# Job’s Supplication[[1]](#footnote-1)

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*When he called upon his Sustainer saying: “Verily harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful.”*

The supplication of Job (Upon whom be peace), the champion of patience, is both well-tested and effective. Drawing on the verse, we should say in our supplication,

*O my Sustainer! Indeed harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful.*

The gist of the well-known story of Job (Upon whom be peace) is as follows:

While afflicted with numerous wounds and sores for a long time, he recalled the great recompense to be had for his sickness, and endured it with utmost patience. But later, when the worms generated by his wounds penetrated to his heart and his tongue, the seat of the remembrance and knowledge of God, he feared that his duty of worship would suffer, and so he said in supplication not for the sake of his own comfort, but for the sake of his worship of God:

*“O Lord! Harm has afflicted me; my remembrance of You with my tongue and my worship of You with my heart will suffer.”* God Almighty then accepted this pure sincere, disinterested and devout supplication in the most miraculous fashion. He granted to Job perfect good health and made manifest in him all kinds of compassion. This Gleam contains Five Points:

# First Point:

Corresponding to the outer wounds and sicknesses of Job (Upon whom be peace), we have inner sicknesses of the spirit and heart. If our inner being was to be turned outward, and our outer being turned inward, we would appear more wounded and diseased than Job. For each sin that we commit and each doubt that enters our mind, inflicts wounds on our heart and our spirit.

The wounds of Job (Upon whom be peace) were of such a nature as to threaten his brief worldly life, but our inner wounds threaten our infinitely long everlasting life. We need the supplication of Job thousands of times more than he did himself. Just as the worms that arose from his wounds penetrated to his heart and tongue, so too the wounds that sin inflicts upon us and the temptations and doubts that arise from those wounds will— may God protect us!— penetrate our inner heart, the seat of belief, and thus wound belief. Penetrating too the spiritual joy of the tongue, the interpreter of belief, they cause it to shun in revulsion the remembrance of God, and reduce it to silence.

Sin, penetrating to the heart, will blacken and darken it until it extinguishes the light of belief. Within each sin is a path leading to unbelief. Unless that sin is swiftly obliterated by seeking God's pardon, it will grow from a worm into a snake that gnaws on the heart.

For example, a man who secretly commits a shameful sin will fear the disgrace that results if others become aware of it. Thus the existence of angels and spirit beings will be hard for him to endure, and he will long to deny it, even on the strength of the slightest indication.

Similarly, one who commits a major sin deserving of the torment of Hell, will desire the non-existence of Hell wholeheartedly, and whenever he hears of the threat of Hell-fire, he will dare to deny it on the strength of a slight indication and doubt, unless he takes up in protection the shield of repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Similarly, one who does not perform the obligatory prayer and fulfill his duty of worship will be affected by distress, just as he would be in case of the neglect of a minor duty toward some petty ruler. Thus, his laziness in fulfilling his obligation, despite the repeated commands of the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity, will distress him greatly, and on account of that distress will desire and say to himself: *“Would that there were no such duty of worship!”* In turn, there will arise from this desire a desire to deny God, and bear enmity toward Him. If some doubt concerning the existence of the Divine Being comes to his heart, he will be inclined to embrace it like a conclusive proof. A wide gate to destruction will be opened in front of him. The wretch does not know that although he is delivered by denial from the slight trouble of duty of worship, he has made himself, by that same denial, the target for millions of troubles that are far more awesome. Fleeing from the bite of a gnat, he welcomes the bite of the snake.

There are many other examples, which may be understood with reference to these three, so that the sense of,

*Nay but their hearts are stained will become apparent.*

# Second Point:

As was explained concerning the meaning of Divine Determining, known as destiny, in the Twenty-Sixth Word, men have no right to complain in the case of disasters and illness for the following three reasons:

**First Reason:** God Most High has made the garment of the body with which He has clothed man a manifestation of His art. He has made man to be a model on which He cuts, trims, alters and changes the garment of the body, thus displaying the manifestation of several of His Names. Just as the Name of Healer makes it necessary that illness should exist, so too the Name of Provider requires that hunger should exist. And so on...

The Lord of All Dominion has disposal over His dominion as He wishes.

**Second Reason:** It is by means of disasters and sicknesses that life is refined, perfected, strengthened and advanced; that it yields results, attains perfection and fulfills its own purpose. Life led monotonously on the couch of ease and comfort resembles not so much the pure good that is being, as the pure evil that is non-being; it tends in fact in that direction.

**Third Reason:** This worldly realm is the field of testing, the abode of service. It is not the place of pleasure, reward, and requital. Considering, then, that it is the abode of service and place of worship, sicknesses and misfortunes—as long as they do not affect belief and are patiently endured—conform fully to service and worship, and even strengthen it. Since they make each hour's worship equivalent to that of a day, one should offer thanks instead of complaining.

Worship consists in fact of two kinds, positive and negative. What is meant by the positive is obvious. As for negative worship, this is when one afflicted with misfortune or sickness perceives his own weakness and helplessness, and turning to his Compassionate Sustainer, seeks refuge in Him, meditates upon Him, petitions Him, and thus offers a pure form of worship that no hypocrisy can penetrate. If he endures patiently, thinks of the reward attendant on misfortune and offers thanks, then each hour that he passes will count as a whole day spent in worship. His brief life becomes very long. There are even cases where a single minute is counted as equal to a whole day's worship.

I once was extremely anxious because of an awesome illness that struck one of my brothers of the Hereafter, Muhajir Hafiz Ahmed. But then a warning came to my heart: *“Congratulate him!”* Each minute he spends is counted as a whole day's worship. He was in any event enduring his illness in patience and gratitude.

# Third Point:

As we have pointed out in one or two of the Words, whenever one thinks of his past life, he will say in his heart or with his tongue either *“Ah!”* or *“Oh!”* That is he will either experience regret, or say *“Thanks and praise be to God.”* Regret is inspired by the pains arising from the cessation of former pleasures and separation from them. For the cessation of pleasure is a pain in itself. Sometimes a momentary pleasure will cause everlasting pain. To think upon it will be like lancing a wound, causing regret to gush forth.

As for the lasting spiritual pleasure that comes from the cessation of momentary pains experienced in the past, it inspires man to exclaim, *“Thanks and praise be to God!”* In addition to this innate tendency of man, if he thinks of the reward that results from misfortune and the requital that awaits him in the Hereafter, if he realizes that his brief life will count as a long life because of misfortune—then instead of being merely patient he should be thankful. He should say, *“Praise be to God for every state other than unbelief and misguidance.”*

It is commonly said that misfortune is long-lasting. Indeed it is, but not because it is troublesome and distressing as people customarily imagine, but rather because it yields vital results just like a long life.

# Fourth Point:

As was explained in the First Station of the Twenty-First Word, the power of patient endurance given to man by God Almighty is adequate to every misfortune, unless squandered on baseless fears. But through the predominance of delusion, man's neglect and his imagining this transient life to be eternal, he squanders his power of endurance on the past and the future. His endurance is not equal to the misfortunes of the present, and he begins to complain. It is as if—God forbid!—he were complaining of God Almighty to men. In a most unjustified and even lunatic fashion, he complains and demonstrates his lack of patience.

If the day that is past held misfortune, the distress is now gone, and only tranquility remains; the pain has vanished and the pleasure in its cessation remains; the trouble is gone, and the reward remains. Hence one should not complain but give thanks for enjoyment. One should not resent misfortune, but love it. The transient life of the past comes to be counted as an eternal and blessed life because of misfortune. To think upon past pain with one's fancy and then to waste part of one's patience is lunacy.

As far as days yet to come are concerned, since they have not yet come, to think now of the illness or misfortune to be borne during them and display impatience, is also foolishness. To say to oneself *“Tomorrow or the day after I will be hungry and thirsty”* and constantly to drink water and eat bread today, is pure madness. Similarly, to think of misfortunes and sicknesses yet in the future but now non-existent, to suffer them already, to show impatience and to oppress oneself without any compulsion, is such stupidity that it no longer deserves pity and compassion.

In short, just as gratitude increases Divine bounty, so too complaint increases misfortune, and removes all occasion for compassion.

During World War One, a blessed person in Erzurum was afflicted with an awesome disease. I went to visit him and he said to me complaining bitterly: *“I have not been able to place my head on the pillow and sleep for a hundred nights.”* I was much grieved. Suddenly a thought came to me and I said:

*“Brother, the hundred difficult days you have spent are now just like one hundred happy days. Do not think of them and complain; rather look at them and be grateful. As for future days, since they have not yet come, place your trust in your Compassionate and Merciful Sustainer. Do not weep before being beaten, do not be afraid of nothing, do not give non-being the color of being. Think of the present hour; your power of patient endurance is enough for this hour. Do not act like the maddened commander who expects reinforcement on his right wing by an enemy force deserting to join him from his left, and then begins to disperse his forces in the center to the left and the right, before the enemy has joined him on the right. The enemy then destroys his center, left weak, with a minimal force. Brother, do not be like him. Mobilize all your strength for this present hour, and think of Divine Mercy, reward in the Hereafter, and how your brief and transient life is being transformed into a long and eternal form. Instead of complaining bitterly, give joyful thanks.”*

Much relieved, he said, *“Praise and thanks be to God, my disease is now a tenth of what it was before.”*

# Fifth Point consisting of three matters.

**First Matter:** True and harmful misfortune is that which affects religion. One should at all times seek refuge at the Divine Court from misfortune in matters of religion and cry out for help. But misfortunes that do not affect religion in reality are not misfortunes. Some of them are warnings from the Most Merciful One. If a shepherd throws a stone at his sheep when they trespass on another's pasture, they understand that the stone is intended as a warning to save them from a perilous action; full of gratitude they turn back. So too there are many apparent misfortunes that are Divine warnings and admonishments, others that constitute the penance of sin; and others again that dissolve man's state of neglect, remind him of his human helplessness and weakness, thus affording him a form of tranquility. As for the variety of misfortune that is illness, it is not at all a misfortune, as has already been said, but rather a favor from God and a means of purification. There is a tradition which says: *“Just as a tree drops its ripe fruit when shaken, so too do sins fall away through the shaking of fever.”*

Job (Upon whom be peace) did not pray in his supplication for the comfort of his soul, but rather sought cure for the purpose of worship, when disease was preventing his remembrances of God with his tongue and his meditation upon God in his heart. We too should make our primary intent, when making that supplication, the healing of the inward and spiritual wounds that arise from sinning.

As far as physical diseases are concerned, we may seek refuge from them when they hinder our worship. But we should seek refuge in a humble and supplicating fashion, not protestingly and plaintively. If we accept God as our Lord and Sustainer, then we must accept too all that He gives us in His capacity of Sustainer. To sigh and complain in a manner implying objection to Divine Determining and Decree is a kind of criticism of Divine Determining, an accusation leveled against God's compassion. The one who criticizes Divine Determining strikes his head against the anvil and breaks it. Whoever accuses God's mercy will inevitably be deprived of it. To use a broken hand to exact revenge will only cause further damage to the hand. So too a man who, afflicted with misfortune, responds to it with protesting complaint and anxiety, is only compounding his misfortune.

**Second Matter:** Physical misfortunes grow when they are seen to be large, and shrink when they are seen to be small. For example, a dream enters one's vision at night. If one pays it attention it swells up and grows; if one does not, it disappears. So too if one attempts to ward off an attacking swarm of bees, they will become more aggressive; whereas if one pays them no attention they will disperse. Thus if one regards physical misfortunes as great and grants them importance, they will grow, and because of anxiety pass from the body and strike root in the heart. The result will then be an inward affliction on which the outward misfortune fastens to perpetuate itself. But if the anxiety is removed by contentment with the Divine Decree and reliance on God, the physical misfortune will gradually decrease, dry up and vanish, just like a tree whose roots have been severed. I once composed the following verses in description of this truth:

*Cry not out at misfortune, O wretch, come, trust in God!*

*For know that crying out compounds the misfortune and is a great error.*

*Find misfortune's Sender, and know it is a gift within gift, and pleasure.*

*So leave crying out and offer thanks; like the nightingale, smile through your tears!*

*If you find Him not, know the world is all pain within pain, transience and loss.*

*So why lament at a small misfortune while upon you is a worldful of woe? Come, trust in God!*

*Trust in God! Laugh in misfortune's face; it too will laugh.*

*As it laughs, it will diminish; it will be changed and transformed.*

If in single-handed combat one smiles at an awesome enemy, his enmity will be changed to conciliatoriness; his hostility will become a mere joke, will shrink and disappear. If one confronts misfortune with reliance on God the result will be similar.

**Third Matter:** Each age has particular characteristics. In this age of neglect misfortune has changed its form. In certain ages and for certain persons, misfortune is not in reality misfortune, but rather a Divine favor. Since I consider those afflicted with illness in the present age to be fortunate—on condition that their illness does not affect their religion—it does not occur to me to oppose illness and misfortune, nor to take pity on the afflicted. Whenever I encounter some afflicted youth, I find that he is more concerned with his religious duties and the Hereafter than are his peers. From this I deduce that illness does not constitute a misfortune for such people, but rather a bounty from God. It is true that illness causes him distress in his brief, transient and worldly life, but it is beneficial for his eternal life. It is to be regarded as a kind of worship. If he were healthy he would be unable to maintain the state he enjoyed while sick and would fall into dissipation, as a result of the impetuousness of youth and the dissipated nature of the age.

# Conclusion

God Almighty, in order to display His infinite power and unlimited mercy, has made inherent in man infinite impotence and unlimited want. Further, in order to display the endless embroideries of His Names, He has created man like a machine capable of receiving unlimited varieties of pain, as well as infinite varieties of pleasure. Within that human machine are hundreds of instruments, each of which has different pains and pleasures, different duties and rewards. Simply, all of the Divine Names manifested in the macroanthropos that is the world also have manifestations in the microcosm that is man. Beneficial matters like good health, well-being, and pleasures cause man to offer thanks and prompt the human machine to perform its functions in many respects, and thus man becomes like a factory producing thanks.

Similarly, by means of misfortune, illness and pain, and other motion-inducing contingencies, the other cogs of the human machine are set in motion and revolution. The mine of weakness, impotence, and poverty inherent in human nature is made to work. It induces in man a state whereby he seeks refuge and help not only with a single tongue, but with the tongue of each of his members. Thus by means of those contingencies man becomes like a moving pen comprising thousands of different pens. He inscribes the appointed course of his existence on the page of his life or the Tablet in the World of Similitudes; he puts forth a declaration of the Divine Names; and becomes himself an ode to the glory of God, thus fulfilling the duties of his nature.

1. From the 2nd Gleam, The Gleams, BSN [↑](#footnote-ref-1)