

## **Who Will Suffer Loss? Who Can Find Salvation from It?**

### **The Meaning of Loss and Its Relationship to the Regulation of the Hierarchy of Love**

Have you ever seen the losers who have lost all their capital in the blink of an eye? Have you offered them a shoulder to cry on? Have you heard their sorrowful cries and lamentations as they say "I've been ruined... I lost all my wealth... I have wasted the fruit of my lifetime of labor"?

If you have seen such people or have experienced such a pain yourself, you shall definitely know what we are talking about. Hearing these words leaves an indescribable pain in the heart and a searing regret that burns the soul. To understand this regret, it is not necessary to experience it ourselves. It is enough to put ourselves in the shoes of those who have lost their homes and businesses in disasters such as fire, flood, or earthquake. They worked hard their entire lives to build a house and set up a business that was their only source of income. Just when they were ready to reap the rewards of their hard work, they had to watch it be utterly destroyed.

Although loss in any aspect of life comes as major shock, material loss is not much of a grief. Better to say, it is no grief at all. That is because every loss we experience in the material world is an investment for eternity. The reward for every loss we suffer in this world will be many times greater in the hereafter. On the other hand, material losses are a factor to grow and develop as they strengthen our spirit of patience and forbearance and bring us closer to God. Therefore, the loss that must

truly make us sad and worried is not material losses, but spiritual losses related to the hereafter. This is referred to as "obvious loss" in Islamic teachings.<sup>1</sup>

"Loss" can be understood in different ways. It can indicate a minimal or reduced profit, or even a situation where the profit and loss balance out. In some cases, when the main capital is lost, it is no longer recoverable. Considering this point, we must see what our greatest capital is, which, if lost, leads to an "obvious loss." How can we prevent the waste of capital?

### **The Relationship Between Loss and Lifetime**

We discussed that the truth of our existence is our heart (soul or spirit). It is what remains of us and enters the hereafter after our *wafat*. Every asset we work hard to have in this world, except for our heart, will be separated from us and thrown away after *wafat*, just like the placenta that is separated from the fetus at birth. Therefore, our heart is our only asset in the hereafter that determines our fate. Then the question remains: How and where does this heart form?

Our heart is formed in the world and over time. In other words, our heart is shaped by how we use the opportunities life gives us. As we explained before, the world has a womb-like quality. In terms of constructive capability, each minute in this world is equivalent to thousands of years in the hereafter. In this sense, by saying that time is gold, we actually lower its value. Time is much more valuable than gold. It is so precious that even a short period of it can completely change our eternal fate and change the path of our life from hell to heaven or vice versa. Time is not a

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<sup>1</sup>. Quran, 39:15

capital that always stays at our disposal. The opportunities of life come and go like spring clouds. Once they are gone, they never come back.

To understand this concept, all we need to do is take a look at the hands of the clock. From the moment you started reading this article up to now, about a minute has passed. This one minute was a part of your life that will never come back. The same is true for an hour ago, a day ago, and a year ago. Now, if we go back to the question we raised above, we can better answer it. Our most valuable capital is "time." If it is lost, it leads to eternal and irreparable loss. But how can we prevent this loss?

### **Who Can Find Salvation from Loss?**

Because the opportunities of life are fleeting, all people are essentially losers, except for a small number of people who trade with the opportunities of their lives. They gain more valuable assets in exchange for the capital they lose. Such people have four key characteristics:

- They are believers.
- They do righteous deeds.
- They advise each other to truth.
- They advise each other to patience.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>. Quran, 103:1-3

Whoever has these four characteristics will achieve salvation and everything will turn out for the best for him in this world and the hereafter. **Patience**<sup>3</sup> means perseverance and endurance in the face of adversity, sins, and acts of worship. It is a relatively well-known concept. We will also fully explain the **truth** in the next lesson. There remain two options: faith and righteous deeds. We will discuss **righteous deeds** in detail in the future. But in short, righteous deeds are deeds that have worthiness. They are aligned with the ultimate purpose of our creation, which is to become like God. Considering this, not every good action can be considered a righteous deed, even if it appears to be beautiful and sacred.

And now, **faith**. Faith is a real thing, not an illusion or an imagination. Therefore, like any other real thing, it has a clear definition and specific effects. Performing obligatory and recommended acts or engaging in charitable and holy acts is not enough to make someone a believer. A believer is someone whose heart has reached a secure position. This inner security is fully reflected in his outward behavior which is manifested as "happiness and peace." If true faith penetrates into someone's heart, that person surely finds lasting happiness and peace. So someone who experiences anxiety, depression, and deep and long-lasting feelings of sorrow may be a Muslim, but he is definitely not a true believer. But how does faith penetrate into the heart?

Faith is closely connected to the hierarchy of love. It only happens when the truth of "[There is no deity except Allah](#)" passes from our tongue and enters our heart. In other words, we are true believers only when we know our main beloved, Allah, have intimacy with Him, and do all our deeds with the intention of getting closer to

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<sup>3</sup>. Some commentators have interpreted patience as fasting, which in this case is consistent with the intended concept of this article.

Him. The word "deed" does not only mean acts of worship and charitable acts. It means all the things we do during the day, from eating and sleeping to raising children, taking care of our spouse, doing economic activities, and even having fun and entertainment. If we do our deeds with the intention of pleasing God and becoming like Him, even something as simple and seemingly insignificant as drinking a cup of tea would be multiplied so much that we can attain Heaven with it! Love for God makes us and our deeds precious and valuable. If this love is truly at the top of our beloveds, we will never lose the right path, and we will not make decisions that lower our value and humiliate us.

According to the points we stated, we can summarize our discussion as follows:

There may be a person who does not organize his heart and does not regulate his hierarchy of love around God, the Household of the Prophet (PBHT), and *jihad*.<sup>4</sup> No matter how many good deeds he does or how much he worships, what he does is as useless and fruitless as planting a sapling in salt marshes. The deeds of such a person will ultimately end up in loss. That is because the value of our deeds is based on whether they are aligned with the purpose of creation and reflect the names and attributes of God or not. Naturally, any deed that does not align with this path does not contribute to the growth and development of the human dimension of our existence. At best, it turns us into a holy animal, not a believing person! But God did not create us to be animals. We have come to Earth to discover and develop the essence of our humanity, and ultimately, return to our original home as an elevated and developed human being. Adjusting our hierarchy of love is so important that it is said, "Anyone who starts his day with anything other than God

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<sup>4</sup>. Quran, 9:24

on his mind becomes among the losers and the unjust."<sup>5</sup> It means that he has both transgressed his human and divine limits and has also sold himself for nothing. Such a person has wasted his whole life, i.e., his most valuable capital, while he could build an eternity with it.

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<sup>5</sup>. *Mesbah al-Shari'a*, p. 168