

## **What Causes Sadness, and How to Overcome It?**

### **The Best and Most Effective Way to Overcome Sadness**

We all have experienced unpleasant feelings like sadness and grief many times, moments that seem to never end, so painful that we would do anything to escape them. Numerous factors can trigger these feelings, from illness and loss of loved ones to dwelling on a painful past, insults, bankruptcy, humiliation, heartbreak, and various unfortunate events caused by our own negligence or the behavior of others. If you explore psychology books and social media for ways to overcome sadness, you will likely encounter suggestions like writing down your problems, exercising, listening to music, traveling, positive thinking, and so on. These strategies aim to help you forget sadness and quickly return to your normal state. However, this usually does not happen, and even if it does, it is not sustainable. This is because sadness is a disease of the soul and can not be overcome by making superficial changes. While these strategies can be helpful, they are better suited for immediate relief rather than lasting recovery. To permanently heal from feelings of sadness, failure, despair, inferiority, and other distressing emotions, we first need to change our worldview.

Is feeling sad about the unfortunate events that happen to us in this world a normal and natural reaction? Are we allowed to mourn and feel defeated over things we do not achieve or lose? Is there a way to be permanently free from sadness, worry, fear, and anxiety?

In this article, we will approach the topic of sadness and its treatments from a different perspective. If you are tired of ineffective and temporary solutions and want to address this problem fundamentally, join us.

### **What Is the Root Cause of Sadness?**

The root cause of sadness lies in a lack of self-knowledge. Until this weakness is addressed, no lasting or deep happiness will emerge, even if we spend hours entertaining ourselves with parties, dancing, traveling, and various relationships!

Someone who lacks self-knowledge is incapable of understanding the true essence of the world. As a result, he only sees the few people and limited material possessions around him. Such a person views death as an expiration date and takes worldly events too seriously. He believes that gaining material wealth in this short life is a success, while losing anything is a real loss. Consequently, he cries and mourns for the things he has lost.

Even performing religious rituals and outward expressions of belief cannot calm an anxious and sad person. This is because the first step in achieving happiness is expanding one's perspective beyond the material world. To escape the sorrows of animalistic and lower aspects of one's being, people need to find greater sources of pleasure than the material world, powerful pleasures that are eternal and connected to infinity.

Someone who weeps over worldly shortcomings and loses his happiness and inner vitality does not believe in the hereafter. They may have knowledge and confirm the existence of a world after death, but having knowledge and having faith are two

different things. Knowledge means knowing something, while faith is a spiritual asset. Knowledge is in the mind, while faith resides in the heart. We know many things, but we often fail to act on them because this knowledge has not taken root in our hearts and become an asset. For example, everyone knows that a corpse is lifeless and cannot harm anyone; however, few are willing to be alone in a room with one. Yet corpse washers easily touch and wash corpses because they have achieved certainty and heartfelt knowledge that the corpse is harmless.

Every phenomenon in the universe has a consequential effect. For example, the effect of water is to wet, and the effect of fire is to burn, and faith also has a consequential effect. The effect of faith is to create happiness and peace.<sup>1</sup> If true faith takes root in someone's heart, it is impossible for them to feel anxious or sad. Sadness arises from a lack of faith. One who is constantly anxious and sad, fearing the future and grieving the past, has a weak and superficial faith. We must not even grieve over our own shortcomings and negligence. Grieving does not solve any problems; instead, it opens the way for Satan, whose greatest desire is to make us despair of God's mercy.

God rewards us with unimaginable blessings in the hereafter for every hardship we endure in this world, even if we ourselves caused those hardships. However, this is not an excuse to make mistakes. We are obligated to consider all aspects of every situation and take the best possible action. Yet, if we make a mistake for any reason, we must not grieve. Instead, we must seek out solutions. Grieving is a tactic of Satan, designed to hinder our progress and to ground us on our spiritual journey.

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<sup>1</sup>. "There will certainly be no fear for the close servants of Allah, nor will they grieve." (Quran, 10:62)

## **Stop Hurting Yourself!**

Most of us, when dealing with sadness, are like someone who constantly wounds himself with a knife and screams in pain yet refuses to stop harming himself! Many of us, whether knowingly or unknowingly, put ourselves in situations that lead to sadness and anxiety, and after feeling bad, we convince ourselves that it is a natural process and that it must be this way. However, sadness is not a natural feeling. Like pain, sadness is a warning signal indicating an inner illness.

Just as we regularly check our blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure, we must also measure our levels of happiness and inner peace daily, even hourly. If we notice any disturbances, we must seek out the cause. We need to identify where we went wrong that has caused the cloud of sorrow to overshadow us and prevent us from being active and cheerful. Sadness usually arises when the foundations of our faith are weakened and our connection to the unseen world (*Ghayb*) and God is disrupted.

The world is a gym for believers, and everyone we interact with in life, whether a spouse, child, colleague, or neighbor is our practice opponent in this gym. We are meant to gain strength and progress toward perfection through our interactions with these people, not to sit in a corner and cry over the pain inflicted upon us. Pain and suffering are inherent in any training environment; without them, the path to human growth and progress would be interrupted.

As a final point, it is worth mentioning that in Islamic teachings, there are two kinds of sadness:

- Blameworthy sadness

- Praiseworthy sadness

What we have discussed so far and warned against refers to blameworthy sadness, which stems from worldly desires. However, sadness itself is not inherently bad. Sadness is blameworthy when it prevents us from reaching God and hinders our journey toward the hereafter. Many kinds of sadness, far from being unfavorable, are deeply sacred, and if we do not experience them, we must doubt the health of our hearts. In Islamic teachings, this kind is known as praiseworthy sadness.

Sympathizing with the troubles of others and trying to solve their hardships as well as the sadness resulting from sin and disobedience to God's commands are kinds of praiseworthy sadness, although they must not lead to despair of God's mercy. Also, mourning for the hardships faced by the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Them), longing for God and His saints, longing for the heavenly family, longing for eternal life and blessings of Heaven, and fear of the torments of Hell, and the like, are all kinds of praiseworthy sadness. The more one experiences such emotions, the closer he is to true humanity. This is because praiseworthy sadness indicates spiritual and human maturity and is the source of lasting, genuine, and true happiness.