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A New Start

However, because of Allah's mercy, my idleness did not last long. Something happened to shock me and inject new life into me. It caused me to understand my responsibilities more fully. Usually one gains experience through hardships and difficulties. Thank God, such hardships caused me to understand the importance of faith in my life.

Thus, I thank God, for His trying man with troubles and hardships that must be considered as some of His bounties. Such hardships and difficulties must not be considered in terms of their cruel appearance alone, but rather through whatever good lessons are gained from them. We should consider them spiritual benefits and face such situations with strength and determination.

I recall such an experience and how deeply it affected me. Its effect was so great that I was on the verge of hopelessness. All that time I dragged myself from the house and strolled the streets, as if to escape the barbs of that experience. I found that I was wrong. The house had nothing to do with that difficulty. Leaving the house did not make any difference. I was defeated and at a loss as to where to go or what to do. Then suddenly I listened to the Qur'anic words that came from a distance, as if I was hearing them for the first time:

Until when the apostles despaired and the people became I sure that they were indeed told a lie, Our help came to them and whom We pleased was delivered and Our punishment is not averted from the guilty people. (Yousef, 12: 11)

On hearing those words I was made aware again, I woke up as if from a sleep that could make me despair. I remembered that Allah, the Almighty never leaves His faithful believers in trouble. Those troubles are nothing but a means or a method towards perfection. To a human being they are the same as a laboratory where the real nature of man is analyzed so that he can learn things about himself that he ignores and discover his weaknesses and defects. After that experience I continued my life amid hopes and pains, flowers and thorns. Thorns are only found near flowers. Hope comes from pain.

Hence I found myself in harmony with various roles and incidents. Good things did not tempt me, neither did bad things lead me into despair. I waited for the relief after hardships and expected darker times

after happy days, as if those happy days warned of what might follow. The years passed on and I enjoyed Allah's mercy in full. I felt I was too unworthy to receive such mercy and compassion. I belittled whatever I did for the sake of Allah. My pains increased due to my shortcomings in serving Him.

Such shortcomings seemed the result of weakness or laziness. I felt uneasy in my surroundings as if I were an intruder. I tried to keep away. How hard it is for one to feel handicapped in the performance of one's duties. I was overwhelmed with sorrow and pain that tarnished my spiritual pleasure in serving Allah the Almighty...it was Allah's mercy that engulfed my inner self and helped me to overcome the obstacles in life. Thanks are due to Him Who keeps the doors open for His worshippers.

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