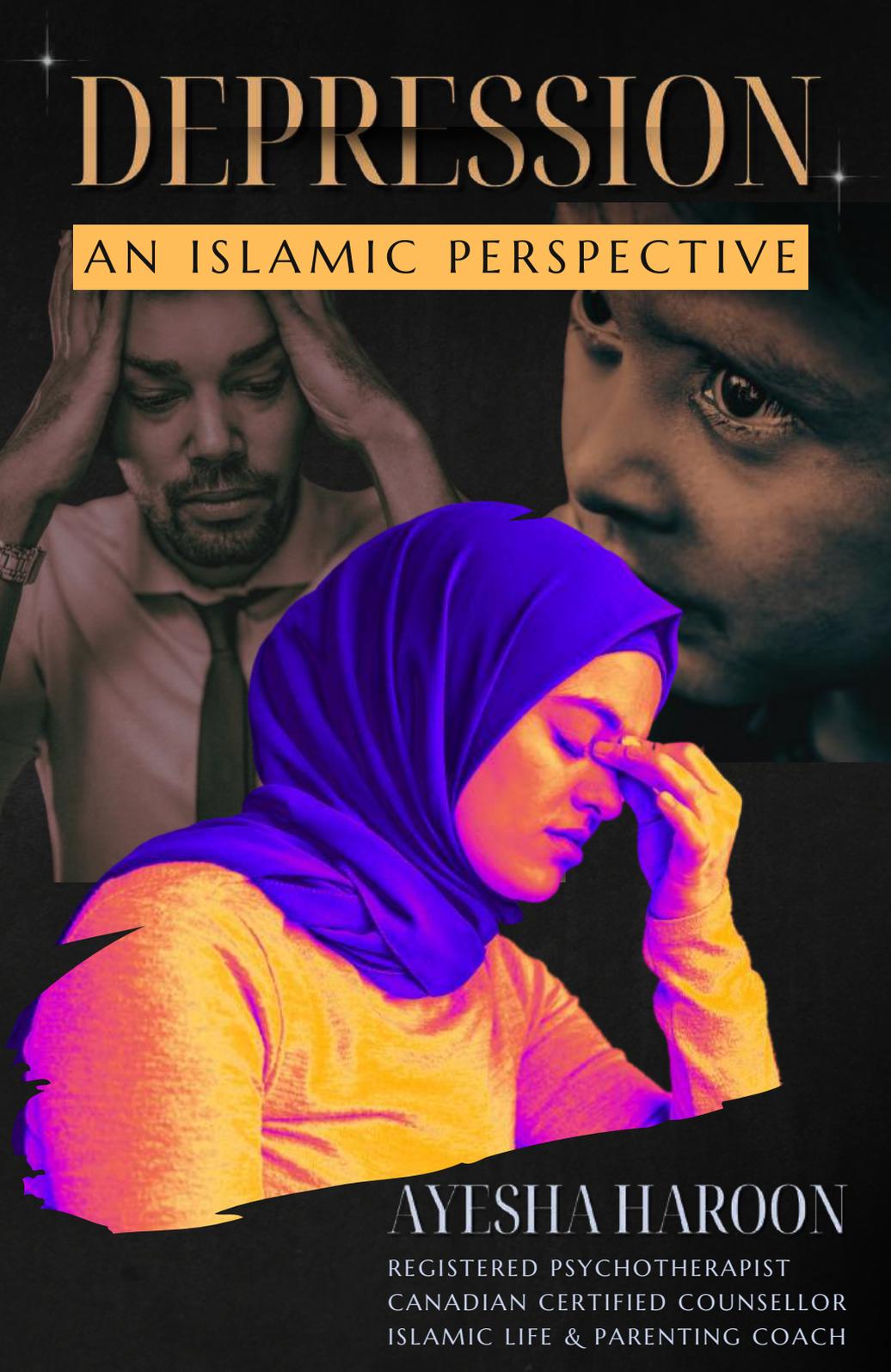


DEPRESSION



AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

AYESHA HAROON

REGISTERED PSYCHOTHERAPIST
CANADIAN CERTIFIED COUNSELLOR
ISLAMIC LIFE & PARENTING COACH

This e-Book discusses some key aspects of sadness and depression as seen from the perspective of Islamic teachings.

You do not need to be a Muslim to benefit from them. It is being provided free of cost for public benefit. You are allowed to share this e-Book with any of your family, friends or community.

To know more about Ayesha Haroon and her practice and to get access to other resources, visit us at ayeshaharoon.com.

Ayesha Haroon





*We do not seek
Sadness
or Depression*





The word "**sadness**" (الْحُزْنُ) does not appear in the Quran except in the form of **forbidding it**

(ولا تهنو ولا تحزنوا)

or in the form of **negating it**.

(فلا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون)

And the reason for this is because there is no benefit for having sadness in the heart. There is nothing more beloved to the devil (Satan) than a depressed believer.



We do not seek sadness, but at times we are unable to stop it from reaching us. In this life, each one of us will be tested with loss!



وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ
وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient.

(Quran, 2:155)



DEPRESSION

DOES NOT INDICATE ANY
WEAKNESS OF FAITH



And every sadness
IS NOT DEPRESSION



FEELING DOWN AND SAD IS A NORMAL HUMAN EMOTION.

Even though we usually just comment - I am sad, low or depressed interchangeably, there is a difference between normal sadness and depression. If you are not a mental health professional, please do not self diagnose yourself for depression. If you are experiencing challenges, let a professional assess your mental health.

Unlike sadness, clinical depression is a real mental illness. The time of concern is when feeling low or sad becomes like a norm and becomes a major impairment in your normal day to day life activities and you are not able to function. A sign could be when someone shows drastic behavioral changes - someone was very bubbly and outgoing and now they have become isolated, standoffish, stern, spending hours in their own room, difficulties at work or school, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, etc. When we are just sad, we do not sleep for 13 hours straight or not get out of our bed for a week. We show up at the workplace, and do not stop talking to people for months on end.



BEING SAD OR DEPRESSED DOES NOT INDICATE OUR LEVEL OF FAITH

No matter what our condition, it is only Allah SWT who can judge our faith. Just like richness and poverty are both tests of this life, so are sadness and happiness. There have been people in our history who have been at the peak of piety, yet they experienced very deep levels of sadness.

Just like any other parent in this situation, Yaqub AS was extremely sad when his beloved son Yusuf AS went missing. He was not just sad for a few days or weeks or months but for years. In fact, he cried so much that he became blind. We know from the biography of our beloved Prophet Muhammad SAW that there was an entire year called the year of sadness. The Prophet SAW lost two people really dear to him in a short period of time. He experienced grief, he experienced loss, he experienced sadness. He SAW cried on the death of his son Ibrahim and he cried when he visited the grave of his mother.



SOME SADNESS IS A SIGN OF BEING A HUMAN BEING AND A SOUND BELIEVER



Narrated Anas RA:
When the reciters of Qur'an
were martyred, Allah's
Messenger SAW recited Qunut
for one month and I never saw
him (i.e. Allah's Messenger SAW)
so sad as he was on that day.

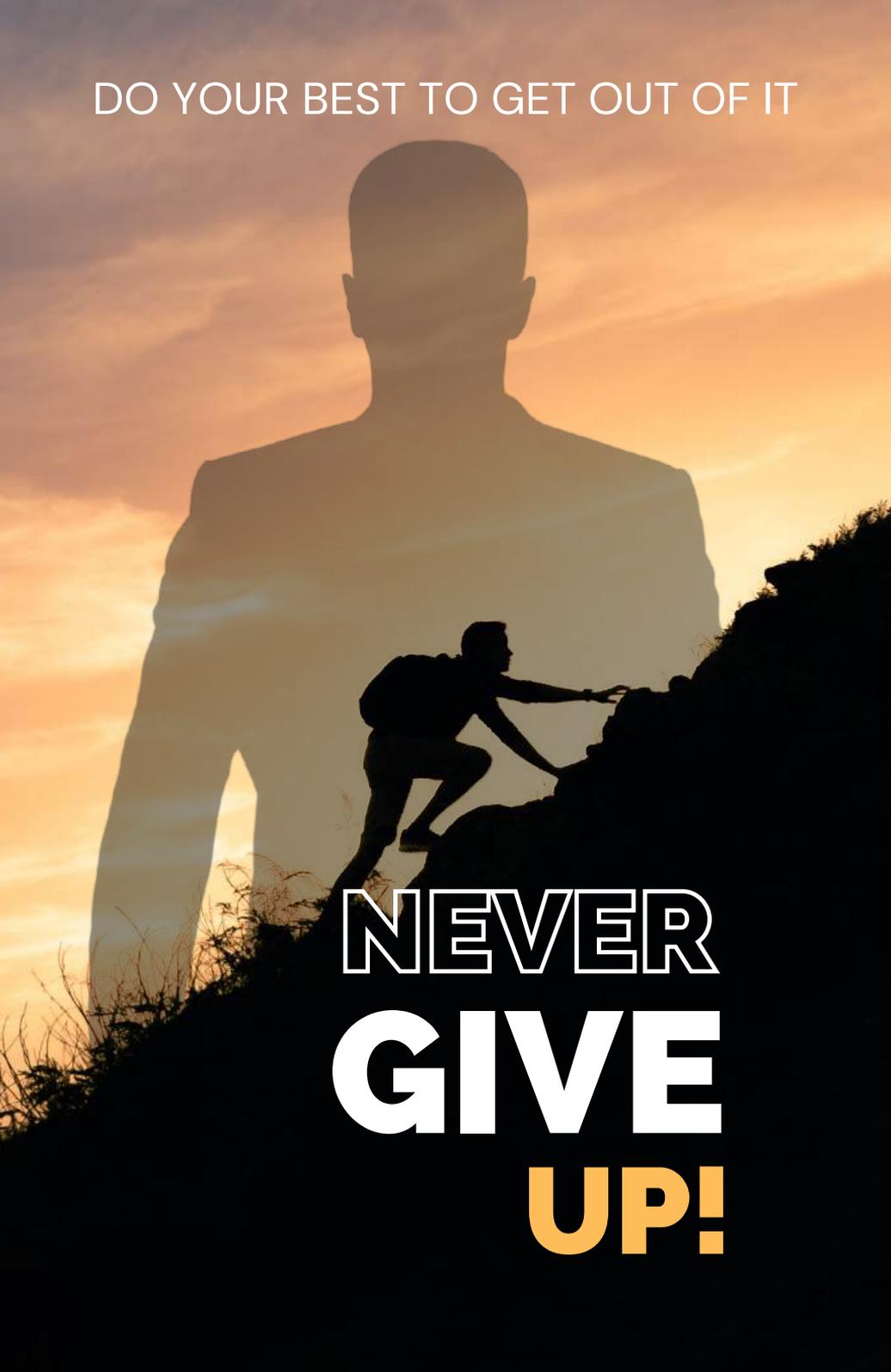


(Sahih al-Bukhari 1300)

When we see oppression, misery, injustice, abuse or a genocide happening in front of our eyes, we can, we will and we should be impacted. Being sad and upset about such things is natural.



DO YOUR BEST TO GET OUT OF IT



**NEVER
GIVE
UP!**

Resilience & Tawakkul

TIRE YOUR LIMBS BUT DO NOT TIRE YOUR HEART

Have trust and rely on Allah SWT, make dua, and take the necessary steps that you can do to get out of the situation and the sadness associated with it. Seek therapy when needed. Do the best that you can and leave the rest to Allah SWT.



Anas bin Malik RA narrated that a man said:

"O Messenger of Allah! Shall I tie it (his camel) and rely (upon Allah), or leave it loose and rely (upon Allah)?"

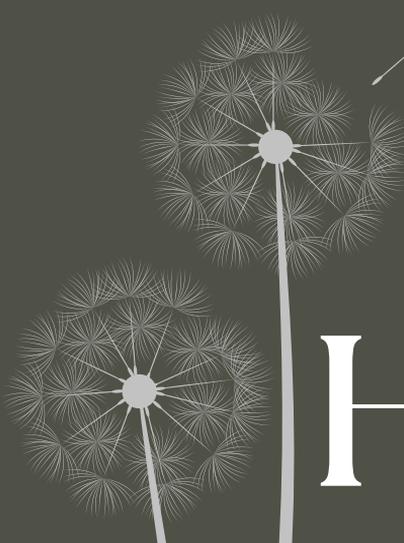
He SAW said:

"Tie it and rely (upon Allah)."



Jami` at-Tirmidhi 2517





Have
Sabr
with it...



BE KIND AND GENTLE WITH YOURSELF AND WITH OTHERS GOING THROUGH SADNESS OR DEPRESSION



Abu Hurayra RA and Abu Sa'id RA reported that the Prophet SAW said, “No Muslim is afflicted by difficulty, continuous pain, anxiety, grief, injury, or care, or even by a thorn with which he is pierced, without God thereby making an atonement for his sins.”

(Bukhari and Muslim)
Mishkat al-Masabih 1537



INCIDENT OF THE LADY WHO SUFFERED FROM EPILEPSY



Narrated 'Ata bin Abi Rabah RA:

Ibn `Abbas RA said to me, "Shall I show you a woman of the people of Paradise?" I said, "Yes." He said, "This black lady came to the Prophet SAW and said, 'I get attacks of epilepsy and my body becomes uncovered; please invoke Allah for me.' The Prophet SAW said (to her), 'If you wish, be patient and you will have (enter) Paradise; and if you wish, I will invoke Allah to cure you.' She said, 'I will remain patient,' and added, 'but I become uncovered, so please invoke Allah for me that I may not become uncovered.' So he invoked Allah for her."

Sahih al-Bukhari 5652



It may be that someone's sins are being forgiven because of the hardship they are facing through their sadness and depression, and we could be earning sins by passing judgements or making fun of them!!!

Don't tell anyone to just snap out of it and get out of it. Do not belittle someone's struggle. We may not know what is causing their sadness or depression. Sometimes seeing a professional counsellor can help.

DO NOT JUDGE OR
BELITTLE YOURSELF
OR ANYONE ELSE
GOING THROUGH
A HARD TIME

A photograph of wooden blocks arranged to spell out the words 'BE KIND'. The word 'BE' is on the top row, and 'KIND' is on the bottom row. The blocks are light-colored wood with black letters.

COMPLETE ABSENCE OF
ALL SADNESS WILL BE IN

JANNAH

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ



One of the beauties and blessings of Jannah is complete removal of kinds of psychological distress.



وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا الْحَزْنَ^ص
إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

And they will say, "Praise to Allah , who has removed from us [all] sorrow. Indeed, our Lord is Forgiving and Appreciative (Quran, 35:34)



LIFT YOURSELF UP WHEN FEELING DOWN

HANDLING SADNESS



We will now detail a few tips to handle sadness and depression like thoughts and symptoms. Please note that this is not an exhaustive or an exclusive list. These are just a few tips. Different things will work well for different people according to their own aptitude and situation. Many of these tips will help with anxiety as well. Anxiety and sadness are different but there is some overlap. For clinical depression - professional help will be required. The tips are detailed in three categories:

- COGNITIVE
- PHYSICAL ACTION
- SPIRITUAL



Cognitive Reframing

Dive into what is stressing you out, why do you feel the way that you feel. Take things and look at them in a different picture. from a positive lens, or finding what you can control, or try to identify the benefits in the situation. Example - losing a job could be an opportunity to find a company that is a better fit. Or it may help to understand that the skillset you have is not valuable anymore. May be you need to train. May be the job was stressing and taking you away from the family. May be this was a temporary relief, even though you will get back to work in another way soon.

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease. (Quran, 94:6)



Could there be a greater wisdom or benefit that I do not know yet?

It has been narrated on the authority of Anas b. Malik RA who said:

When they (Companions of the Holy Prophet SAW) were overwhelmed with grief and distress on his return from Hudaibiya where he had slaughtered his sacrificial beasts (not being allowed to proceed to Mecca), the Qur'anic verse: Inna fatahna... laka fathan mobinan... fauzan 'aziman, was revealed to him. (At this) he SAW said: "On me has descended a verse that is dearer to me than the whole world."

(Sahih Muslim 1786a)



People that do not understand the concept of higher wisdom or Divine wisdom will say. "Why me?" "Why did this have to happen to me? I am a good person!" The believer understands that it is absolutely normal to be inflicted with some sadness in our lives. At the same time, it does not throw us off track. We stay focused and do not lose our focus on Allah SWT anymore. This attitude comes through a connection to Allah SWT and His Messenger SAW.



Monitor Your Thoughts

WATCH OUT FOR COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES...

"If only"

Do not beat yourselves up with should statements .. Our beloved Prophet SAW told us to stay away from "if only" as it opens the door to shaytaan and makes us doubt everything that we have done in our lives. Allah SWT has a plan! We are not able to bring back the past. We do the best that we can and we move forward.

Magnifying

This happens when we make too big a deal out of certain problems, completely ignoring everything else. Many a times, this is not an accurate depiction of what is happening in our lives. Prophet SAW faced more challenges in life than any of us faced, or could ever face, yet his companions RA used to say that they had not seen anyone smile as much as the prophet SAW.

Labelling

Labels like - "I am a loser." & "I am no good" lead to frustration, anxiety and low self esteem. You may have done something that you are not proud of, but do not make yourselves into that issue. You made a mistake, but you are not a mistake! Prophets like Adam AS and Musa AS sought forgiveness and moved on. Allah SWT has honoured all children of Adam AS and that includes me and you. Additionally, the Prophet SAW told us that the honour of a believer is dearer to Allah SWT than the kaaba.



Physical Action

Take a Walk

Research shows the power of taking a walk. It does something to get up and get moving. You naturally feel better. Breathe in the fresh air when you can. It calms us down when we are feeling sad. Even when out on a military expedition, the prophet SAW would take out time to race with his wife!

Food

'A'isha RA told that she heard God's messenger SAW say, "Talbina* gives rest to an invalid's heart and removes some of his grief."

*A kind of gruel made of flour or bran and milk, sometimes having honey mixed with it.

(Bukhari and Muslim.)



Being in Nature

Stare at the trees, touch the flowers. New research shows that just looking at the pictures of nature is also beneficial. If mountains or beaches or trees make you happy, look at their pictures often too. Quran constantly encourages us to look at the objects of nature and ponder over them - sky, moon, sun, leaves, oceans, animals, ...



Deep Breathing

Calms us down and help us to get back to alert state and get back to what we were thinking or doing. We are nothing but a number of breaths. Every breath is a gift of life from Allah SWT.

Striving fisabilillah

Our role model, our guide, our prophet SAW - what did he do after the year of sadness? He went to Taif - and even though the people rejected him, Allah SWT accepted his efforts and rewarded him. After Taif was Miraj!

SPIRITUAL

Prophet SAW gave us duas...

These are not quick fixes. It is crucial and absolutely necessary to make dua with sincerity and conviction.

اللَّهُمَّ لَا سَهْلَ إِلَّا مَا جَعَلْتَهُ سَهْلًا،
وَأَنْتَ تَجْعَلُ الْحَزْنَ إِذَا شِئْتَ سَهْلًا

O Allah, there is no ease other than what You make easy.
If You please You ease sorrow. (Hisn al-Muslim 139)

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ،
وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ،
وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلْبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

O Allah! I seek refuge with You from worry and grief,
(tension about future and sadness about past)
from incapacity and laziness, from cowardice and
miserliness, from being heavily in debt and from being
overpowered by (other) men. (Hisn al-Muslim 137)



Sabr & Salah

Allah SWT told us to seek help from sabr and salah. Attach your duas to two rakat of salah when you are really feeling at a low place. You will be amazed how much better you feel, even physically. It is like everything that was racing and making us feel sad, upset, or agitated slows down and becomes calm.

Dhikr

Knowing that there is no god except Allah SWT is almost like a spiritual re-frame. Allah SWT told us that - "Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."
(Quran, 13:28)

Quran

Consistently read the Quran from cover to cover. Then we will understand the reality of this dunya. We are going to understand that there are people who are going to oppress others. We are going to understand that there are going to be ups and downs in life. When you are completely disconnected from the Quran, a lot of things will cause you sadness. Quran sets a certain mindset and gives us a mentality on how to approach life.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ, ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ, ابْنُ أَمَتِكَ
نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ, مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ, عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَاؤُكَ
أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ
أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ
أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ
أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَبِيعَ قَلْبِي وَنورَ صَدْرِي
وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي

O Allah, I am Your slave, and the son of Your male slave, and the son of your female slave. My forehead is in Your Hand (i.e. you have control over me). Your Judgment upon me is assured, and Your Decree concerning me is just. I ask You by every Name that You have named Yourself with, revealed in Your Book, taught any one of Your creation, or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You, to make the Qur'an the spring of my heart, and the light of my chest, the banisher of my sadness, and the reliever of my distress. Hisn al-Muslim 120

