بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

How Do I Cope with the Trials, Suffering and Hardships in My Life?

By Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wāhid Alam

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation. May Allah extol the Messenger in the highest company of Angels and grant him peace; and likewise, his family, his Companions and all those who truly follow him until the Day of Resurrection.

From the wisdom of Allah is that He tries His worshippers with tribulation, hardship, calamities, illnesses and chronic diseases so as to distinguish the righteous worshippers from the wicked wrong-doers, the pure from the foul, the truthful from the liars, the patient from those who show no restraint, the one

who is hopeful of the Allah's reward from the one who denies it. These trials make manifest and distinguish the awliyā', who are the beloved ones of Allah, from His enemies.

So, the awliyā' of Allah are the true believers—they are patient when struck with calamities and are pleased with the Decree (Qadā) of Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ)—rather, they are grateful to Allah for it, because they know it will ultimately be good for their lives and their Hereafter. They know that Imān and patience in times of hardship expiates sins and raises ranks in the Jannah. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has informed us regarding the state of the believers in the face of trials, tests and calamities:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

"And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of

wealth, loss of life, loss of fruit and crops, but give glad tidings to the patient ones."

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

"Those who, when afflicted with calamity, say: 'Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.'"

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

"They are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." (Al-Baqarah 2: 154-157)

So, the people of Imān are given firmness, and they are patient. Allah gives them a firm-footing and steadfastness in this life and the next, just as Allah stated:

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۚ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ

"Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. Allah sends astray the wrongdoers—and Allah does what He wills." (Ibrahim 14:27)

The believers know that if they are obedient, God-fearing, perform righteous deeds and are patient in the face of difficulties and calamities that Allah will reward them, recompense them, expiate their sins, show them mercy and raise them in rank.

So, the believers must return to Allah with their hearts and with their deeds in sincere repentance—they must abandon sinning, rude conduct and immorality, and increase in the acts of obedience and piety—and seek out more and more good deeds to perform such as the Night Prayer, giving in charity, visiting the sick, making dhikr and du'ā, kindness to parents, da'wah to family members and

neighbours, enjoining what is good, forbidding what is wrong, and so on.

Returning to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ) is the greatest of ways to remove calamities, hardships, epidemic diseases, chronic illnesses, depression and sadness. Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ):

وَبَلَوْنَاهُم بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"We tested them with good times and bad that perhaps they would return [to obedience]." (Al-A'rāf 7:168)

So, disobedience, going overboard in sins, lewdness and immorality are from the causes of corruption, tribulation and hardship in the lives of people. Allah stated:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُم بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea due to what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste something of the consequence of what they have done that perhaps they will return [to obedience].” (Ar-Rūm 30:41)

Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) decrees whatever He decrees of good and evil, and whatever takes place of corruption on land and sea so that mankind may return to the Truth—that they may rush to repent for their sins and transgressions—and they might hasten to His obedience and to the obedience of His Messenger (صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ).

That is because unbelief, and disobedience to Allah (تَبَارَكَوَتَعَالَىٰ) and His Messenger (صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ) are the reason behind every evil and calamity in this world and punishment in the Hereafter.

And it is the Tawhīd of Allah, which is to single Him out with worship Him, alone and without partners—and to have Imān in Him, to believe in the resurrection after death and in the Day of Judgement, to believe in Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and what was revealed to him, to obey Allah and to obey His Messenger (عليه الصلاة والسلام), to hold fast to His Sharī'ah and invite others to it, to advise (and even refute) the one who opposes the Sunnah and the Sharī'ah—**it is in this that lies the means to every goodness in this world and the next**.

The believers are steadfast upon that, firm and resolute—they advise each other with this methodology of rectification, and they cooperate with each other upon that. In that there is for them honour in this world and in the Hereafter, and salvation from every hated affair and torment, and protection from every fitnah (tribulation). With this, they can bear

any calamity and hardship because their hearts are at ease with the Decree of Allah and His Ordainment.

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ) has informed us that the affair is in His Hands, and He explained that liberation from calamities that strike the servant are achieved by returning to Allah with humility, sincerity, subservience and obedience. Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) stated:

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And verily, We will make them taste the near torment (the trials in the life of this world) prior to the supreme torment in the Hereafter, in order that they may repent and return [to obedience]." (As-Sajdah 32:21)

And He (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ) said:

وَمَا نُرِيهِم مِّنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا ۖ وَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And We showed them not a sign except that it was greater than its sibling, and We seized them with an affliction that perhaps they might return [to obedience]." (Az-Zukhruf 43:48)

And He (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ) said:

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْقُرَىٰ وَصَرَّفْنَا الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

"And indeed, We have destroyed towns (populations) around you, and We have repeatedly shown them the proofs and signs of revelation in various ways so that they might return [to obedience]." (Al-Ahqāf 46:27)

People deal with calamity, grief, hardship and death in two ways: There are those who return to Allah, and those that follow the Shaytān and their desires without true guidance.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ

"And We have already sent messengers to nations before you, O Muhammad. Then We seized them with poverty and hardship that perhaps they might humble themselves to Allah."

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُم بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَٰكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Then why, when Our punishment came to them, did they not humble themselves? Instead their hearts became hardened and Shaytān beautified to them that which they were doing!" (An'ām 6:42-43)

So, from the people are those who return to Allah and humble themselves, repent, they truly depend upon Allah as He deserves, they seek refuge with Him through supplications (du'ā), they are obedient to His commands and stay well-away from sins—and especially far away from the major sins.

Then there are those whose hearts are hard, they follow Shaytān because he beautifies for them the wicked deeds, sins and acts of disobedience. They do not mix with the righteous, they don't care about their honour, they are absent from the mosques of Ahlus-Sunnah and Salafiyyah, they are absent from Jumu'ah and the congregational prayers, they do not attend the gatherings of knowledge, they do not guard their Prayers, they do not pay the Zakāh or Fast Ramadān and they are easy going with what Allah has prohibited. So, they exchange bribes, buy

and sell stolen goods, deal in interest (ribā), they flirt with the opposite sex and engage in lewd and immoral behaviour such as pornography, pop-culture and movies.

So, ask yourself, O servant of Allah, which of these two categories of people do you belong to? Are you from the people of obedience and nearness to Allah, or are you from the people of sin, disobedience and a follower of Shaytān?

Take account of yourself now, repent to Allah (جَلَّ وَعَلَا) and seek His forgiveness—race to His obedience, stay away from sins and cooperate with the believers upon righteousness and piety. Do as much good as you can because Allah loves the doers of good, be plentiful in the remembrance of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) and seeking His forgiveness, enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil so that you may receive Allah's mercy.

And learn from others who have been struck with calamities because of their sins, evil companionship, innovations and following of desires. Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) forgives those who repent to Him, and He is merciful with the doers of good and He will give a good end to the righteous (muttaqīn).

Part Two:

From the wisdom of Allah when these calamities, trials, disasters and diseases strike is that people are shown their weakness and inability regardless of how strong they think they are. It makes us realise, yet again, the greatness of Allah (جَلَّ وَعَلَا), His power, ability and strength. So, a person must not become proud and arrogant and seek to oppress and show tyranny towards others. It is a must that we depend on Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and show kindness and mercy to the creation, and especially the weak and poor. These viruses and

diseases by which Allah kills humans in large numbers is by far the least of His armies, **"and no one knows the armies of your Lord except He."**

Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ) has, in the past, sent to the arrogant disobedient ones His armies to destroy them—and there is no safety from His destruction except by returning to Him and repenting to Him (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). Allah (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ) stated:

وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ ۖ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُم مُّوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا سَابِقِينَ

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنبِهِ ۖ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَغْرَقْنَا ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَٰكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

"And We destroyed Qarūn, Fir'awn (Pharaoh), and [his general] Hāmān. Indeed, Mūsā came to them with clear proofs and

signs, but they were arrogant in the land, yet they could not escape Our punishment.

So We punished each of them for his sins—of them were some on whom We sent a violent wind with showers of stones, and of them were some who were overtaken by a punishing awful cry, and of them were some whom We caused the earth to swallow, and of them were some whom We drowned. It was not Allah Who wronged them, but they wronged themselves." (Al-'Ankabūt 29: 39-40)

These calamities and disasters can be a blessing in disguise for the believer and a reason for him to return back to Allah (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) so that he becomes righteous, shows patience and hopes for the reward from Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ). He looks at these affairs as a reminder, and a

cause that leads him to piety, just as Allah's Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

عَجَبًا لأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لأَحَدٍ إِلاَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءُ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءُ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ

"Amazing indeed are the affairs of a believer for there is good in every affair of his —and that is not the case with anyone except for a believer. If he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks Allah, thus that is good for him. And if he is afflicted with hardship, he shows patience, and that is good for him." (Muslim, 2999)

Shaikhul-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) stated: "From the perfection of the bounties of Allah on His believing worshippers is that He sends upon them hardships and harm, and that which leads them to seek refuge with Him

alone, so they supplicate to Him, being sincere to Him in their Religion. Their hope is in Him (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and they do not place their hope in other than Him, their hearts are attached to Him (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and not to other than Him. So, they attain reliance upon Him and utter dependence, they achieve the sweetness of Imān, its pleasure and delight, and complete freedom from polytheism.

And these bounties upon them are greater than the removal of actual sickness, fear and infertility, and greater than the attainment of ease and the removal of the hardships of life—because these things are the delights of the body and worldly bounties that the unbeliever may receive in greater abundance than even the believer.

As for that which is attained by the those who worship only Allah (Ahlut-Tawhīd), who are sincere to Him in their Religion is that the

stronger the believer, the greater the trial—but this is too great of an affair for everyone to comprehend. So, each believer receives a share of it according to his Imān." There occurs in a hadith:

عَنْ مُصْعَبِ بْنِ سَعْدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللهِ أَيُّ النَّاسِ أَشَدُّ بَلاَءً قَالَ الأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الأَمْثَلُ فَالأَمْثَلُ فَيُبْتَلَى الرَّجُلُ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَإِنْ كَانَ دِينُهُ صُلْبًا اشْتَدَّ بَلاَؤُهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي دِينِهِ رِقَّةٌ ابْتُلِيَ عَلَى حَسَبِ دِينِهِ فَمَا يَبْرَحُ الْبَلاَءُ بِالْعَبْدِ حَتَّى يَتْرُكَهُ يَمْشِي عَلَى الأَرْضِ مَا عَلَيْهِ خَطِيئَةٌ

Mus'ab ibn Sa'd narrated from his father who stated: I asked: **"O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is tried most severely?"** He said: **"The Prophets, then those who are most like them, then those most like them. And a person is tried according to his religion—if he is firm in his religion, then his trials are more severe, and if he is weak in**

his religion, then he is tried according to the strength of his religion. So, a person continues to be tried until he is left walking upon the earth without any sins." (Tirmidhi, no. 2398)

May Allah make us from the sincere followers of the Prophets, and true worshippers of Allah (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), able to control our desires, and to be patient upon hardships.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct, and giving generously to relatives—and He forbids immorality, bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded." (An-Nahl 16:90)

And all praise is for Allah the Lord of all creation—and peace and blessing be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions and all those who truly follow him until the Day of Resurrection.

أقولُ قَوْلِي هذا وأستغفِرُ اللهَ لِي ولكم مِن كلِّ ذنبٍ فاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إنَّهُ هو الغفورُ الرحيم