

HOW TO BEHAVE WHEN STRUCK BY ILLNESS (PART 2 OF 2): GOD'S MERCY HAS NO LIMITS

Rating: 4.5

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[How to Behave When Struck by Illness \(part 2\) with patience](#) and understanding that nothing happens without the permission of God.

“And with Him are the keys of the unseen; no one knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that is [written] in a clear record.” (Quran 6:59)

When illness or injury strikes the reasons may not be apparent, or perhaps even be beyond our understanding. However God wants only good for humankind. We can therefore be sure that there is great wisdom behind the affliction and that it presents us with the opportunity to develop a closer relationship with God. As humans, of course we have free will and are free to choose our own course of action in any given situation, but the best reaction is patience and acceptance.

Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, informed us that we will be tested, according to our level of faith and that the very least good that will come from these tests will be purification from sins. He said, a man will be tested according to the level of his religious commitment, and the trials will keep affecting a slave of God until he is left walking on the face of the earth with no burden of sin whatsoever.^[1]

When illness or injury over come us it is natural to be fearful. At times we can even feel resentful, wondering why God has allowed this to happen. We question and complain, but really this serves no purpose except to accentuate our sorrow or suffering. God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy has given us clear guidelines about how to behave when struck by illness or injury. If we follow these guidelines it is possible to bear afflictions with ease and even to be grateful. When struck by illness or injury, a believer puts his or her trust in God, expresses thankfulness for whatever condition God has decreed for him, and seeks medical aid.

Medical treatment is allowed in Islam and seeking medical aid does not negate or cancel out the idea of putting one's trust in God. Prophet Muhammad made this clear when he said, **“No disease has been ordained except that it has a cure.”**^[2] A believer may go to a doctor for the treatment of diseases and injuries. He may go to seek a diagnosis and a cure for diseases of the mind or emotional conditions. However there are some small stipulations, including that a cure cannot be sought in something that is forbidden, such as alcohol. Ultimately God does not put healing in something He has prohibited.

It is not permissible to seek a cure from soothsayers, fortunetellers and other charlatans of any sort. These people claim to have knowledge of the unseen, which is not possible and they are only trying to extort people and lead them astray from the One True God. God has also forbidden the use of amulets and lucky charms to ward off illness and injury. All power and all strength come from God alone. To call on someone or something besides God to heal us or keep us safe is a very serious sin.

While seeking treatment or cure in this physical world it is important to also seek a cure through spiritual remedies. The first thing to do is to think positively about God, confirm your belief in Him, and contemplate His names and attributes. He is the Most Merciful, the Most Loving, and the Most Wise. We are advised to call on Him by the names that are most appropriate to our needs.

“And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to God so call on Him by them.” (Quran 7:180)

God has not abandoned us to the trials, tests and tribulations of this world, He has provided us with guidance and the most powerful weapons against torment and distress – Quran, words of remembrance and supplication, and prayer.^[3] As we move further into the 21st century we have begun to rely on medical aid instead of authentic spiritual remedies, however using the two, hand in hand can often be very effective very quickly. Sometimes illnesses persist, sometimes injuries become chronic, but sometimes ill health can bring about great spiritual insight.

How often have we heard people with debilitating diseases or terrible disabilities thank God for their conditions, or speak of the way pain and suffering brought blessings and goodness into their lives? When we are feeling alone and distressed, God is our only handhold. When pain and suffering become unbearable, when there is nothing left but fear and misery, that is when we reach for the one thing that can bring about redemption – God. Complete and utter trust and total submission to the will of God brings about the joy and freedom that is known as the sweetness of faith. It is peace and tranquility and it enables one to accept all the conditions this world brings, the good, the bad, the ugly, the painful, the distressing and the joyous.

Finally it is important to understand that illnesses and injuries can be God's way of purifying us. As human beings we are not perfect, we make mistakes, do bad deeds, and even deliberately disobey God's commandments.

“Whatever misfortune befalls you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness.” (Quran 42:30)

God’s mercy should never be underestimated. He asks us to seek forgiveness from Him. Prophet Mohammad reminded us that God is waiting for us to turn to Him. In the last part of the night, when darkness lies heavily across the land, God descends to the lowest heaven and asks His slaves. **“Who is saying a prayer to Me that I may answer it? Who is asking something of Me that I may give it to him? Who is asking forgiveness of Me that I may forgive him?”**^[4]

Often misfortune, pain, and suffering come about because of our own actions. We choose to commit sin, but God purifies us through loss of wealth, health or the things we love. Sometimes suffering now, in this world means that we will not suffer for all of eternity, sometimes all that pain and distress means that we will attain a higher station in Paradise.

God knows the wisdom behind why good things happen to bad people, or why bad things happen to good people. In general, whatever causes us to turn to God is good. In times of crisis people are drawn closer to God, whereas in times of comfort we often forget from where the comfort originated. God is the Provider and He is the Most Generous. God wants to reward us with life everlasting and if pain and suffering can guarantee Paradise, then ill health and injuries are a blessing. Prophet Muhammad said, **“If God wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials.”**^[5]

When illness strikes, the best course of action is to thank God, try to be closer to Him and to seek medical aid and count the blessings that He has bestowed upon us.

Footnotes:

[1] *Ibn Majah.*

[2] Bukhari

[3] For a full explanation of the healing power of Quran please see the article Health in Islam Part 2.

[4] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim, Malik, At Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud*

[5] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari.*

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