210410 - She feels sad and depressed, and is asking for a solution

the question

I am a twenty-four year old woman. I feel sad almost all the time, and have no desire to make contact with people. I feel very lonely and as if nothing could make me happy, even though I offer all the obligatory prayers, even Fajr on time, I pray qiyam al-layl, I read a juz of Quran every day in order to complete it once every month, I try to draw closer to Allah and I have performed ‘Umrah more than once. But these feelings are not going away. Praise be to Allah, I am blessed, my life is pretty good and is better than many, praise be to Allah. I acknowledge that and I give thanks to Allah for it; I hope that He will not call me to account for my negative feelings. But I do not know what is the cause of these bad feelings. This has been going on for more than a year, and started before the unfortunate developments that have occurred in the Arab world. It has gotten worse with the killings in our country and the loss of relatives of some friends of mine. How can I overcome this negativity?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

First of all, we would like to welcome you to the Islam Q&A website. We ask Allah to benefit us and you by means of what we say, and to relieve us and our Muslim ummah of distress.

Noble sister… Trouble is inevitable in the life of this world; this is how Allah has decreed it and He has made it a place of trials and tests, and a bridge to the Hereafter. Even the best of His creation, the prophets, were never free of troubles. Life is never plain sailing for anyone, young or old. You may have reason to rejoice one day, then reason to feel sad for many other days; this is how it always is in the life of this world and this is how people are all the time.

Who among us has not felt grief and sorrow as a result of the calamities we see befalling the Muslims, day after day? Who among us has not lost interest in this world and everything in it, because of what we hear or see?

But when these feelings of sadness and loneliness or bad moods persist and prevent us from living a normal life or carrying out the duties that are required of us, or fulfilling the rights of others, or they cause us to neglect the blessings of Allah which He has bestowed upon us and fail to give thanks for as we should, at that point sadness moves from being something natural to being a case of weakness and sickness that needs to be treated.

There is no greater remedy for that than patience and fearing Allah, and thinking positively of Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, putting one’s trust in Him, delegating one’s affairs to Him and turning to Him in all times of calamity.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Many people, when they see evil or when the Muslim ummah goes through a lot of trouble, panic, lose hope and start complaining as people who are beset by calamities do. But this is forbidden; rather what is enjoined is to be patient, to put one’s trust in Allah, to be steadfast in adhering to the religion of Islam and to believe that Allah is with those who fear Him and those who do good, and that the best end is for those who fear Him; whatever befalls him is because of his sins, so he should be patient, for the promise of Allah is true; he should seek forgiveness for his sins and glorify and praise his Lord morning and evening.

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa, 18/295

Secondly:

If the state of grief worsens and leads to some level of depression, then in addition to this spiritual remedy, showing patience, putting one’s trust in Allah and always remembering Him, medical attention from a knowledgeable and trustworthy specialist is also needed.

The symptoms of depression include the following:

- always feeling sad, anxious and in a bad mood
- loss of interest and lack of enjoyment in activities that people usually enjoy
- constant pessimism and feeling helpless in the face of life’s problems
- feelings of guilt, worthlessness and social alienation
- inability to show or express feelings towards others or to accept feelings from others
- trouble sleeping, such as insomnia, sleeping too long or waking up too early
- eating problems (overeating or loss of appetite)
- chronic physical pain from which no remedy brings relief
- weepiness
- getting tense quickly; hyperactivity and not being able to calm down and relax
- constant feelings of tiredness and inability to do any physical activity
- inability to concentrate, remember or take sound decisions

If four or more of the symptoms mentioned above are present, then you should consult a specialist in psychology, as mentioned above.

In addition to seeking medical treatment, you should try to keep yourself busy with useful activities, such as reading Quran and other books, and engaging in hobbies and so on. Do not forget some natural remedies that will re-energise you and help the brain to regain energy, such as honey and dried fruits.

One of the prescriptions that was often used in the past is talbeenah. According to an authentic report, the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said concerning it: “Talbeenah brings comfort to the sick person and it lessens grief.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 5101;

Muslim, 2216

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Zad al-Ma‘ad:

This broth clears that from the stomach and intestines, cleanses it, makes it flow, makes it more liquid, adjusts it, and restores balance. Thus it gives relief, especially for the one who usually eats barley bread, which was the custom of the people of Madinah at that time; it was their staple food, as wheat was very expensive for them. And Allah knows best.

Talbeenah is a broth made from barley flour with its bran, to which a cup of water is added, and it is heated on a low fire for five minutes, then a cup of milk and a spoonful of honey is added.

Please see also the answer to question no. 45847

And Allah knows best.