

AlMaghrib

UST. SARAH SULTAN

# GROUNDED

Overcoming Loss, Fear, and Anxiety Through  
Personalities from the Quran and Seerah

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## OBJECTIVES OF THIS COURSE:

1. Learn about the stories of the prophets and our righteous predecessors from a human lens of struggle.
2. Learn practical psychospiritual coping mechanisms that are applicable in our own daily lives and difficulties.
3. Understand resilience, the importance of it for our spiritual and mental wellbeing and ways to enhance it.
4. Reframe difficult experiences through a lens that brings us closer to Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta'āla*).
5. Gain a greater conviction in the wisdom behind tests and struggles in our lives.
6. Understand post-traumatic growth, how it manifested in the prophets and righteous predecessors and how we can aim to embody these qualities through our struggles as well.
7. For parents, understand how we can use these coping skills to help our children through struggles.

## TESTS AND HARDSHIPS ARE INEVITABLE

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ  
 خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ  
 الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلا إِنَّا نَصْرُ اللَّهِ  
 قَرِيبٌ



Do you think you will be admitted into Paradise without being tested like those before you? They were afflicted with suffering and adversity and were so ‘violently’ shaken that ‘even’ the Messenger and the believers with him cried out, “When will Allāh’s help come?” Indeed, Allāh’s help is ‘always’ near.

(*al-Baqarah*, 2:214)

The Prophet Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, “Paradise is surrounded by adversity, and Hellfire is surrounded by lusts.”  
(*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2823)

## HAPPINESS MISCONCEPTION

Our circumstances only contribute to 10% of the overall level of happiness we feel in our lives

Our experience of reality is much more dependent on what's happening internally than on what's happening externally.

## IMPORTANCE: RESILIENCE

- Resilience is “the capacity we all possess to rebound from stress and feelings of fear, helplessness and overwhelm.”
  - It allows us to cope when faced with significant changes, struggles, and risks.
- Resilience is important for us as believers:

“The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant; from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it, but when the wind becomes quiet, it becomes straight again. Similarly, a believer is afflicted with calamities (but he remains patient till Allāh removes his difficulties). And an impious wicked person is like a cedar tree that stays hard and straight till Allāh cuts (breaks) it down when He wishes.”

(*Ṣaḥīḥ* al-Bukhāri, no. 5644;

*Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim, no. 2809)

## PARENTS CAN HELP CHILDREN BUILD

Bulldozer parenting & helicopter parenting

Stress inoculation

# 10

TEN AREAS OF BENEFIT THAT COMES FROM LEARNING TO COPE & DEVELOP

1. Adaptation to Change
2. Mental Health
3. Problem-Solving
4. Healthier Relationships
5. Productivity
6. Physical Health
7. Personal Growth
8. Crisis Preparedness
9. Happiness and Well-being
10. Faith and Spirituality

# UNIT 1: GRIEF & LOSS

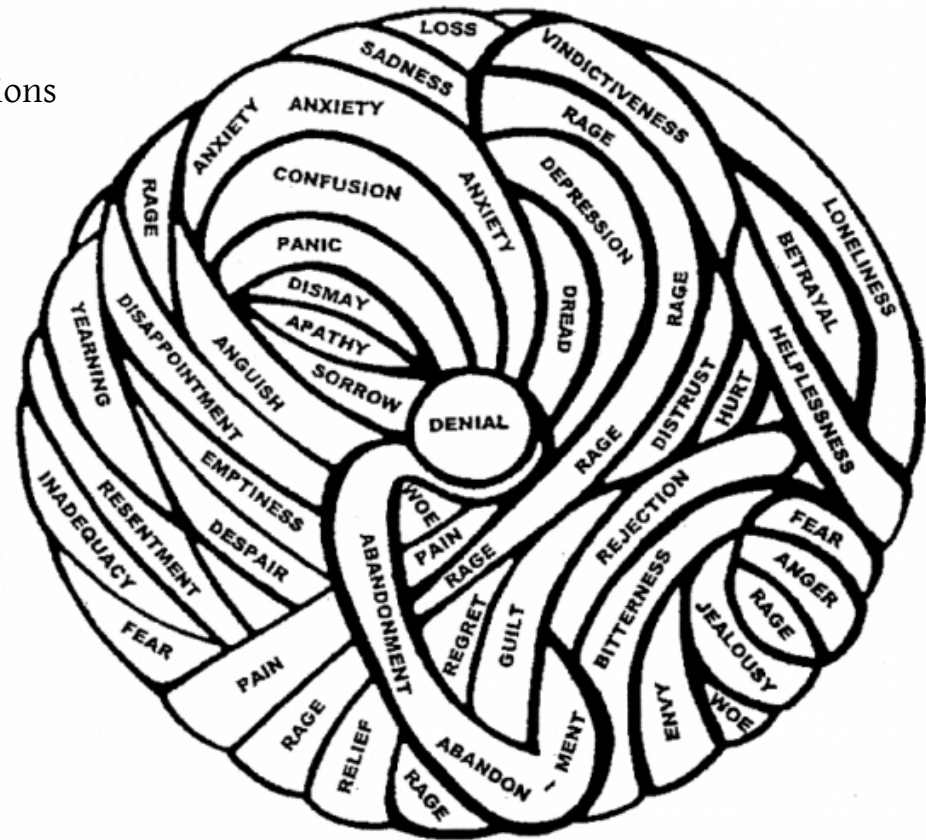
GROUND

## WHAT IS GRIEF?

*What is grief?*

“Grief refers to the process of experiencing the psychological, behavioral, social and physical reactions to the experience of the loss.”

## TANGLED BALL OF GRIEF



## TASKS OF MOURNING

Grief is a normal response to loss

It is not linear

Psychologist J. William Worden's Tasks of Mourning

1. Task I: To accept the reality of the loss.
2. Task II: To process the pain of grief.
3. Task III: To adjust to a world without the deceased.
4. Task IV: To find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life.

## TASK 1: ACCEPT REALITY OF THE LOSS

After a death, it's common that the reality of the situation is minimized or denied. To complete this task, the reality of the loss must be fully accepted, both intellectually and emotionally.

### EXAMPLE I

When the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) died: ‘Umar stood up and said, “By Allāh! Allāh’s Messenger (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) is not dead!” He said, “Verily! Allāh will resurrect him and he will cut the hands and legs of some men.” Then Abu Bakr came and uncovered the face of Allāh’s Messenger (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), kissed him and said, “Let my mother and father be sacrificed for you, (O Allāh’s Messenger (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*), you are good in life and in death. By Allāh in Whose Hands my life is, Allāh will never make you taste death twice.” Abu Bakr said, “No doubt! Whoever worshipped Muḥammad, then Muḥammad is dead, but whoever worshipped Allāh, then Allāh is Alive and shall never die.” The people began to weep and then later discussed choosing a ruler. ‘Umar said (to Abu Bakr), “No but we elect you, for you are our chief and the best amongst us and the most beloved of all of us to Allāh’s Messenger (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*).” So ‘Umar took Abu Bakr’s hand and gave the pledge of allegiance and the people too gave the pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr.

## EXAMPLE 2

When the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) lost his son Ibrāhīm

When he saw Ibrāhīm was breathing his last breaths. It made the eyes of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) shed tears. Abd’l Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf said, “Even you, O Messenger of Allāh?” The Prophet said, “O Ibn ‘Awf, this is mercy.” Then, the Prophet wept some more and he said, “Verily, the eyes shed tears and the heart is grieved, but we will not say anything except what is pleasing to our Lord. We are saddened by your departure, O Ibrāhīm.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri*, 1241)

## TAKEAWAYS

- Name the grief to acknowledge it.
- Acceptance doesn’t mean a lack of struggle - it’s the difference between denying reality and sitting with the pain of the reality.
- Acceptance can look different for different people.

## TASK 2: EXPERIENCE PAIN OF GRIEF

- Grief involves painful emotions such as sadness, anger, and guilt. It can be tempting to avoid these feelings, burying them rather than facing them. However, working through grief means confronting, naming, and making sense of these emotions.
- What we resist persists. Avoidance of emotions leads to problems.
  - And if we don’t face it, it comes up in different ways and at less-than-ideal times
- What happens when you don’t allow yourself to grieve?

EXAMPLE 1: PROPHET YA'QŪB ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM)

Prophet Ya'qūb ('alayhi'l-salām) experienced loss of Yūsuf ('alayhi'l-salām) then followed by the loss of Benyamin. When the Prophet Ya'qūb ('alayhi'l-salām) got this news he said,

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ عَسَى اللَّهُ  
 أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ جَمِيعاً إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾  
 وَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا سَفَى عَلَى يَوْسُفَ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ  
 مِنَ الْحُزَنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾

“He cried, “No! Your souls must have tempted you to do something ‘evil’. So ‘I am left with nothing but’ beautiful patience! I trust Allāh will return them all to me. Surely He is the All-Knowing, All-Wise. and he turned away from them, saying, ‘Alas for Joseph!’ His eyes went white with grief and he was filled with sorrow.”

(Yūsuf, 12:83-84)

قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ تَفْتُوا تَذَكُرُ يَوْسُفَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ حَرَضاً  
 أَوْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْهَالِكِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

They (his sons) said, “By Allāh! You will not cease to remember Yūsuf until you lose your health or ‘even’ your life.”

(Yūsuf, 12:85)

TAKEAWAY

Grief doesn't have a particular timeline.

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

He replied, “I complain of my anguish and sorrow only to Allāh, and I know from Allāh what you do not know.

(Yūsuf, 12:86)

## TAKEAWAY

Psychological benefit of speaking to God during moments of distress.

يَا بَنِيَّ أَذْهَبُوا فَتَحَسَّسُوا مِنْ يُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ وَلَا تَأْيَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يَأْيَسُ مِنَ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

O my sons! Go and search ‘diligently’ for Joseph and his brother. And do not lose hope in the mercy of Allāh, for no one loses hope in Allāh’s mercy except those with no faith.”

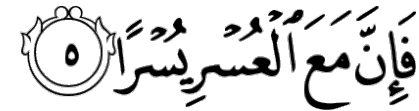
(Yūsuf, 12:87)

## EXAMPLE 2 : UMM SALAMAH'S

Umm Salamah's separation from her son and husband:

### TAKEAWAYS

- What you resist persists. This is an example of the importance of allowing yourself to grieve.
- Sometimes retelling the narrative of what happened can be empowering.
- Getting support and advocacy from others who can help to encourage a change in circumstances.
- We can accept a struggle we're facing while still hoping and praying for change and advocating for change.
- This stage, just like the other stages, will not last forever. Remember the promise of Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*),



For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.  
Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease. (*al-Sharḥ*, 94:5)

- Remember that every moment of sadness and pain, no matter how overwhelming, is a part of the process of healing, is an indication of your love for this person and is witnessed by Allāh.

## TASK 3: ADJUST TO LIFE WITHOUT DECEASED

### INTERNAL ADJUSTMENT:

What do I do now with this energy I used to put toward our relationship?

Identity: Who am I now (not a wife, mother, etc.)?

### EXTERNAL ADJUSTMENT:

Physical absence of person.  
Daily routine changes.  
New roles & new skills needed.  
New worldview.

### SECONDARY LOSSES:

Loss of a relationship with someone results in other losses by default as well.

## EXAMPLE

### THE DEATH OF ABU SALAMAH:

Abu Salamah told his wife: I heard something today that was so beloved to me. “Whoever says at the moment of calamity:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ اللَّهُمَّ أَجْزِنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا  
*Inna lillāhi wa inna ilayhi raji'ūn Allāhumma jirni fi muṣībati wa'kh-lif-li khayran minha* (That to Allāh we belong and to Allāh we return. Oh Allāh, compensate me for my tragedy and give me better than that which was taken away from me.) I heard the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) say, whoever says this at the moment of calamity will be given something better by Allāh.”

After Abu Salamah’s death, Umm Salamah said said: “When Abu Salamah died, I remembered what he had told me from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and I said: ‘*Inna lillāhi, wa inna ilayhi raji'ūn.* (Truly, to Allāh we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.) O Allāh, with You I seek reward for my calamity, so reward me for it. But when I wanted to say ‘and compensate me with better,’ I said to myself: ‘How can I be compensated with something better than Abu Salamah?’ Then I said it, and Allāh compensated me with Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) and rewarded me for my calamity.”

(Sunan Ibn Mājah, 1598)

## TAKEAWAY

How to begin adjusting to changes in life after loss?

## TASK 4: CONNECT TO THE DECEASED WHILE RE-INVESTING

This can be a difficult balance to strike:

- Loss oriented vs. Present/Future oriented
- Continuing Bonds Theory: Research shows it can be helpful to stay connected to the deceased after a loss
- Find a way to remember the deceased while moving forward in life
- Moving on doesn't mean forgetting. It means finding a place for the deceased in one's thoughts— a place that is important but still leaves room for others.
- Completing this task means finding a healthy balance between cherishing their memory and moving forward in life.

## EXAMPLE I

### THE PROPHET (ṢALLALLĀHU ‘ALAYHI WA SALLAM) & KHADĪJAH (RADYALLĀHU ‘ANHA)

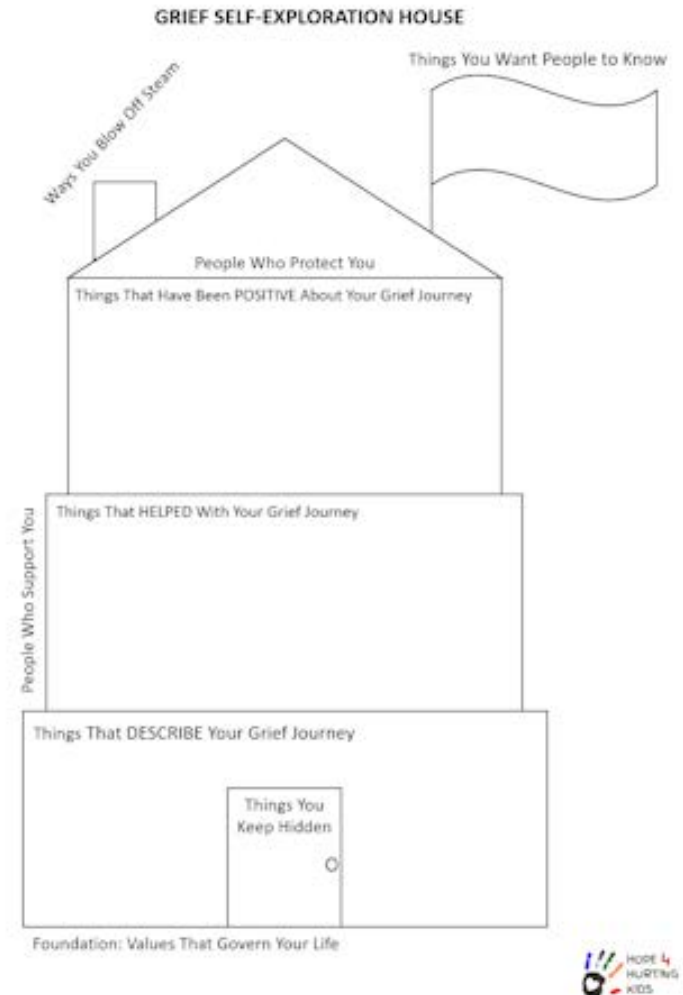
When the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) was given something, he would say, “Go to such person, for they were a friend of Khadījah. Go to the house of such person, for they were loved by Khadījah.” (*al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 225)

Once Hāla bint Khuwaylid, Khadījah’s sister, asked the permission of the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) to enter. On that, the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) remembered the way Khadījah used to ask permission, and that saddened him. He said, “O Allāh! Hāla!” So Aisha became jealous and said, “What makes you remember an old woman amongst the old women of Quraysh an old woman (with a teethless mouth) of red gums who died long ago, and in whose place Allāh has given you somebody better than her?” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3821) Allāh’s Messenger (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said: “Allāh has not given me a better one in her place; she believed in me when everyone disbelieved in me, knew that what I have brought is the truth when all the people did not, gave me her money when the people obstructed me, Allāh, the Almighty, granted me children from her and deprived me children from my other wives.” (*Musnad Aḥmad*, 24864)

When the people of Makkah sent about ransoming their prisoners Zaynab (the daughter of the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) sent some property to ransom her husband, Abu’l ‘Āṣ, sending among it a necklace of hers which Khadījah had had, and (which she) had given to her when she married Abu’l ‘Āṣ. When the Messenger of Allāh (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) saw it, he felt great tenderness about it and said: “If you consider that you should free her prisoner for her and return to her what belongs to her, (it will be well).” They said: “Yes.” (*Sunan Abi Dāwūd*, 2692)

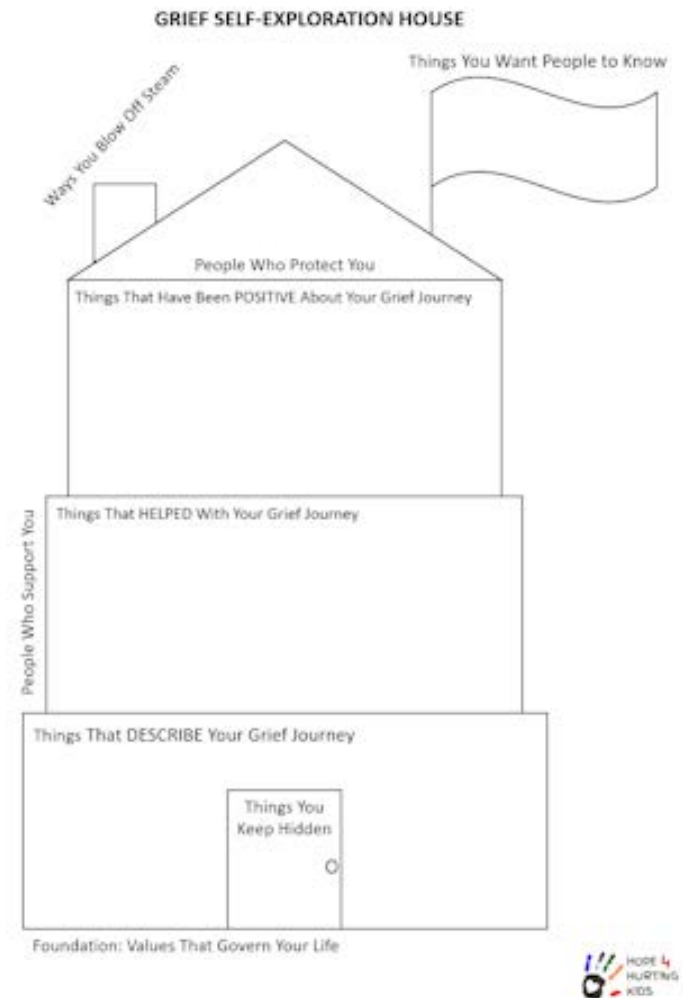
# TAKEAWAYS

- The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) remembered Khadījah fondly, acknowledged her place in his life and heart, and gave gifts to those beloved by her, thereby maintaining a connection with her after her death.
- Habits of the heart: Desire to continue internal relationship with a person who’s not present anymore. When these moments come up, attach it to a new beneficial habit to attach meaning and action to something that may be painful.
- Keeping connection with the deceased can be helpful.
  - The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) created a balance between maintaining a connection with his beloved wife, Khadījah while still moving forward in life
- Speaking of the person who passed as a healing technique.
- Keeping relationship with those who loved that person as well



## TAKEAWAY (CONTINUED)

- *Du‘ā’*: Abu Hurayrah (*raḍyAllāhu ‘anhu*) reported: The Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, “Verily, Allāh Almighty will raise the status of his righteous servants in Paradise, and they will say: ‘O Lord, what is this?’ Allāh will say: ‘This is your child seeking forgiveness for you.’” (*Musnad Aḥmad*, 10611)
  - Abu Hurayrah (*raḍyAllāhu ‘anhu*) reported: The Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, “When the human being dies, his deeds end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, or a righteous child who prays for him.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 163)
- Visualization: the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said this *du‘ā’* upon the death of a companion: “O Allāh, forgive him and have mercy on him, and give him strength and pardon him. Be generous to him, and cause his entrance to be wide, and wash him with water and snow and hail. Cleanse him of his transgressions as white cloth is cleansed of stains. Give him an abode better than his home.... Take him into Paradise, and protect him from the punishment of the grave [and from the punishment of Hell-fire].” (*Muslim*, 2/663)
  - This allows you to visualize a future filled with peace and goodness.



OTHER TYPES OF LOSSES

1. LOSS OF RELATIONSHIPS

*Ibrāhīm ('alayhi'l-salām) and His Relationship with His Father*

- Importance of Maintaining Ties of Kinship
  - “Allāh created the universe, and when He had finished, kinship (*al-rahm*) stood up and said, “This is the standing up of one who seeks Your protection from being cut off.” Allāh said, “Yes, would it please you if I were to take care of those who take care of you and cut off those who cut you off?” It said, “Of course.” Allāh said, “Then your prayer is granted.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharh al-Nawawi*, 16/112)
  - Allāh, the Almighty and Exalted, said, “I am the Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*). I have created ties of kinship (*ṣilat'l-rahm*) and derived a name for it from My Name. If anyone maintains ties of kinship, I maintain connection with him, and I shall cut off anyone who cuts them off.” (*Al-Adab Al-Mufrad*, 53)
  - “The one who maintains a relationship with his relatives only because they maintain a relationship with him is not truly upholding the ties of kinship. The one who truly upholds those ties is the one who does so even if they break off the relationship.” (al-Bukhāri, 5645).

TAKEAWAYS

How to deal with difficult relationships:  
Don't stoop to their level:

وَلَا تَسْتَوِ الْحَسَنَةَ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةَ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا  
الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

“Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend”

(*Fuṣṣilat*, 41:34)

- You can't control others, but you can control your response to them:
- Set boundaries with respect.
- When connection with a person cannot be fulfilled in typical ways, *du'ā'* is a beautiful avenue and can provide solace.

## 2. UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS: HINNAH BINT FAQŪD: MOTHER OF MARYAM ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM)

إِذْ قَالَتْ أُمَّرَأْتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا

فَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا

وَضَعْتُ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي

أُعِيدُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾

‘Remember’ when the wife of ‘Imrān said, “My Lord! I dedicate what is in my womb entirely to Your service, so accept it from me. You ‘alone’ are truly the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” When she delivered, she said, “My Lord! I have given birth to a girl,”—and Allāh fully knew what she had delivered—“and the male is not like the female. I have named her Maryam, and I seek Your protection for her and her offspring from Shaytan, the accursed.”

(Āle-‘Imrān, 3:35-36)

## TAKEAWAYS

when navigating unfulfilled expectations:

- Accept your new reality.
- Maintain good expectations of Allāh.
- Strive for your goal in a new way.

## PARENTS: HOW TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH GRIEF

Children's lives are filled with losses too - most often small ones but knowing how to deal with the small ones is preparation for dealing with the larger ones.

- Validate emotion (e.g. "It's so disappointing when you get excited to go somewhere and it doesn't happen.")
- In cases of loss: take care of yourself first
- Stick to routine and structure
- Be clear about what death is so they understand its permanence in this life.

### WAYS TO COPE AS A FAMILY:

- Share hopes and plans for the future
- Create family traditions your loved one would have appreciated
- Get out in nature together
- Volunteer together as a family
- Stay connected to deceased (e.g. *du'ā'* list, memories, *sadaqah jāriyah*, write a letter)

# UNIT 2:

# FEAR & ANXIETY

GROUNDING

## NORMALIZE ANXIETY

Abu Sa'īd al-Khudri (*raḍyAllāhu 'anhu*) reported: The Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) entered the mosque one day while a man from the *Anṣār* named Abu Umāmah was there. The Prophet said, "O Abu Umāmah, what is the matter that I see you sitting in the mosque while it is not time for prayer?" He said, "O Messenger of Allāh, I am compelled by anxiety and debts." The Prophet said, "Shall I not teach you a word to say by which Allāh Almighty will relieve your worry and complete your debt?" He said, "Of course, O Messenger of Allāh." The Prophet said, "Say in the morning and evening:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ  
مِنَ الْجُبْنِ وَالْبُخْلِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ غَلَبَةِ الدَّيْنِ وَقَهْرِ الرِّجَالِ

'O Allāh, I seek refuge in you from worry and sadness. I seek refuge in you from inability and laziness. I seek refuge in you from cowardice and stinginess. And I seek refuge in you from being overwhelmed by debt and from oppression of men." Abu Umāmah said, "I did this and Allāh took away my worries and debts." (*Sunan Abi Dāwūd*, 1555)

## FALSE REFUGES

*False refuges provide temporary relief from discomfort.*

Identifying your false refuges is a great step in breaking down the walls that prevent you from gaining a true sense of peace and safety.

Think about what you've been avoiding and ask yourself: *What is one small thing I can do today that I haven't felt willing to do in a long time?*

*True refuge is found in having trust in Allāh (tawwakul)*

Having trust in Allāh allows us to face the discomfort in a situation without running to our false refuges.

## UNCERTAINTY TOLERANCE

*Uncertainty tolerance:* the Psychological principle that relates to how we deal with uncertainty in our lives.

Those who embrace uncertainty, who learn not to fight it, who recognize they're not in control of everything in the world, are the ones who are best able to cope and function in their lives.

### EXAMPLE: THE STORY OF THE CAVE

While in a cave, hidden from assassins trying to kill the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), Abū Bakr (radīAllāhu ‘anhu) was worried and said, “If any of them should look under his feet, he would see us.” The Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), however, was the image of calm. “O Abū Bakr!” he exclaimed. “What do you think of two [persons] the third of whom is Allāh?” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri, 3653)

## TAKEAWAYS

*to Build Uncertainty Tolerance:*

- Acknowledge that Allāh is the only one in control of the universe. Most things in life are uncertain to us but they are known to Allāh.
- Control what you can and accept what you can't.
- Radical Acceptance is the full acceptance of the knowledge that we cannot currently change the present facts, even if we do not like them.

## **ANXIETY & FEAR: STORIES OF THE RIGHTEOUS**

*FIRST REVELATION OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ)  
'ALAYHI WA SALLAM)*

# TAKEAWAYS

- Reach out to someone you trust, someone capable of comfort and empathy during moments of hardship.
- First, do something physical to help your body manage the shock of a difficult experience.
- Talking through a difficult experience and having it witnessed by someone safe and supportive can be incredibly healing.
- Fear is a natural human emotion that everyone experiences at times. It's what you do with the emotion that makes a difference.
- Strengths-based approach: When someone comes to you in need of comfort and reassurance, emphasize the strengths Allāh has given them and the value you see in them.
- Consult someone with wisdom, good judgment and knowledge during difficult times.
- The opportunity to be a support to someone during a trial is a gift and an opportunity from Allāh.
- Face your fear: Just because there's a struggle or difficulty doesn't indicate that you should back down.

PROPHET YŪSUF ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM) & THE WELL

## TAKEAWAYS

- When fear is channeled in the wrong way, it can do a lot of damage to ourselves and to others around us.
- The struggle you're enduring will not last forever.
- Cultivating hope is helpful for healthy mental health, resilience and motivation.

SNYDER'S HOPE THEORY:

1. Goal thinking: Having clear goals that excite you and fill your mind with pictures of the future.
2. Pathways thinking: The ability to seek out and identify multiple pathways to your goals, pick the most appropriate routes for your situation, and monitor your progress over time.
3. Agency thinking: The ability to motivate yourself and to build a capacity for persistence and long-term effort in the face of obstacles.

**\*Missing component for Muslims: *Tawakkul* (trust in Allāh). Part of hope is understanding that the event's achievement is not completely within one's control.**

*Advocate: Prophet Yūsuf ('alayhi'l-salām) in Jail*

وَأَسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيصَهُ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَأَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا  
 لَدَا الْبَابِ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ  
 أَوْ يُعَذَّبَ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

They raced for the door and she tore his shirt from the back, only to find her husband at the door. She cried, “What is the penalty for someone who tried to violate your wife, except imprisonment or a painful punishment?”

قَالَ هِيَ رَوَدَّتْنِي عَنْ نَفْسِي

Joseph responded, “It was she who tried to seduce me.”

(Yūsuf, 12:25-26)

## TAKEAWAYS

- Advocate for yourself.
- Speaking up during a moment of anxiety is empowering.

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ  
عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Joseph prayed, “My Lord! I would rather be in jail than do what they invite me to. And if You do not turn their cunning away from me, I might yield to them and fall into ignorance.”

(Yūsuf, 12:33)

## TAKEAWAYS

- Cognitive dissonance: when confronted with situations that contradict beliefs, ideals, and values, people will try to find a way to resolve the contradiction to reduce their discomfort.
- Prophet Yūsuf (*‘alayhi’l-salām*) chose to align his actions with his values rather than changing his values in order to align with the easier path.

## POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN THE STORY OF YŪSUF YŪSUF ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM)

1. A greater appreciation of life
2. Increased closeness in relationships
3. Identification of new possibilities
4. Increased personal strength
5. Greater spiritual development

## THE POWER OF PRAYER: THE BATTLE OF BADR

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*radīAllāhu 'anhu*) reported:

On the day of Badr, the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) looked upon the idolaters and they were 1,000 in number, while his companions were only 319 men. The Prophet faced the direction of prayer, then he raised his hands and supplicated aloud to his Lord, "O Allāh, accomplish what You have promised me! O Allāh, bring about what You have promised me! O Allāh, if this band among the people of Islam is destroyed, You will not be worshipped on the earth!"

The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) continued to call out to his Lord with his hands raised and facing the direction of prayer until his cloak fell from his shoulders. Abu Bakr came, picked up his cloak, and placed it on his shoulders, then he embraced him from behind, saying, "O Prophet of Allāh, your supplication to your Lord will suffice, for He will accomplish what He has promised you."

Allāh Almighty revealed the verse,

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِالْفِ  
 مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ ﴿٩﴾

“When you sought deliverance from your Lord and He answered you: ‘Verily, I “When you sought deliverance from your Lord and He answered you: ‘Verily, I will reinforce you with a thousand angels, rank after rank,’” (*al-Anfāl*, 8:9).

Thus, Allāh reinforced him with the angels.  
 (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 1763)

## BATTLE OF BADR TAKEAWAYS

Ways to Build Distress Tolerance:

- Exercise self-compassion
- Focus on what is within your control rather than on end results
- Prayer for fortitude and serenity through submission to Allāh

*Parenting: Anxiety Coping Techniques for Children*

- Create a tool kit/list/picture of different things kids can do when feeling strong emotions.
- Create a stable home base.
- Encourage communication to share their worries and provide validation.
- Help children to create mental, physical and spiritual shifts to address negative thought patterns.

# TAKEAWAYS

## **POWERLESSNESS**

### WHAT IS POWERLESSNESS?

*Powerlessness:* may be described as an overwhelming feeling of helplessness or inadequacy in stressful situations – making us more susceptible to anxiety, stress and depression.

When a person repeatedly experiences situations in which the overwhelming emotion is that of powerlessness and helplessness, this can lead to learned helplessness.

*Learned helplessness:* We eventually stop trying to change things when we feel that control over a situation has been lost, even when the situation changes so that control might be taken back.

### **MŪSA (‘ALAYHI’L-SALĀM)’S MOTHER**

- Self-regulation: Self-control is the ability to act in your long-term best interest, consistent with your deepest values. It is what allows us to feel one way but act another.
- Allāh is our anchor and the ultimate source of help Who is always accessible to you.
- There are certain things that only you can do so take on the role Allāh has given you to make a difference.
- Don’t belittle a small action you can do.

### **MARYAM (‘ALAYHI’L-SALĀM) & THE BIRTH OF ‘ĪSA**

- When something happens that shakes your world, it’s ok to ask questions to get a clearer understanding. Sometimes we need more information to stabilize ourselves.
- What is the stream Allāh has provided you with in this moment of pain?
- We don’t get to choose what form Allāh’s help will arrive in.
- Behavioral activation as an antidote to powerlessness.

# TAKEAWAYS

## MŪSA ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM) ESCAPING TO MADYAN

- Sometimes we feel powerless due to the weight of our mistakes and sins.
- Create change after repenting to avoid the same mistake.
- When feeling powerless to change the negative cycles you go through:
  - Make a positive intention and goal.
  - Acknowledge the blessings of Allāh.
- The people we surround ourselves with have a strong impact on us so be cautious about the company you choose.
- Don't let hardships cause you to forget the struggles of others, especially if it's within your power to create change for someone else.
  - You may be unable to change the circumstance you're coping with but can you do something to change someone else's?
- Helping others can be an antidote to powerlessness.
  - Bystander effect vs. being an "upstander"
- Channel emotion into *du'ā'*.

## YŪNUS ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM) & ACCOUNTABILITY

- An antidote to powerlessness is accountability.
- Healthy guilt is a positive thing: Don't consider how small the sin is but, rather, the greatness of the One we have sinned against.
  - Ask yourself: What is my role in this? What changes can I make? Do I need to seek Allāh's forgiveness for my part in this situation?
- Glorifying Allāh during difficult moments is a reminder of His ultimate power and capability, which can alleviate feelings of powerlessness.
- Importance of *muḥāsabah*: self-examination for accountability.
- Psychological and spiritual benefit of *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness).

## TAKEAWAYS

### MŪSA ('ALAYHI'L-SALĀM) FACING FIR'AWN

- Don't allow your fears to dictate whether you step up to a challenge or avoid it.
- Allow yourself to accept help. It was sent by Allāh.
- In moments of hardship, remember what Allāh told Mūsa and Hārūn ('alayhim'l-salām):

قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَىٰ ﴿٤٦﴾

- No matter what you're going through, Allāh knows and He is with you, hearing and seeing.
- Victim vs. survivor mindset
- Fostering a survivor mindset:
  - Cognitive restructuring
  - Affirmations
  - Truth-telling

“Allāh reassured ‘them’, “Have no fear! I am with you, hearing and seeing.”

(Ṭā Ha, 20:46)

## PARENTING: HELPING CHILDREN TO NAVIGATE FEELINGS OF HELPLESSNESS AND POWERLESSNESS

- Self-efficacy:
  - Nurturing a “can do” attitude that encourages our children that they can attempt new things and accomplish difficult tasks can naturally improve their view of their capability to deal with certain stressors in life.
  - A strong sense of self-efficacy can also help our children to gain mastery in practicing their faith and a sense of confidence that they can successfully observe Islam in their lives, no matter the difficulties that come their way.
- Set realistic, achievable goals.
- Reframe challenges & difficulties as learning opportunities.
- Encourage accountability while also normalizing making mistakes.
- Give them responsibility and chores to promote stress inoculation.

## LONELINESS & PRESSURE TO CONFORM

### Loneliness & Pressure to Conform

One of the biggest themes in the stories throughout this course is people choosing the ease and comfort of the status quo vs. the way the Prophets and the righteous who choose the truth in the face of hardship, and choose Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*)

As Muslims, especially those living in the west, feeling lonely can often be the norm.

وَأَصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ  
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ، وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ  
الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ  
أَمْرَهُ فُرطًا

The Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) told us: “Islam began as something strange and it will return to being strange, so blessed are the strangers.” (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 145*)

- We are commanded by Allāh to choose the path less traveled, even if it’s hard:

And patiently stick with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure. Do not let your eyes look beyond them, desiring the luxuries of this worldly life. And do not obey those whose hearts We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follow ‘only’ their desires and whose state is ‘total’ loss. (*al-Kahf, 18:28*)

- We are encouraged to be of the “few” that Allāh mentions so frequently in the Qur’ān
- Patience and resilience are needed to navigate difficult times as well as to stand firm in faith and obedience to Allāh when following His commands may be counter to our personal desires.
- The importance of strengthening an Islamic identity.

# TAKEAWAYS

## Story of Prophet Nūḥ (*‘alayhi’l-salām*)

- Don’t Personalize: even if people call you names, as long as you are doing what is pleasing to Allāh, their words don’t matter. They are rejecting the truth rather than personalizing it as a rejection of YOU.
- People’s judgments are most often a reflection of themselves and their personal struggles more than a reflection of you.
- Wish good for others.
- Treat people in a way that is reflective of your character, not theirs: “O my people”
- How do we keep working toward a goal when nothing seems to be working?
  - Do your part: commit to the process with sincerity rather than over-worrying about results.
  - If at first you don’t succeed, try again
  - Make a change: try a different approach.
  - Be cautious about allowing ego to get in the way when someone gives you beneficial feedback.

- Do not allow your actions to be dictated by others or worries about how they will respond to you.
- Choose a Name of Allāh to reflect on that leads you to a greater sense of certainty and contentment.
- Do not allow your actions to be dictated by others or worries about how they will respond to you.
- Choose a Name of Allāh to reflect on that leads you to a greater sense of certainty and contentment.

# TAKEAWAYS

## Story of Prophet Nūḥ (*‘alayhi’l-salām*) [continued]

- What do we do when someone we love is making the wrong choices?
  - Realize even the most righteous cannot guarantee the guidance of their loved ones.
  - Realize that each person is accountable to themselves.
  - The choice of others to change is not in your control.
  - The hearts of humans are between the fingers of Allāh.
  - Plant the seed – your responsibility is to convey the message, not to ensure it reaches the person.
  - Prioritize the relationship: Take responsibility for yourself and your actions while acknowledging that others and their choices are not within your control

# TAKEAWAYS

## Story of Prophet Ayyūb (‘alayhi’l-salām)

- Patience doesn’t mean you don’t feel or that the situation isn’t hard. *Ṣabr* means to “tie something down;” to exercise restraint.
- Attribute good to Allāh and strive to see the mercy in difficult circumstances.

*How did Ayyūb (‘alayhi’l-salām) maintain his hope and strength of his faith while he lost everything?*

1. He realized the people’s opinions didn’t matter
2. That he was never alone - Allāh was with him
3. Patience
4. Gratitude
  - i. Salt-water moments
  - ii. Turn struggles into gratitude

## Story of Hājar (raḍyAllāhu ‘anha)

- Psychological reframing: Once Hājar understood the command came from Allāh, her perception of the situation of being left in the desert was transformed.
- Sometimes the things we have to do with our loved ones can feel painful but you do it because you know there’s good in it.
- Do your part to create change in your circumstances; nothing is too small a step.
- Focus on the strengths and gifts Allāh has given you and using them rather than focusing on the abilities you wish Allāh had given you.
- Your accomplishments and any good that comes from your effort is a gift from Allāh. This seed was meant to flourish and if Allāh allows you to be a means toward this, it’s a blessing from Him.
- Believe in the promise of Allāh that even if you don’t see it in this life; your efforts will be seen in the next.

# TAKEAWAYS

## Story of ‘Āsiya (‘alayhi’l-salām)

- In reality, when we put Allāh before our desires and worldly gains, we are choosing ourselves as well. Worship of Allāh allows us to prioritize our purpose and who we truly are. This is not a favor to Allāh, it is a favor to yourself.
  - Even if it doesn’t always feel that way. Feelings are transient but the reward of Allāh is permanent and eternal and when we choose to live our values rather than allow our values and choices to fluctuate with societal standards, we choose eternal reward rather than temporary comfort.
- External Validation: It’s a natural human experience to want to be well-liked by others; to want recognition and acceptance. We all strive for a sense of belonging and are hurt when others reject us.
  - This becomes a problem when it gets in the way of worshipping Allāh and connecting with Him.

- When we base our self-worth and our choices on the standards that we imagine are pleasing to people, we put Allāh and His standards second. We are telling ourselves that what people think of us is more important than what Allāh (*subḥānahu wa ta’āla*) thinks of us.
- We can’t truly be who we are when our connection with Allāh isn’t prioritized
- How can we combat the need for external validation:
  - People are unpredictable: society’s standards will always change so if we change along with them, our identities will change constantly. The only stable standard we have is the standard of Allāh.
  - Self-accountability: we waste so much time focusing on other people, yet on the Day that matters most, we won’t be asked about them. We will be asked about how we spent OUR lives.
  - The hearts of humans are between the fingers of Allāh. Acknowledge that the hearts that you seek are actually in the Hands of the One we often fail to seek.
  - Work on nurturing contentment in your heart.

## PARENTING: HELPING CHILDREN TO DEVELOP A STRONG ISLAMIC IDENTITY & RESIST THE URGE TO CONFORM

### 1. BUILD HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM:

- i. Positive labeling
- ii. Using a strengths-based approach
- iii. Verbalizing observed strengths
- iv. Helping your child identify strengths
- v. Paying attention to what your child is doing right
- vi. Conveying a sense of importance
- vii. Showing interest in what your child enjoys
- viii. Making space for your child in discussions
- ix. Investing in the magic ratio

### 2. ENCOURAGE HEALTHY AUTONOMY:

- i. Encouraging an independent relationship with Allāh
- ii. Allowing opportunities for your child to make decisions
- iii. Encouraging positive distinctiveness
- iv. Nurturing your child's talents
- v. Nurturing a variety of social circles & supports

