

## **A brief glance at Spirituality, Reflections and Trials and Tribulations in Islam by Faisal Ally**

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### **Introduction**

Our world has become ‘doom and gloom’ and this is what most people across this entire globe are facing today. Many are faced with challenges like we have never faced before nor even imagine that could have ever happened in our lifetime. What we are facing will only get worse as the days go by. Our lives are being changed forever and it’s not for the best. Humanity will never be the same again. Many have already become very depressed and unhappy, while some will also take their lives due to this dire time we’re living in. The entire world is under house arrest where many have to now depend on the government and food banks, waiting with lineups for miles and for hours.

*In this article, I’m sharing some information and techniques hoping to shed a little light or even a gleam of hope for others that are searching for a way out of their despair.* With Ramadan upon us soon for this year 2020, which is the Muslim month of fasting, this is a good time for me to share information on Islam, as many have become curious about this month of fasting and what Muslims are practicing.

With the depression and unhappiness many face today, people must look at other sources to find real happiness, instead of always looking at someone else to bring them happiness, or finding happiness in material things which can disappear in a moment as we are witnessing right before our eyes, where many continues to lose their income, businesses, and have to depend on the government and food banks.

As this sadness and despair continues to play on people’s minds daily, there are ways to experience calm and peace from within, but this will take some practice and time.

This article is broken down into 7 sections plus the introduction.

### **Introduction**

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Most are aware that prayer is a big part of Islam, but there's much more to praying. Knowing how to focus and getting the most out of your prayer is a big part of practicing Islam. The teachings of Islam are very straightforward and simple. Until the moment we take our last breath, we can still be learning and growing from Islam, as the teachings of Islam is always expanding with great knowledge and examples.

### 1) Facing depression - doom and gloom - and spending time in reflections

One of the lectures I came across a few years ago on a youtube channel is called: How Surah Ad-Dhuha can change your life - Sh Tawfique Chowdhury [Beautiful]  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoqhNz7wD3I>

In this lecture Chowdhury states that when Prophet Muhammad did not hear from Angel Gibreel and six months went by, he was feeling depressed where the Prophet thought that Allah (God in Arabic) did not want him to be a Prophet anymore. Then the Angel Gibreel came to the Prophet and revealed the message of Surah 93 (Chapter 93) Ad-Duha of the Quran, which translates, to 'The early hours'.

Chowdhury begins, "Allah (One God as described in the Quran) said, Wad duha - By the sun and the morning in its blazing glory...wad duha, the first thing you tell someone who is depressed. Wake up, see the sunlight. It's not all dooms day. It's not all doom and gloom. There's a beautiful sun out there. Beautiful light."

Chowdhury continues, "Wad duha wa laili izaaja - and by the night it develops." He says, that the second problem with people who are depressed is they stay up the nights then go to sleep in the morning, and stay up at nights, so everything is doomy and gloomy. They have a bad sleep wake pattern. He then gives the translation for this second line: Wa laili izaaja translates to English as by the night as it gives comfort.

Chowdhury is describing how to **REFLECT** in Islam. We can reflect on the vastness of the creation that's created by the Creator. We can only worship the Creator, but never the creation. The creation, that is the universe, is a source of spiritual nourishment. Chowdhury is also discussing a chapter from the Quran, which is also a source - revelation - of spiritual nourishment and fills the heart with peace and love.

Here is the translation of the two mentioned line above from the book: *Twenty-three chapters of The Holy Quran p.58*

The first line in the surah is Wad-du-Haa (by the morning hours)

The next line in the surah is Wal-lai-li izaaja sajaa (and by the night when it is still)

Chowdhury reads the third line from this surah: Maa wad-da-aka rab-buka wa-maa kala. He then says, “Allah does not hate you oh Muhammad. Allah doesn’t hate us. Allah doesn’t hate you Muhammad nor has he forgotten you.”

Today many are facing hardships and Islam teaches us that each one of us will face hardships in this life and that we must walk the Middle Path, which is briefly discussed below. Islam teaches that life is about Trials and Tribulations.

Chowdhury then reads the next line of the surah: Walal Aakhi-ratu Khai-rul laka minal oolaa. He then says “Indeed the hereafter will be far better for you than this dunya. What’s coming will be far better for you than the situation you are in now. The word ‘dunya’ is translated to ‘world’ in English

As mentioned above Islam speaks of Trials and Tribulations, and that this world is one of Tests. Islam shows us a way to live life because at times the journey will be very difficult, and you may not have anyone to turn to. Islam teaches us how to live a good life in this world, even with all of our challenges.

There are many more lines in this chapter that’s discussed in the lecture.

Chowdhury is advising people to spend time in reflection especially when faced with depression. Aside from regular prayers, spending time in reflections can help take away depressions. By simply stop dwelling on the depressing ‘dunya’ we live in and filling our minds with spiritual nourishment, through reflections we start to become more enlightened and the more we practice the more elevate we become.

## **2) A glance at the book Spirituality in Islam by M. W. Khan**

According to Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in his book Spirituality in Islam, published in 2001, and says on page 5, ‘This book does not carry a copyright’, on page 15, Khan wrote: There’s nothing mysterious about spirituality in Islam. It is rather the direct result of the kind of intellectual development that takes place when a believer ponders over the Creator and His creation: he gains something in the process that may be termed spirituality. The source, therefore, of Islamic spirituality is PERUSAL AND REFLECTION...

In the passages above, Chowdhury has discussed how reflecting on the lines mentioned above can take your thoughts of depressing moments.

Khan says that spirituality “is the elevation of the human condition to a plane on which the mind is focused on the higher, non-material realities of a godly existence. The opposite of spiritualism is materialism, a course followed all too often in this world.”

Khan’s takes us to Surah (Chapter) 13 verse 2 of the Quran, which is translated as follows: “God is He who raised the Heavens without visible supports, then He ascended the Throne. He has compelled the sun and the moon to be of service, each pursuing an

appointed course; He controls the affairs (of the Universe); He makes plain His revelations, so that you may be certain of the meeting with your Lord.

Khan says that this verse brings a 'dual source of divine inspiration', meaning that the Universe is a permanent source of spiritual nourishment to reflect on, and also the Quran itself and the true authentic life of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (PBUH) which people can reflect on and learn from. And in the lecture above by Chowdhury, his example demonstrates how both the universe and the Quran are permanent source of spiritual inspiration and nourishment that can bring healing and even completely remove depression.

Khan states that the Quran is a book of guidance that trains the mind to 'understand the Universe and live in it as desired by the Almighty.' He says that the believers will naturally say: "There is no god but the one God!" and that when the believers study this, the believer will see that 'there are so many complex happenings in its vastness' and when the believer witness 'the events of the universe always proceeding towards a meaningful result, he realizes that man's life, too, must have a meaningful end. Thus he exclaims: "O our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose.

Today many people have lost hope and do not have a purpose in life. Many become alcoholic and drug addicts. Many are also using deceptions on others and feels good about their practices because of the material wealth they gain from deceiving others, which they will sooner or later lose as they will also have to one day face trails and tribulations in the way everyone has to; some also call themselves reformers, but are truly the deceivers.

### **3) Facing hardships - Trials and Tribulations**

Islam makes it clear that we are here for a purpose. All beings are here for a purpose. The message from Chowdhury and Khan is not to give up hope and that each and every person in this world will be tested. Islam teaches you that life is about trials and tribulations, and that each one of us will face hardships such as losing wealth, facing death etc... But there's hope and we all have a purpose for living. In Islam, people often hear about Muslims with their faith, praying 5 times a day, fasting for the month of Ramadan, giving to charity, making a pilgrimage to Hajj once in a life time if he or she can afford it, and carry out other practices, but there's also reflections.

There's so much more to understand. For example prayers is not only about praying and asking for health etc...Islam shows us a way of life and how to practice to make our life easier and how to avoid health problems such as depression. As mentioned above both Khan and Chowdhury wrote about reflections in Islam and the benefits of doing it. For example, during prayers where the worshipper takes his/her mind away from their worldly problems, Muslims are also engage in reflections during prayers. For example during prayers in surah 'Al Fatiha' meaning the 'Opening' (Surah 1) of the Quran, verses such as Maliki yaw mideen (Master of the day of judgment), Eeya ka na budu (Only you we worship) is reflecting on the greatness of the Almighty, where the worshipper reflects on since the Almighty can create the Universe and life and give us great guidance to

conduct our behavior, then the Almighty will also have all of our actions recorded, and that one day we will all be held accountable for all of our actions. If anybody has told you that it's okay to harm others and that you are being forgiven and that you can carry out more sins and bad behaviors and you do not have to worry about your bad actions, the only thing I can tell you is you were lied to. In Islam you have to keep improving your behavior and to learn from past mistakes because you will be held accountable for all of your actions. You also have to care for the elderly and take care of them when they become old and helpless; it's our duty.

#### **4) The practice of Dhikr and meditation**

Khan wrote on page 7: The greatest source of pleasure is the remembrance of God and says "it is only in the remembrance of God that hearts are comforted (13:8)."

Aside from prayers and reflections, there's a practice called Dhikr, where a person is engaged in the remembrance of the Almighty Creator of the heavens and earth by repeating a phrase such as 'Allahu Akbar' meaning God is great, 'Subhannalah' meaning Glory to God', 'Alhamdu lillah' meaning my praise be to God, and many more phrases describing the Almighty Creator of the heavens and earth. By focusing on one of these phrases, by repeating the phrase over and over for a few minutes a day or even for an hour you will certainly take your mind away from your 'doom and gloom.' This is the same as meditating and focusing.

In the book Spirituality in Islam, Khan wrote: "...in the spiritual world there is no great difference between comfort and deprivation. What one gains from experiences of material pleasure is of far less value than what one gains from experiences of deprivation. He says on p.7: A materially-minded person sees only the creature, while a spiritually-inclined person sees the splendor of the Creator through the creature."

**For example when calamity hits a person, this person will have to search for answers, and one of the best way to transform and go beyond this misfortune is to change your lifestyle and to become more spiritual.**

#### **5) What to do when you open your eyes in the morning**

Khan says that the Universe becomes a permanent source of spiritual nourishment. When you open your eyes in the morning, instead of allowing your mind to start rambling with the problems you face in this world, you should instead immediately focus your mind on something as beautiful as creation - to see the beauty in the rising sun, to hear the beauty of birds twittering. Or as soon as you open your eyes, start doing Dhikr as explained above. DO NOT WAIT until your mind is filled with worldly problems; once your mind starts to ramble, it becomes harder to let go of your worldly problems.

#### **6) Walking The Middle Path**

Islam teaches you to walk the middle path, whereas some walk the path all the way to the right and others all the way to the left. Islam teaches that if you have wealth that you should not become too excited about it because you can lose it all in a second as we are

witnessing across this entire world today. And if you are very depressed that you should not dwell on things and becoming more depressed, but you should walk the Middle Path instead, doing your best not to be so depressed, because in the next moment you can gain something that can make you very happy. The examples I gave above are some ways to rid yourself of depression, but it's really up to the individual, because it takes practice, and also a lifestyle change.

I find that most people do not consciously practice spirituality although they may practice prayers. When a calamity hits, many becomes depressed, some turns to drugs and alcohol, which will destroy a person's life.

With the depression and despair people are facing, it's important to have a way of life that will lift you out of that depression. The examples I mentioned above should help to uplift a person through regular practice.

### **7) Terms - Understanding the words 'Muslim', 'Islam' and Allah**

Muslim - The word 'muslim' in classical Arabic means a person that believes in the One God. This One God can only be described as mentioned in Islam such as 'The Greatest,' 'The Amazing,' 'The Exalted' that has no image (as also mentioned in the Bible, Torah, Vedas) and cannot be seen (as also mentioned in the Bible, Torah, Vedas). You will always hear Muslims saying that Jesus, Abraham, Moses, Joseph etc... were all Muslims, and that's because they all prayed to the One God, as described in Islam.

Allah - Allah translates to the One God as described in Islam. Jesus used the word Allaha in his time, and Muslims use the word, Allah. The Christians in the Middle East uses the word 'Allah.' The word god is a new word and applies to male, female, objects and all kinds of deities, where as the word 'Allah' and 'Allaha' only has one meaning.

Islam - The classical Arabic word 'islam' means submission to God as I described above who God is. You will always hear Muslims saying that Jesus, Abraham, Moses, Joseph practiced Islam, meaning that they submitted to God as described above.

According to Muslims a person that believes in this One God (Allah / Allaha) as I just described was practiced since time memorial, but as time goes on and new Messengers arrived, societies have to accept the new messenger along with the messengers of the past because the new way of life and more advanced societies becomes more and more complex through time. According to Islam, the Prophet Muhammad is the seal of all messengers, meaning that he is the last messenger sent by the Almighty creator.

Whatever way a person chose to practice, it's important to have a way that's uplifting especially through difficult times. Don't wait until a calamity hits really hard to start searching for solutions. Having good uplifting tools to live by is very important, especially in this day and age.

