 40)<sup>1</sup>

The verse poses a question which many atheists or agnostics and people who see themselves as weakly practising their religion ask themselves when in dire straits.

## Part 77: Suicide/suicide attempts

So often, patients who attempt suicide:

- a. either do not want to die but feel they have no other option;
- b. or are certain they want to die until they carry out the suicidal behaviour, at which point they realise the enormity and futility of the act.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'âm 6: 40*: This is a reminder that the unbelievers call on Allah when they have no one left, since they know He alone can rescue them and is the only One Who has no equals or partners in what He does.

﴿وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ نَنْظُرُونَ﴾  
(سورة آل عمران: ١٤٣)

«You did indeed wish for death before you met it; now you have seen it with your own eyes.» (Āl 'Imrān 3: 143)<sup>1</sup>

Thâbit ibn aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «If anyone intentionally swears falsely by a religion other than Islam, then he is what he has said (for example, if he says: If such a thing is not true then I am a Jew, he is really a Jew if he is a liar). And whoever commits suicide with a piece of iron will be punished with the same piece of iron in the hellfire.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in the hellfire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the hellfire (forever).» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Jundab narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «A man was afflicted with wounds and he committed suicide, and so Allah said: My slave has caused death on himself hurriedly, so I forbid paradise for him.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

Anas ibn Mâlik narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «None of you should wish for death because of a calamity befalling him; but if he has to wish for death, he should say: O Allah! Keep me

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 143: This is a reminder to the believers who, before battle, wished to meet the enemy and fight them. Allah tells them that their wish has been fulfilled and that they should be patient.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: What is said about committing suicide.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: What is said about committing suicide.

<sup>4</sup> Theme: What is said about committing suicide.

alive as long as life is better for me and let me die if death is better for me.» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

«Abu Hurayrah narrated: I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying: The good deeds of any person will not make him enter paradise (that is, none can enter paradise through his good deeds).

They (the Prophet's Companions) asked: Not even you, O Messenger of Allah?

He said: Not even me, unless Allah bestows His favour and mercy on me. So be moderate in your religious deeds and do the deeds that are within your ability; and none of you should wish for death, for if he is a good-doer, he may increase his good deeds and if he is an evil-doer, he may repent to Allah.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Anas narrated:

«If I had not heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying: You should not long for death – I would have longed (for it).» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The verse demonstrates how the image and reality of suicide and death are two very different things. Oftentimes patients wish to commit suicide but when their plan has been exacted, they realise this is not the end they want for their lives. Understandably at this point, patients are unable to consider the wider consequences of their behaviour (suicide). It is often the case in therapy that when patients realise the consequences their death would have on others and themselves, they reconsider their position. The hadiths present the consequences for Muslim patients and are also alerting others that escaping life does not mean they will have eternal peace. The last hadith, however, acknowledges the realisation that sometimes life events can be so traumatic that one wishes for death to escape from them.


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<sup>1</sup> Theme: The patient's wish for death.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The patient's wish for death.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: What kind of wishing is disliked.

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## Part 78: Taking and giving power

It is easy to feel overpowered by the negative behaviours of other people and to want to give up, forgetting the fact that such schemes are only as powerful as the individual's response to them.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا  
أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٧٦)

﴿Those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the cause of ṭāghoot. So fight against the allies of Satan; feeble indeed is the scheming of Satan.﴾ (*an-Nisā' 4: 76*)<sup>1</sup>

The verse reminds of the Solution-Focused Therapy maxim: "It is not the problem that happens to the person, but it is the person the problem happens to that determines its impact." In controlling one's response, one demonstrates the base of true power.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا  
يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي  
التَّوْبَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْحِيلِ كَزُرْحٍ أَخْرَجَ سَطْرَهُ فَتَازَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ  
يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً  
وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة الفتح: ٢٩)

﴿Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are firm and unyielding towards the disbelievers, compassionate towards one another. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking the grace and pleasure of Allah. Their mark is on their faces

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 76*: Jihad is encouraged to defend the oppressed. The believers fight in obedience to Allah and the disbelievers in obedience to Satan.

from the effects of prostration. Such is their description in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel is that of a seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong; then it grows thick and stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers – so that He may infuriate the disbelievers through them. Allah has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and an immense reward. ﴿ *al-Fath* 48: 29) <sup>1</sup>

It is sometimes advised for patients who have been abused that one effective form of revenge on the abuser is to reinstate control of their lives, so minimalising their effect on the future of the abused person (by reducing their psychological importance and further re-abuse through continuation of distress due to the ongoing trauma). The verse offers a perfect summary of this process.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ﴾  
(سورة الحشر: ١٣)

﴿Indeed, the fear they have of you in their hearts is greater than their fear of Allah, for they are a people devoid of understanding.﴾  
(*al-Hashr* 59: 13) <sup>2</sup>

Patients often misappropriate power to people and are then disturbed by the level of control others have over them. This is generally due to the ‘handing over’ of power to others, fearing them as a consequence of cognitive rather than actual fears, as is suggested in the verse above.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Fath* 48: 29: These are the qualities of the believers who were harsh towards the disbelievers and kind to the believers, their good deeds attested to by their good appearance. They are likened to seedlings growing every day from strength to strength. For this behaviour, a mighty reward awaits them.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *al-Hashr* 59: 13: The hypocrites gave the Jews a promise of support in their fight against Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), but they had no intention of fulfilling it if the Jews were actually attacked. They seemingly feared the Muslims more than they feared their Creator.

## Part 79: Taking life seriously

When they are caught up in psychological games of defence and strategy, many patients can lose the focus of their lives until their problems become insurmountable.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٧٢)

﴿Verily, We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it. But man undertook it; verily he has proven to be a wrongdoer and ignorant.﴾ (al-Ahzāb 33: 72)<sup>1</sup>

The verse is a poignant reminder that life is not a game, nor is it intended to be a series of games as is commonly and unhealthily acted out (psychological or otherwise). Such games can have serious consequences.

## Part 80: Taking responsibility for the consequences of one's actions

Patients often refuse to take responsibility for their decisions and actions, blaming circumstance, other people, Satan, and destiny. This is because taking responsibility means taking a risk to change and therein lies the real fear and challenge.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Ahzāb 33: 72*: The trust here is interpreted to mean obedience to Allah, religion, prescribed punishments, chastity, obligatory duties, prayer, fasting, and cleansing from ritual impurity. Generally, it is agreed that they all refer to the acceptance of commands and their conditions.

﴿يَبْنَئِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾  
وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنفَعُهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ  
يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٢٢-١٢٣)

﴿O Children of Israel, remember the blessing I bestowed upon you, and that I favoured you above all other nations. Then guard yourselves against a day when no soul will avail another at all, no compensation will be accepted from it, no intercession will benefit it nor will they be helped.﴾<sup>1</sup> (*al-Baqarah* 2: 122-123)

﴿وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَّ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ  
فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا  
تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنتَ بِمُصْرِخِي إِنِّي  
كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾  
(سورة إبراهيم: ٢٢)

﴿And Satan will say, when the matter is decided: Verily, Allah gave you a true promise; I also gave you promises, but I betrayed you. I had no power over you, except that I called you and you responded to me. So do not blame me; blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I disavow your erstwhile association of me with Allah. Verily, for the wrongdoers there will be a painful punishment.﴾<sup>2</sup> (*Ibrâheem* 14: 22)

Ibn 'Umar narrated that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 122-123: The people are reminded to follow Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who is described in the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. Allah commands them not to be jealous of their cousins, the Arabs, because the final Messenger (ﷺ) came from them and this should not move them to rebel against him and the message.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Ibrâheem* 14: 22: Satan will disown his followers on the Day of Resurrection.

«Allah will bring a believer near Him and shelter him with His screen and ask him: Did you commit such-and-such sins?

He will say: Yes, my Lord.

Allah will keep on asking him till he will confess all his sins and will think that he is ruined.

Allah will say: I screened your sins in the world and I forgive them for you today.

Then he will be given the book (record) of his good deeds.

Regarding the disbelievers and hypocrites (their evil acts will be exposed publicly) and the witnesses will say: These are the ones who lied against their Lord. No doubt! The curse of Allah is on the *dhâlimoon* (polytheists, oppressors, and wrongdoers).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

These verses and hadiths are stark reminders to individuals of the importance of the consequences of their decisions and that the resolution of their own problems and actions will ultimately fall on their shoulders alone. This encourages them to be active rather than passive in their decision making. This problem often occurs in cases where patients have failed to make the distinction between blame, passive problem saturation, and responsibility versus active problem solving. (See the section entitled 'Blame versus responsibility'.) Applying the example of the Day of Judgement is helpful in reminding patients of this process. It is a useful model for living, strengthening the reasoning behind decision making, and self-monitoring. This is because if the action can be justified before Allah, then, *in shâ' Allâh*, the correct level of thought has been given to it.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُنتُحُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٣٤) ﴿١٣٤﴾

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: «...Indeed, the curse of Allah is upon the evildoers.» (Hood 11: 18)

﴿That is a nation which has [already] passed away; they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn, and you will not be questioned about what they used to do.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 134)<sup>1</sup>

﴿تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٤١)

﴿That is a nation which has [already] passed away; they will have what they earned and you will have what you earn, and you will not be questioned about what they used to do.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 141)

﴿قُلْ أَتَحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلِنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٣٩)

﴿Say: Would you dispute with us about Allah, when He is our Lord and your Lord? We have our deeds and you have your deeds, and we are sincerely devoted to Him.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 139)<sup>2</sup>

﴿مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ<sup>٤</sup> وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ<sup>٥</sup> فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ<sup>٤</sup> وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ١١٧)

﴿I said nothing to them except that which You commanded me [to say]: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. I watched over them whilst I was amongst them, then when You took me up to You, You

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 134*: The people are warned that their relationships to the prophets or their ancestry will not bring a lesser accounting; rather, it will depend on one's deeds alone.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 139*: Allah pre-empts the arguments of the idolaters, asking if they do in fact dispute with the Muslims about the oneness of Allah and submission to the commands revealed. Allah is their Lord whether they accept this or not. The Muslims disown what the idolaters advance, just as the disbelievers reject what the Muslims do.

[alone] were the Watcher over them, and You are Witness over all things. ﴿ (al-Mâ'idah 5: 117)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَلَا تَقْرُؤِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٥٢)

﴿Do not send away those who call upon their Lord every morning and afternoon, seeking [to see, in the hereafter] His Countenance. You are not at all accountable for them nor are they accountable for you, and therefore you have no right to send them away; [if you did so] you would be one of the wrongdoers. ﴿ (al-An'âm 6: 52)<sup>2</sup>

﴿وَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ لِي عَمَلِي وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بَرِيئُونَ مِمَّا أَعْمَلُ وَأَنَا بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة يونس: ٤١)

﴿If they reject you, then say: My deeds are mine and your deeds are yours. You are not accountable for what I do, nor am I accountable for what you do. ﴿ (Yoonus 10: 41)<sup>3</sup>

﴿لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مِمَّا كَسَبَتْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ﴾ (سورة إبراهيم: ٥١)

﴿So that Allah may requite each soul according to what it has earned; verily, Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴿ (Ibrâheem 14: 51)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mâ'idah 5: 117*: These are the words of Prophet 'Eesâ (ﷺ) concerning those who reject polytheism and affirm monotheism, which confirm that he did only what Allah commanded.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'âm 6: 52*: This is a command to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) not to turn the weak people away but to honour them, reminding him that all are responsible for their own deeds.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Yoonus 10: 41*: This is a command to be distant from the idolaters and their actions if they deny the Messenger (ﷺ).

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Ibrâheem 14: 51*: On the Day of Resurrection, the servants will be reckoned swiftly since Allah knows all they have done.

﴿يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مُّجَدِّدٌ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة النحل: ١١١)

﴿On the day when each soul will come, pleading for itself, and each soul will be paid in full for what it has earned, and no one will be wronged.﴾ (an-Nahl 16: 111)<sup>1</sup>

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِإِثْمِكَ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكَ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا أَكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّىٰ كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾ (سورة النور: ١١)

﴿Verily, those who propagated the slander were a group among you. Do not think that it was bad for you; rather it is good for you. Each man among them bears [responsibility for] his share in the sin, and as for the one among them who played the major role, for him there will be a grievous punishment.﴾ (an-Noor 24: 11)<sup>2</sup>

﴿قُلْ لَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا أَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْأَلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة سبأ: ٢٥)

﴿Say: You will not be questioned about our misdeeds and we will not be questioned about what you do.﴾ (Saba' 34: 25)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl 16: 111*: This verse refers to those people who are forced to renounce Islam. Allah tells them that all will make a case for their own defence: no one will plead on another's behalf and none will be dealt with unjustly.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Noor 24: 11*: This refers to the event of *al-iffk* (the slander), where 'Ā'ishah, the Prophet's wife and Mother of the Believers, was falsely accused of misconduct (being in wrongful isolation with a man who was not her relative) by the hypocrites. This disrupted the relationship between her and the Prophet (ﷺ). 'Ā'ishah became very ill when she came to know of the slander and went to her parents' home, where she stayed. The Prophet (ﷺ) visited her and she confidently stated her innocence, knowing that Allah would reveal the truth and vindicate her. This verse was revealed in her defence.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Saba' 34: 25*: This verse indicates the disowning of the idolaters by the believers from their actions and beliefs.



﴿وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَّا يَفْعَلُونَ﴾ (سورة الزمر: ٧٠)

﴿Every soul will be paid in full for what it has done, and He knows best all that they do.﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 70)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيبَةٍ فِيمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ﴾ (سورة الشورى: ٣٠)

﴿Whatever calamity befalls you is because of the deeds that your own hands have wrought, but He overlooks much.﴾ (ash-Shoorâ 42: 30)<sup>2</sup>

These verses re-emphasise the role of self-accountability when managing or accommodating responses of people following implementation of behavioural change coupled with a reference to past and current events. They are also reminders that others are similarly responsible for their own reactions, not the patient themselves. This misunderstanding is common when patients confuse the ideas of being responsible for and to others.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا يٰحَسْرَتْنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ ۗ أَلَا سَاءَ مَا يَزِينُونَ﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ٣١)

﴿Lost indeed are those who deny the meeting with their Lord until, when the Hour comes upon them suddenly, they will say: Alas for us, that we neglected it! They will bear their burdens on their backs; miserable indeed will be their burden.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 31)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, az-Zumar 39: 70: This refers again to the Day of Judgement and the accounting.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ash-Shoorâ 42: 30: One of the causes of misfortune is sin.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-An'âm 6: 31: Allah describes the regret of the disbelievers when they face Him on the Last Day. In the grave, every person will see their deeds in the form of a man. The unjust person will =

The verse provides a useful analogy as to the quality of one's deeds and their manifestation on the character of the individual.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ، وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ، قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَأَشْهِدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾  
 (سورة آل عمران: ٨١-٨٢)

And [remember] when Allah took the covenant of the Prophets, saying: If I give you scripture and wisdom, and there comes to you a Messenger confirming what is with you, then you must believe in him and you must support him. [Allah] said: Do you agree, and take this covenant of Mine as binding upon you? They said: We agree. He said: Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses. If any turn away after this, it is they who are the evildoers. ﴿Al 'Imrān 3: 81-82﴾<sup>1</sup>

Defending one's principles and suffering as a result is, of course, a great responsibility and demonstrates great strength of character. It is common that when taking a stand against any injustice or

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=see him in the form of a dark, ugly-faced person. He will remain in the grave with the person and when the deceased is resurrected, this companion will say: "In the earth I carried you because you followed your desires and today you carry me." So he will ride on the back of the unjust person until he leads them to the fire.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Al 'Imrān 3: 81-82*: Allah tells of a covenant made with all the prophets from Ādam to 'Eesā (peace be upon them all) to believe in Muhammad (ﷺ), even though they will never meet. The standing given to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is highlighted in the fact that he led the prayer of all the prophets on the night of *isrā'* (night journey of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ from Madinah to Jerusalem) at the mosque in Jerusalem and has been promised the grace of intercession on the Last Day (a responsibility which no other prophet was prepared to take).

unreasonable behaviour, the individual may feel defeated and lose hope in continuing to work towards their goals. The verse reminds of the seriousness of our commitments and its implications on our lives.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ أَمْرٌ رَبِّكَ كَذَلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة النحل: ٣٣-٣٤)

﴿What are they [the disbelievers] waiting for, but for the angels to come to them, or for the decree of your Lord to come to pass? Likewise did those who came before them. It is not Allah Who wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves. The evil consequences of their deeds overtook them, and the very thing [punishment] they used to ridicule overwhelmed them.﴾ (an-Nahl 16: 33-34)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ فَكَلَّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٤٠)

﴿Each of them We punished for their sin: against some of them We sent a violent squall of pebbles, some were overtaken by the blast, some We caused the earth to swallow, and some We drowned. It

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nahl 16: 33-34*: The disbelievers who refuse to believe are simply awaiting the punishment from Allah. The command refers to the Day of Resurrection and the terror they will experience. They are warned that their predecessors did the same and they also suffered the punishment. But they were not wronged, since Allah (ﷻ) gave them ample opportunity to repent through the messengers and their scriptures which were clear proofs, yet they still denied. Hence, they wronged only themselves and were surrounded by the very thing they mocked.

was not Allah Who wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves.} (al-'Ankaboot 29: 40)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ أَوْلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا السُّوْءَىٰ إِنَّ كَذِبًا يُبَايِنُ اللَّهُ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٠﴾﴾  
(سورة الروم: ٩-١٠)

{Have they not travelled in the land and seen what was the fate of those who came before them? They were more powerful than them; they dug the earth and built upon it more than these [people of Makkah] have built. Their Messengers came to them with clear signs. It was not Allah Who wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves. And utterly evil will be the fate of those who did evil, for they rejected the signs of Allah and used to ridicule them.} (ar-Room 30: 9-10)<sup>2</sup>

The verses highlight how humankind is quick to blame others when things go wrong. The true strength and Solution-Focused method is to take responsibility and change direction.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-'Ankaboot 29: 40: This is a description of the previous people who rejected their messengers. This specifically describes the people of 'Ad, to whom Prophet Hood was sent, and the people of Thamood, to whom Prophet Şalih was sent. The swallowing up of someone refers to Qâroon. He was an arrogant transgressor who looked down on others and walked in a boastful manner. So Allah caused the earth to swallow him and his house, and it will continue to sink until the Day of Judgement. The drowning refers to the death of Pharaoh, his minister (Hâmân), and their troops. This all happened to them because of what they had done by their own hands.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Room 30: 9-10: These are the signs of the oneness of Allah. The people are questioned about the nations that came before them who had more resources and strength. Allah was not at all unjust in His punishment of them. They brought the punishment on themselves.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٧٢)

﴿Verily, We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it. But man undertook it; verily he has proven to be a wrongdoer and ignorant.﴾ (al-Aḥzāb 33: 72)<sup>1</sup>

The verse simply highlights the importance of taking responsibility for one's behaviour.

## Part 81: The power of prayer

It is a well-known fact that the power of prayer can never be underestimated, be it in the form of the five daily prayers of Islam or supplications to the Creator. It is an act that even relatives of both psychologically and physically ill patients – and indeed, the patients themselves – revert to at the most acute phases of illness.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٢)

﴿ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴾ (سورة الرعد: ٢٧-٢٨)

﴿Those who disbelieve say: Why has no sign been sent down to him from his Lord? Say: Verily, Allah leaves to stray whomever He wills

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Aḥzāb 33: 72: The trust (known also as obedience) was offered to the creation – the heavens and the earth – before it was offered to Prophet Ādam, who asked what the responsibility involved. Allah replied, “If you do good you will be rewarded, and if you do bad you will be punished.” Prophet Ādam took the trust with all that it entailed. An interpretation of the trust is religion, obligatory duties, and prescribed punishments. An alternative definition refers to prayers, fasting, and cleansing after sexual impurity.

and guides unto Himself whoever turns to Him, those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah, for verily in the remembrance of Allah hearts find comfort. ﴿ (ar-Ra'd 13: 27-28)<sup>1</sup>

﴿ وَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحجر: ٩٧-٩٨)

﴿We know you are distressed by what they say. So glorify and praise your Lord, and be among those who prostrate [to Him]. And worship your Lord until that which is certain [namely, death] comes to you.﴾ (al-Hijr 15: 97-99)<sup>2</sup>

Prayer in the form of supplication or otherwise is again powerful in creating hope for the distressed. It relieves tension, unburdening the soul, since people can say to the Creator what they often cannot say to the creation.

## Part 82: Time

Individuals often blame lack of time for not being able to make the effort to change or work on their relationships. However, the problem is not that there is no time but that time is not valued for what it is and so is not utilised effectively.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, ar-Ra'd 13: 27-28: Allah responds to the disbelievers who request miracles. The believers are reminded that remembrance of Allah brings them peace, since only He possesses this ability.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-Hijr 15: 97-99: When Allah gave the command to proclaim the message of Islam publicly, He guided that any protection offered by the idolaters should be refused. This, of course, resulted in hostility and aggression towards Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who was consoled with this verse. The Prophet (ﷺ) was told to simply put his trust in Allah for protection and success until the certainty comes: that is, death.

﴿وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِّحُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَن تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة فاطر: ٣٧)

¶There they will cry out loud: Our Lord, bring us out; we will do righteous deeds, different from what we used to do. [Allah will say to them:] Did We not make your lives long enough for anyone who might reflect and pay heed to do so? And, moreover, the warner did come to you. So taste [the punishment]. For the wrongdoers there will be no helpers.¶ (Fâṭir 35: 37)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة العصر: ١-٢)

¶By Time, verily man is in a state of utter loss.¶ (al-‘Aṣr 103: 1-2)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Allah says: The son of Ādam hurts me, for he abuses *ad-dahr* (time); though I am ad-Dahr (meaning the Creator of time). In My Hands are all things and I cause the revolution of day and night.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«There are two blessings which many people lose: (they are) health and free time for doing good.» (Bukhari)<sup>4</sup>

The verses direct us to the well-known statement that “a lifetime is long enough to learn from one’s mistakes.” The answer is in respecting

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Fâṭir 35: 37: This verse describes the state of the disbelievers in hell. Though they will request to go back to the worldly life and do good deeds, Allah knows they would not and that they are lying, so He will not respond to their request.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, al-‘Aṣr 103: 1-2: This refers to the time in which humankind exists, in a state of loss and destruction.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: ¶...and nothing but the passage of time causes us to die...¶ (al-Jâthiyah 45: 24)

<sup>4</sup> Theme: Health and leisure (free time for doing good deeds). There is no life worth living except the life in the hereafter.

time and benefiting from it to make changes before it passes. The hadiths support this idea, highlighting that we blame time for many things and benefit from time in healing but that true control and power is only in the Hands of the Creator of time itself: Allah.

## Part 83: Understanding destructive behaviour by others

In situations where the individual is suffering due to others, patients will naturally seek to question and try to understand the reason behind the other person's behaviour. The reasons will, of course, be as varied as the individuals involved.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَيْسَ الْمِهَادُ

﴿٢٠٦﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٠٦)

﴿When it is said to him: Fear Allah, his arrogance leads him to sin. Hell is enough for him – what a wretched resting place.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 206)<sup>1</sup>

The verse explains how people can move to positions of injustice towards others as well as towards themselves. Arrogance stems from overconfidence, which involves an inability to judge one's skills to master the situation coupled with a lack of self-reflection and consideration of implications of words and behaviours. This may be advertent or inadvertent (one cannot, of course, judge the intention with certainty when other people are not present during therapy). The verse is also a reminder to check such characteristics within ourselves and warns us of the consequences.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 206*: Rejecting advice is a characteristic of the hypocrite, who is not used to adhering to the good deeds commanded by Allah.



Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The signs of a hypocrite are three: When he speaks, he tells a lie; when he promises, he breaks it (his promise); and if you trust him, he proves to be dishonest (if you keep something as a trust with him, he will not return it).» (Bukhari)<sup>1</sup>

‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever has the following four (characteristics) will be a pure hypocrite and whoever has one of the following four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy until he gives it up: when he is entrusted, he betrays (proves dishonest); when he speaks, he tells a lie; when he makes a covenant, he proves treacherous; and when he quarrels, he behaves in a very imprudent, evil, and insulting manner.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

«(Tareef Abi Tameemah) Jundab narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) saying: If anyone does a good deed in order to show off, Allah will expose his intentions on the Day of Resurrection (before the people) and if anyone puts the people into difficulties, Allah will put him into difficulties on the Day of Resurrection.

The people said (to Jundab): Advise us.

He said: The first thing of the human to putrefy is the abdomen, so he who can eat nothing but good food (halal and earned lawfully) should do so, and he who does as much as he can that so that nothing will intervene between him and paradise by not shedding even a handful of blood (that is, murdering) should do so.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

The hadiths support the aforementioned verse, giving clear characteristics of hypocritical behaviour (the list enables the individual themselves to reflect). It again presents the consequences of disrupting

<sup>1</sup> Theme: The signs of a hypocrite.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The signs of a hypocrite.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: Whoever puts people into trouble and difficulties will be put into trouble and difficulties by Allah.

the lives of others. This serves as a warning that the behaviour will not go unquestioned. Even if it is not heeded by the aggressor, it should offer hope to the victim.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدُّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرًا بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجِ أَهْلِهِ مِنهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقْتَلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُم عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَعُوا وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَمَا كَانَ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢١٧)

﴿They ask you about fighting in the sacred month. Say: Fighting therein is a grave offence; but graver is it before Allah to bar others from the path of Allah, to disbelieve in Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and to drive out its people from it. Persecution is worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you turn back from their faith and die as disbelievers, their deeds will come to nothing in this world and in the hereafter; they will be inhabitants of the fire and will abide therein forever.﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 217)<sup>1</sup>

This verse serves as a reminder to those perpetrating unjust behaviours as it highlights the impact and significance of such ‘mischief’ on the life of the individual. Ironically, it is often societally dismissed as something trivial, though ongoing harassment and bullying clearly has a detrimental effect on mental health and prevents individuals from making necessary changes.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah 2: 217*: The verse gives rulings on fighting during the sacred months. The Quraysh prevented the Muslims from entering al-Masjid al-Haram. The Quraysh were continually trying to force the Muslims to give up their religion and convert to disbelief through restrictive sanctions and oppressive measures.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ  
وَقَضَاءً وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٦٨)

«Satan threatens you with poverty and instructs you to be miserly, but Allah promises you His forgiveness and grace. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.» (*al-Baqarah* 2: 268)<sup>1</sup>

«Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) came across me in one of the streets of Madinah and at that time I was in a state of janābah. So I slipped away from him and went to take a bath. On my return, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: O Abu Hurayrah! Where have you been?

I replied: I was junub, so I disliked to sit in your company.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: *Subhān Allāh* (glorified is Allah)! A believer never becomes impure.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«An adulterer at the time of committing illegal sexual intercourse is not a believer, and a person at the time of drinking an alcoholic drink is not a believer, and a thief at the time of stealing is not a believer.» (Bukhari)<sup>3</sup>

One powerful strategy to encourage patients to stop and think about their own and other people's behaviour is to externalise the problem, separate the problem from the person (as termed in Narrative Therapy), and critically look at the behaviour in and of itself. The

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Baqarah* 2: 268: This verse mentions the doubts that the creation experiences when giving money in charity. The threats of poverty from Satan cause people to refrain from giving because of a false fear. Yet Allah promises forgiveness and bounty: the exact opposite of what Satan threatens the creation with.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: (What is said regarding) the sweat of a person who is junub and that a believer does not become impure.

<sup>3</sup> Theme: What may be eaten of the meat of sacrificed animals.



point here is to reduce negativity towards the self. This is because with certain behaviours the patient considers themselves as a 'bad' person. This distancing allows the individual time to reflect and change their minds or at least understand the behaviour as being distinct from themselves. The maxim used in Solution-Focused Therapy is: "You are not the problem; the problem is the problem."

This externalisation process is reiterated by the final hadith, which isolates the behaviour at the time of the action. However, the emphasis here is more morally grounded. The fact that with certain behaviours the individual is considered to be outside the faith at the time of action impels the individual to feel repelled by the behaviour. This is useful in maintaining a baseline measure for identity and behaviour, since in such instances the behaviour has implications for one's way of life and faith. This can encourage the individual to take responsibility for the problem rather than blame the problem and relegate any personal responsibility to it.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدُّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدُّهُ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمَّتْ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيَّتِينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٥)

﴿Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a heap of gold, will [readily] pay it back; there are others, who, if entrusted with a single gold coin, will not repay it unless you keep standing over him, because they say: We are under no obligation towards the unlettered. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly.﴾  
(*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 75)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 75: When the Jews tried to deceive the Muslims or commit injustice, their reasoning was that they would not be called to account for their behaviours towards them, since Allah Himself had 'allowed' this for them.

The verse is self-explanatory and additionally points to the unhelpfulness of the idea that it is acceptable to transgress the limits of justice in situations where one has been wronged by another. This thinking and the resultant behaviour commonly become a source of guilt and shame.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى ۖ وَإِنْ يُضْرِبُوا يَدَّيْكُمْ وَيُضْرِبُوا رِجْلَيْكُمْ وَيَضْرِبُوا بِأَعْيُنِكُمْ حَصْبًا مِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ فَمَا لَكُمْ لِمَا يَضُرُّكُمْ تَتَابَعُونَ ۗ وَإِنْ جَاءَكُمُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَخُذُوا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْكُمْ أَوْ يُضْلَبُوا ۚ وَلَا يَنْصَرُونَ ۗ﴾  
 ﴿لَنْ يَضُرُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى ۖ وَإِنْ يُضْرِبُوا يَدَّيْكُمْ وَيُضْرِبُوا رِجْلَيْكُمْ وَيَضْرِبُوا بِأَعْيُنِكُمْ حَصْبًا مِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ فَمَا لَكُمْ لِمَا يَضُرُّكُمْ تَتَابَعُونَ ۗ وَإِنْ جَاءَكُمُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَخُذُوا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْكُمْ أَوْ يُضْلَبُوا ۚ وَلَا يَنْصَرُونَ ۗ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١١-١١٢)

﴿They will do you no harm, except with abusive words. If they come out to fight you, they will turn and flee, then they will not prevail. They are struck with humiliation wherever they may be, except when under a covenant [of protection] from Allah or a covenant [of protection] from the people. They have incurred Allah's wrath, and wretchedness is decreed for them. This is because they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah, and killed the Prophets unjustly. That was because of their disobedience and transgression.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 111-112)<sup>1</sup>

Much anger around being treated unjustly exists because the 'victim/survivor' tends to feel that there will be no recompense for

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 111-112: The Muslims will prevail over the People of the Book. The reference to fighting describes the battle of Khaybar where the Jews were defeated and previously the Jews of Madinah, Banu Qaynuqâ', Banu Naḍeer, and Banu Quraydhah. The case was similar with the Christians in *ash-Shām* (the Levant). However, the Jews and Christians who live under Islamic law in Islamic countries are to be protected as citizens through the covenant of Allah and the Muslims. They incurred Allah's anger as they killed the previous messengers and transgressed the limits set by the Creator.

their suffering and the perpetrator has 'got away with it'. The verse is a reminder that victory for the perpetrators is temporary. In Allah's plan, their behaviour is insignificant. It will be questioned and they will be punished: hence, justice will prevail. Allah's retribution will be much greater than that of human beings. The verse also refers to a very important point: that most people who mistreat others are usually very unhappy in their own lives, irrespective of whether they acknowledge this or not.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا يَحْزَنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَصُرُوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِزًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَصُرُوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۗ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُؤْتِيهِمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُؤْتِيهِمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْمًا ۗ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ١٧٦-١٧٨)

﴿Do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief; not the least harm will they do to Allah. It is Allah's will that they will have no share in the hereafter; theirs will be a grievous punishment. Those who purchase disbelief at the cost of faith – not the least harm will they do to Allah, but theirs will be a painful punishment. Those who disbelieve should not think that the respite We give them is good for them. We only grant them respite so that they may increase in sinfulness; theirs will be a humiliating punishment.﴾ (Āl 'Imrān 3: 176-178)<sup>1</sup>

The verses are powerful reminders that the continuation of destructive behaviour does not mean success. It is the destruction of

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, Āl 'Imrān 3: 176-178: Allah reassures the Prophet (ﷺ), who became saddened by the rebelliousness of the disbelievers, since he wanted only good for humankind. Allah informs the Prophet (ﷺ) that they will have no good share in the hereafter. These are people who have willingly exchanged faith for disbelief.

the soul since little good is likely to come from what is in essence bad and harmful to others. The verses also encourage perseverance in one's own life goals at the expense of the pain caused by those who seek to hinder progress.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُشْرُونَ الضَّلَالَةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَن تَضِلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٤)

﴿Have you not seen those who were given a portion of the scripture? They purchase misguidance and want you to lose your way.﴾  
(*an-Nisā' 4: 44*)<sup>1</sup>

﴿مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مَسْمُوعٍ وَرَدَعْنَا لِيَأْ بِالسِّنِّهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَانظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِن لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴾ (سورة النساء: ٤٦)

﴿Among the Jews are some who distort the meaning of [revealed] words, and say: We hear and we disobey, and: Listen, may you not hear, and: *Rā'inā*, with a twist of their tongues so as to disparage religion. If only they had said: We hear and we obey, and: Listen, and: *Undhurnā*, it would have been better for them, and more proper. But Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, and only a few of them will believe.﴾ (*an-Nisā' 4: 46*)<sup>2</sup>

Often individuals wish to undermine others because of their own insecurities and inadequacies. The verses highlight the active intention

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 44*: Allah tells of how the Jews chose misguidance over guidance by rejecting Prophet Muhammad's message and ignoring the accurate descriptions of him in their own scriptures.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 46*: The Jews are chastised for intentionally distorting the revelation and mocking Islam. Although the Jews understood the Book, they chose misguidance over guidance.

here and the need for other individuals to feel somehow superior to the one they are oppressing.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنْتَا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَا أَضِلُّهُمْ وَلَا أُمَيِّنُهُمْ وَلَا أَمُرُّهُمْ وَلَا أَمُرُهُمْ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٩﴾﴾ (سورة النساء: ١١٧-١١٩)

﴿Instead of Him, they call upon none but female [deities]; they call upon none but a rebellious devil whom Allah cursed, and he said: I will certainly take a designated portion of Your slaves, and I will certainly lead them astray and fill them with false hopes. I will certainly order them to slit the ears of livestock and I will certainly order them to change the creation of Allah. Whoever takes Satan as a protector [and helper] instead of Allah has indeed suffered a manifest loss.﴾  
(*an-Nisā' 4: 117-119*)<sup>1</sup>

In order to more readily understand certain types of behaviours, patients view the other as simply following Satan. The verse is powerful not only in aiding recognition of this fact but also in directing the patient to wish good for the person: a much stronger psychological position.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿يَتَّبِعُهَا الرُّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْكِرُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّاعُونَ﴾

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, an-Nisā' 4: 117-119*: The idolaters claimed that the angels were female and so made their gods appear female under the illusion that this would bring them closer to Allah, believing the resemblance made them daughters of Allah. The verse is also giving a warning that shirk (worshipping false deities) will never be forgiven and in fact the idolaters worship Satan by this.



لِلْكَذِبِ سَمْعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُواكَ بِتُورٍ كَذِبٍ لِيُؤْتُواكَ بِتُورٍ كَذِبٍ لِيُؤْتُواكَ بِتُورٍ كَذِبٍ لِيُؤْتُواكَ بِتُورٍ كَذِبٍ  
 مَوَاضِعَهُ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِن لَّمْ تَأْتِكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ  
 اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ  
 يَظْهَرِ قُلُوبَهُمْ هُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خَيْرٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

(سورة المائدة: ٤١)

﴿O Messenger, do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief, those who say with their mouths: We believe, but have no faith in their hearts, or those among the Jews who eagerly listen to lies and to those who have not even come to you. They distort the meaning of [revealed] words and say: If you are given this [ruling], accept it, but if you are not, then beware! Whoever Allah wills should be misguided, you cannot help him against Allah in any way. Those are the ones for whom it is not Allah's will to purify their hearts. For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the hereafter theirs will be a grievous punishment.﴾ (*al-Mā'idah* 5: 41)<sup>1</sup>

One of the main reasons patients cannot move on from traumatic situations caused by other people is the disappointment they feel in their behaviour, sometimes causing a further lack of trust in that specific and other general relationships. The verse warns that when such people are tried for their behaviour, their grief will only add to their own suffering.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah* 5: 41: The believers are comforted not to feel distressed by the behaviour of the Jews and hypocrites. They gain their information from those people who do not even attend the gatherings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). They are selective in the laws they obey depending on the convenience of the punishment. During the Prophet's time, the Jews would refer cases of adultery to the Prophet (ﷺ) and ask him to judge according to the Qur'an when the punishments in the Torah were too severe.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾﴾ (سورة الأنعام: ١٠٨)

﴿Do not revile those on whom they call besides Allah, lest they revile Allah out of spite and lack of knowledge. Thus We have made fair-seeming to every nation its actions. In the end they will return to their Lord and He will inform them of what they used to do.﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 108)<sup>1</sup>

﴿وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَقَدْ تَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ مِنْ مَسْكَانِهِمْ وَرَزَقَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَضَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا مُتَّبِعِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾﴾ (سورة العنكبوت: ٣٨)

﴿And [We also punished] 'Ād and Thamood, as is clear to you from the ruins of their dwellings. The Satan made their deeds fair-seeming to them and barred them from the right path, even though they were intelligent people.﴾ (*al-'Ankaboot* 29: 38)<sup>2</sup>

﴿أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَنًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلَا نُذِيبُ نَفْسًا عَنْ عَمَلِهَا حَسْرَتًا إِنْ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٨﴾﴾ (سورة فاطر: ٨)

﴿Is one whose evil deeds are made fair-seeming to him, so that he regards them as good [like one who is rightly guided]? Verily, Allah

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-An'ām* 6: 108: Allah prohibits the believers from insulting the false deities of the disbelievers since the harm will be great if the idolaters insult Allah in retaliation. Loving the idols has been made fair-seeming to the idolaters as with previous nations who chose misguidance.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-'Ankaboot* 29: 38: Allah tells of previous nations who were destroyed because of their rejection of their messengers.

leaves astray whomever He wills and guides whomever He wills. So do not let yourself waste away in sorrow for them. Verily, Allah knows well all that they do. ﴿Fāṭir 35: 8﴾<sup>1</sup>

Oftentimes individuals are convinced that they are doing the right thing, no matter how wrong it actually is. The verses warn that certain behaviours are falsely believed only to appear acceptable.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ بِإِسْمِهِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ الْغَيْبَ وَنَسُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا هُمْ فِي مِيقَاتِ الْحُرُوبِ يُوَفِّي الصُّلْحَ شُرَكَاءَ وَهُمْ يَأْبَؤُنَّ أَنْ يَنْصُرُوا الْمُرْتَدَ وَيَكْفُرُونَ وَلَهُ لَعْنَةُ الدَّائِمِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ فُسَبِّحْهُنَّ حَسَنَةً وَسَوْفَ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنْهُنَّ وَإِنْ يُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَخَذْنَا بِأَمْرِنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا لَهُم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٤٩-٥٠)

﴿Among them there are some who say: Give me leave to be excused and do not expose me to temptation. They have already fallen prey to temptation. Verily, hell will encompass the disbelievers. If anything good happens to you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they say: We took our precautions beforehand, and they turn away rejoicing.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 49-50)<sup>2</sup>

Destructive behaviour is sometimes just an unhelpful way of defending oneself, in spite of the impression it gives to others that it is for their safety.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Fāṭir 35: 8*: The person who believes that their wrongdoing will be accepted has been misguided by Allah, so there is no one else to help him.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *at-Tawbah 9: 49-50*: Among the hypocrites of Madinah were some men who did not go into battle with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), giving lame excuses regarding fear of temptation, little realising that the trial of saving oneself over the Prophet (ﷺ) was greater than the lies they told. Again, the enmity of the hypocrites is made clear.

﴿أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لَبِيجٍ يَعْشُهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ، مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ، سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ  
بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَكْدُهُ، لَمْ يَكِدْ بِرَبِّهَا ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُّورٍ﴾  
(سورة النور: ٤٠)

﴿Or [their deeds are] like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed by waves, above which are other waves, above which are clouds; layers of darkness, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand [in this darkness], he can hardly see it. The one to whom Allah gives no light will have no light at all.﴾ (an-Noor 24: 40)<sup>1</sup>

The verse is helpful in gaining some insight into the behaviour of those individuals who do not mend their ways and continue destructive behaviour towards others and towards themselves.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ﴾ (سورة النمل: ٤)  
﴿As for those who do not believe in the hereafter, We have made their deeds fair-seeming to them, so they wander blindly [in their misguidance].﴾ (an-Naml 27: 4)<sup>2</sup>  
﴿وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ﴾  
(سورة النمل: ١٤)

﴿They rejected the signs, although in their hearts they were certain that they were true, out of wickedness and arrogance. So see what was the fate of those who spread mischief.﴾ (an-Naml 27: 14)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Noor 24: 40: This verse presents a parable of the heart of the disbeliever, whose ignorance is due simply to following someone without knowing where they are going. The darkness refers to their speech, their deeds, their coming, their going, and their destiny. The one whom Allah does not guide is a loser.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 4: The disbelievers have been left to be lost in their misguidance.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, an-Naml 27: 14: This is a reference to the =

It is often the case that in spite of appearances, people oppressing others do so in the belief that what they are doing is for the good of the other person. They convince themselves of their position, even though it is wrong.

## Part 84: Unhelpful role models

Oftentimes, individuals take role models unquestioningly, without any identifiable benefit and then model their behaviour. The details of what benefit is taken is rarely considered until the modelling of behaviour causes a challenge and a problem is created.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَسْمَعُ مَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا لَنَآءَابَاءُ نَا أَوْلُو كَات  
ءَابَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ  
الَّذِي يَتَّبِعُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءَ وَنِدَاءَ صُمُّ بِكُمْ عَمِيَ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾﴾ (سورة  
البقرة: ١٧٠-١٧١)

﴿When it is said to them: Follow what Allah has revealed, they say: Nay, we will follow the ways of our forefathers. [Would they do that] even though their forefathers did not understand a thing and were not guided? The likeness of those who disbelieve is that of animals whom the herdsman calls, but they hear nothing except the sound of shouts and cries. Deaf, dumb, and blind, they do not understand.﴾  
(*al-Baqarah* 2: 170-171)<sup>1</sup>

=account of Prophet Moosâ and his challenge to the magicians of Pharaoh, who were subsequently defeated. Deep down in their hearts they were well aware that they were wrong but denied it due to their own arrogance.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 2: 170-171: The disbelievers are likened to wandering animals who do not understand what the shepherd says when he calls to them. They respond only to unintelligible sounds. They do not see the path of truth.

The verse reminds us of the inherited familial and cultural behaviours that are adopted in the face of adversity, even though upon close examination they are unhelpful and counterproductive since they are not based on any sort of truth. The analogy of the cattle is helpful in making the point more forcefully and facilitating reflection.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿... قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَن يُؤْتَىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيْتُمْ أَوْ يُحَاجُّوكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٣)

﴿... Say [O Muhammad]: True guidance is the guidance of Allah. [They say:] Do not believe that anyone else could be given something similar to what you were given, or that they could use it to engage you in argument before your Lord. Say: All bounties are in the Hand of Allah; He grants them to whomever He will. And Allah is All-encompassing, All-knowing.﴾ (*Āl 'Imrān* 3: 73)<sup>1</sup>

The verse is self-explanatory in its advice. What is not from the halal is advised against. It is also a reminder of how the baseline must always be Allah's guidance, which is timeless, and not current social trends of what is deemed to be acceptable behaviour. This is particularly important in contemporary secular models of therapy, which can pathologise religion and so whole nations of people.

Allah (ﷻ) mentions:

﴿وَتَرَىٰ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْآثِمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكَلِهِمُ السُّحْتُ لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦٢)

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Āl 'Imrān* 3: 73: This is a response to the Jews who would attend the morning prayer with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and leave the religion in the evening, telling the weak Muslims that they had discovered some faults in their religion. They told each other that they should not share their knowledge about Islam so as to not encourage the people to incline towards it. But Allah guides the hearts of the faithful through clear proofs, and this occurred in spite of what the Jews intended.

«You see many of them rushing into sin and transgression, and devouring unlawful earnings. Wretched indeed is what they have been doing.﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 62)<sup>1</sup>

Hārithah ibn Wahb al-Khuzā'i narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say:

«May I tell you of the people of paradise? Every weak and poor obscure person whom the people look down upon but if he takes an oath to do something, his oath is fulfilled by Allah. And may I inform you of the people of the hellfire? They are all those violent, arrogant, and stubborn people.» (Bukhari)<sup>2</sup>

Hatred and anger can be contagious when tolerance levels are low. It is common that when one is hurt by someone, one tries and retaliates with the same level of negativity as a way to assume power and control of the situation. Unfortunately, patients often find that they become stuck in this cycle and the problem which initiated the tension remains unresolved. The verse and hadith identify key destructive behaviours.

## Part 85: Valuing yourself and others

It is often the case that individuals accept ill treatment and do not reflect on their own behaviour simply because they do not value themselves and consequently cannot value others.

﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ﴾ (سورة التين: ٤)

«Verily We have created man in the best of conditions.﴾ (at-Teen 95: 4)<sup>3</sup>

The verse is a poignant reminder to value and appreciate the creation, be it oneself or others.

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, al-Mā'idah 5: 62*: The disbelievers hurry towards the prohibited and illegal things such as interest, continually transgressing against the rights of others through such behaviours.

<sup>2</sup> Theme: The statement of Allah: «Harsh and, furthermore, ignoble.﴾ (al-Qalam 68: 13)

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir, at-Teen 95: 4*: Humankind was created in the best form, beautified by the Creator (ﷻ).

## CONCLUSION

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The state of our hearts is reflected by the condition of our souls. Since our brains are quite literally (physiologically) connected to our hearts, what we think is in essence who we are. It is our thoughts that interpret our feelings about the world and our experiences; it is those very thoughts that drive our behaviours throughout our lives.

In these connections, we see that the thoughts we hold and the way in which we choose to express them determines our complete health – mind, body and soul – thus holding the key to not only our future in this worldly life but also our destination in the hereafter. We are reminded of this in the hadith:

«Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it is sound, the whole body is sound, but if it is corrupt, then the whole body is corrupt – and that is the heart.» (Bukhari)

The Quran and Sunnah help us to nurture the relationship between our internal and external worlds, encouraging balance, consistency, and reflection. Time and time again we are advised to reflect on the condition of our hearts and minds: to know our thoughts and the intentions behind them and see them for what they truly are.

The process feels awesome, can become arduous, and often seems irrelevant to our worldly lives. Our focus centres upon our immediate gratification and what is convenient in the present, so we accommodate our unhealthy thoughts and support each other to trivialise the consequences. In avoiding the challenge this process requires, we forget that there is the mercy of Allah (ﷻ) and in that state of hopelessness we are no longer merciful to ourselves or each



other. In emotionally detaching ourselves from the ultimate goal of pleasing Allah (ﷻ) – and in doing so pleasing ourselves – we lose sight of paradise, causing ourselves a greater injustice.

Essentially, our lives are about making a constant choice between living in light and living in darkness. This process must be **active**. In this we see the power of our thoughts and the roles we hold in shaping our destiny.

Bringing our darkest thoughts into the light requires patient, self-compassion, and persistence. The reward is as Allah promises:

﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ...﴾ (سورة

البقرة: ٢٥٧)

﴿Allah is the Protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 257)

That light is surely a goal worthy of lifelong pursuit.



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# GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC TERMS<sup>1</sup>

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<i>abu</i> (or <i>abi</i> )	أَبُو، أَبِي	father (of)
<i>āmeen</i>	آمِينَ	O Allah, accept our invocation; amen
<i>Anṣār</i>	الْأَنْصَار	'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah
<i>banu</i> (or <i>bani</i> )	بَنُو، بَنِي	<i>lit.</i> 'children (of)'; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor
<i>Dajjāl</i>	الدَّجَال	the antichrist (anti-Christ); in Islamic teachings, he is a false Messiah who will deceive the people and cause harm to humankind until he is killed by Jesus (ﷺ)
<i>da'wah</i>	الدَّعْوَة	disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam
<i>dhâlimoon</i>	الظَّالِمُونَ	polytheists, wrongdoers, oppressors
<i>dhulm</i>	الظُّلْم	oppression, wrongdoing

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<sup>1</sup> The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (that is, is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

<i>du'ā'</i>	الدُّعَاءُ	supplication; invocation
<i>fiqh</i>	الفِقْه	Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law
<i>fitnah</i> (pl. <i>fitan</i> )	الْفِتْنَة	<i>lit.</i> trial, temptation; (attempting to sow) discord between Muslims
<i>fiṭrah</i>	الْفِطْرَة	the natural inclination (of humans) instilled by Allah
<i>ghusl</i>	الغُضُل	ritual shower necessary after a major impurity, e.g., after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period
Hadith ( <i>Hadeeth</i> )	الْحَدِيث	the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law
hadith ( <i>hadeeth</i> )	حَدِيث	a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers
Hajj ( <i>Hajj</i> )	الْحَجْج	the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his/her lifetime
halal ( <i>halâl</i> )	حَالَال	permitted according to Islamic law
<i>haq</i>	الْحَقْ	truth, rights, divine truth
<i>hayâ'</i>	الْحَيَاء	modesty, bashfulness, shyness, moral conscience and self-respect
hijab ( <i>hijâb</i> )	الْحِجَاب	dress code ordained by Allah for believing women

<i>hikmah</i>	الحِكْمَة	<i>lit.</i> wisdom; it also refers to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad
<i>Iblees</i>	إِبْلِيسَ	another name for Satan in Arabic
<i>ifk</i>	الإِفْكَ	forged statement; a lie or slander
<i>iḥrām</i>	الإِحْرَام	the state of consecration for Hajj or ‘umrah; the special clothing worn by the pilgrim in such a state
<i>iḥsân</i>	الإِحْسَان	goodness, perfection, excellence; to worship Allah as if you see Him, but even if you do not see Him you know that He sees you
<i>in shâ’ Allâh</i>	إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ	God willing
<i>janâbah</i>	الْجَنَابَة	a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission
<i>Jibreel</i>	جِبْرِيلَ	the Arabic name for Gabriel (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur’an and other communications from Allah (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) to Prophet Muhammad (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ)
<i>jihād (jihâd)</i>	الْجِهَادَ	struggle or striving (in Allah’s cause)
<i>jinn (plural of jinni)</i>	الْجِنِّ	non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as ‘demons’ or ‘devils’; They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some people try to ‘foretell’ the future by contacting a jinni. Some

		disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can tell them what will happen in the future, near or far, or that the jinn can provide people with riches or some sort of power.
<i>lâ ilâha illâ Allâh</i>	لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ	there is none worthy of worship other than Allah
<i>mahr</i>	المهر	obligatory marriage gift presented by the groom to the bride, and a necessary stipulation of the marriage contract
<i>al-Masjid al-Harâm</i>	المسجد الحرام	the Sacred Mosque in Makkah where the Kaaba is situated
<i>mufaṣṣal</i>	المفصل	chapters found in the last seventh of the Qur'an, starting from Soorat Qâf (no. 50)
<i>Muhâjiroon (or Muhâjireen)</i>	المهاجرون	<i>lit.</i> 'emigrants' of any kind; used in Islamic discourse to refer to people who emigrate to safeguard their religion, specifically the Muslims who migrated with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah
<i>mushrikoon (sg. mushrik)</i>	المشركون	polytheists and idolaters
<i>nafl (pl. nawâfil)</i>	النفل	supererogatory acts and deeds; one who performs them is rewarded, but one who neglects them is not punished
<i>qadar (or qadr)</i>	القدر	divine predestination; destiny; power; exact measure

qibla ( <i>qiblah</i> )	الْقِبْلَةُ	the bearing from the Kaaba to any point on Earth; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer
Quraysh	قُرَيْشٌ	the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism
<i>rak'ah</i> (pl. <i>raka'ât</i> )	الرَّكْعَةُ	a unit of the formal prayer ( <i>ṣalâh</i> ); a set of movements, accompanied by recitation of Qur'an and other prescribed words of worship, in which the worshipper stands, bows, stands upright again, then prostrates twice
Ramadan ( <i>Ramaḍân</i> )	رَمَضَانَ	the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting and the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed
<i>rooḥ</i>	الرُّوحُ	soul, spirit
<i>ṣadaqah</i>	الصَّدَقَةُ	voluntary charity; in the Qur'an and Hadith, the word is often used to refer to zakat
<i>salâm</i>	السَّلَامُ	<i>lit.</i> 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace
<i>ṣalât</i> or <i>ṣalâh</i>	الصَّلَاةُ	formal prayer: a combination of physical postures, recitation and supplication
<i>Shâm</i>	الشَّامُ	the area that includes the current states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine



Sharia ( <i>Sharee'ah</i> )	الشَّرِيعَة	Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah
<i>shirk</i>	الشُّرْك	associating partners with Allah
<i>soorah</i> or <i>soorat</i>	سُورَة	chapter of the Qur'an
<i>subhân Allâh</i>	سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ	glory be to Allah
Sunnah	السُّنَّة	the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law
<i>tafseer</i>	التَّفْسِير	exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings ( <i>usu.</i> of Qur'anic verses)
<i>tâghoot</i>	الطَّاغُوت	idols; everything evil that is worshipped
<i>tahajjud</i>	التَّهَجُّد	voluntary night prayer offered between ' <i>ishâ</i> ' and <i>fajr</i>
<i>taqwâ</i>	التَّقْوَى	fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah
<i>tawhêed</i>	التَّوْحِيد	the Oneness of Allah: that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners
<i>tayammum</i>	التَّيَمُّم	dry-earth ablution, performed when no pure water is available
Ummah	الْأُمَّة	community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims

'umrah	الْعُمْرَة	a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah
zakat ( <i>zakāh</i> or <i>zakāt</i> )	الزَّكَاةُ	obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to other Muslims who qualify as recipients



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