



Best  
Seller

NEW EDITION

# *Reclaim your Heart*

Personal insights on  
breaking free from life's shackles

YASMIN MOGAHED

"Reclaim Your Heart is all about physical and spiritual reconciliation, through love and with peace. We all need it."

—Tariq Ramadan

"The book is a message of strength for those from all walks of life, spoken in the voice of humanity, to those in any phase of life."

—The Muslim Observer

# *Reclaim your Heart*

Personal Insights on Breaking Free  
From Life's Shackles



Yasmin Mogahed

**FB PUBLISHING**  
SAN CLEMENTE



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### *Recent posts and praise*

*Reclaim Your Heart* is mirroring the spiritual message of Islam : simple, profound and elevating. Through her personal and intimate journey, Yasmin Mogahed is taking along her reader in a very special way : she speaks from the heart to the heart, and succeeds in appeasing the mind. The success of this book is well deserved and this new edition (with four new chapters) is a gift, full of hope and light. This is a book helping every one of us to come close to the One, close to one's heart. *Reclaim Your Heart* is all about physical and spiritual reconciliation, through love and with peace. We all need it.

-Tariq Ramadan, Professor

"To put it plainly, this is a book that makes sense of it all. All the heartbreaks, the pain, disappointments and losses that occur are put in their place... Dare I say, you may never look at hardship in the same way again."

-Sahil UK

"Mogahed's work reads like advice from a wise counselor or trusted friend, allowing readers to turn its pages for solace and relief when overwhelmed by the pressures of life."

-Azizah Magazine

"The words in this book... have the ability to elicit tears, tears which come from knowing and recognizing the truth and then attempting to find this truth within yourself."

—Muslim Women Exposed

"...*Reclaim Your Heart* gave me a whole new perspective on the purpose of life. I don't believe that anyone who reads this book could not benefit from its wisdom."

-SISTERS Magazine

Beyond beautiful... Thank you Yasmin, for this beautiful book. You changed my perspective of life and taught me to let go of this illusion we're living in and focus solely on the afterlife. Thank you for letting me believe in second chances. I know I'm not perfect but I plan on working on myself to become a better person. Your words are truly calming and have helped me fall asleep with a smile on my face even through my most difficult nights. Wishing you all the best.

-Dalia E.N.

[This book] truly justifies the title... this is a book which has helped me a lot and I would love to read it again and again. In particular useful for those souls who are going through [a] difficult phase of their life. A must read.

-Abu F.

Ms. Mogahed writes with such a beautifully eloquent voice and conveys such a timeless and necessary message in this book. She writes as though speaking with a friend and lays out her thoughts in a similar way. I could hardly put this book down at all... This is a book I would recommend to anyone who feels like there is something "missing" in them; like they are not really whole. While I am not much for the self-help genre as a whole, I believe this book truly hits the nail on the head. If you feel like you have strayed from where you should be, or you know that you have, then this book really has the potential help you bring yourself back to the place where you need to be. Very insightful, yet so simple.

-Drew

[This book] changed my life... it's one of the most amazing books I've ever read. First of all, [it] helped me look to myself and learn to love [myself], also taught me nothing in this world is permanent except the creator and he is the one we can depend on for all things. It was at times difficult to read but only because it's not the easiest thing to dig deep into your heart and soul, but all in all the whole book makes complete sense.

–Amira G.

Sister Yasmin has a way with words which reaches your heart and then (more importantly) your head. This book is the answer to the questions which we struggle with as we strive to live our lives more consciously. She has a gentle tone, uses simple logic, [and] is able to connect everything back to our one purpose. For those reasons, and many others, this is a book I re-read frequently and have given as a gift to my dearest friends and relatives.

-Mommy22

This book is a great reminder of how we should think and live. It can actually be applied to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Yasmin's writing style is very easy to get through. This is the kind of book you can get through quickly but will really benefit you if you sit down and think how these things apply to your life. I will be rereading this book periodically.

-Julie408

This book has changed the way I look at life. There were so many "Aha" moments while reading the chapters. The examples given in the book make it easy to understand, read, and relate to our everyday lives. Reclaim Your Heart is a book you must have in your library. It helps ease the pain that we endure every day. It also helps us understand and accept hardship, loss, love, and grief while backing everything up with Ayat from the Quran, the hadeeth, and stories from the life of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions.

–Amazon Customer

Inspiring read! This is a well written book that shares how our most important relationship should be with God. The ideals are supported by the Q'uran and the teachings of the Prophet (pbuh). This is a great book for anyone, but especially those like myself who struggle with expectations of this life and expectations from relationships in this life. It gives a true perspective on where we should place our focus. I found it difficult to put down when I started reading; truly inspirational!

-Dana M.

An excellent piece that I could relate to in an instant. What I failed to be able to do in 2 years following a divorce, Alhamdulillah this book provided the closure I needed within a week. Thank you sister Yasmin.

--Raifa B

As Salaamu alaykum... this book is phenomenal. I heard the author speak at a convention and bought the book there. I loved it so much that I bought this for my daughter and another sister! I strongly recommend reading it - Yasmin Mogahed explains the matters of the heart in such a way that yours will open up, and be insha Allah filled with Allah (swt)... not things or people. There's so much more than that in this book though, masha Allah. Jazak'Allahu khayran, Sis. Yasmin, for sharing with us your beautiful thoughts, for teaching us, for caring.

-K. Polman

I recommend this book for every one (any age). I have read this book already but every day I have been reading an essay out of it that takes 5 [minutes] to read and it reminds me of this daily life. This book is such a great reminder and help on difficulties we face in this world and gives us hope for the hereafter. It's a must read because [it is so] encouraging.

-Regina O.

One year ago my fiancé/husband decided to call it quits on me, and I was devastated. I was confused, sad, upset; you name it. Alhamdulillah though, it had led me to stumble upon your writings. This past year has been a very emotional year however an excellent learning process to mend my heart correctly. I learned only Allah belongs in the heart and the rest is a gift that belongs in the hand; even if they are halal things. Your writings have helped me so much there are no words to describe it. Three weeks ago my father Allah yirhamo (May God have mercy on him) passed away very suddenly leaving my entire family and community shocked and devastated; yet my first thought was Inna lillah w Inna elayhi raji3oon, to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return; my dad went Home inshAllah. Instead of getting

upset, I found myself truly thankful Allah chose him to be my dad and let me have had him for as long as I did. Regardless of the situation, Allah always chooses the best for us, so I believe this was the best time for him to go.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, because had I not learned and reflected on your writings, I don't think I would be who I am today, handling the loss of one of my favorite people in the world. I would like to say it was one specific piece of writing that inspired me, but it wasn't; it was your entire collection. I make dua Allah rewards you immensely, and continuously inspires you and allows you to keep doing what you're doing. May Allah bless and protect your loved ones. Please make dua for my father.

—Aala

I would like to extend my gratitude to you, for changing my life completely, Allah bless you dear. I was going through terrible phase of my life, darkness, depression, hollowness and negativity was all over me. Then I stumbled upon your articles. Enlightened I am now! Alhamadulillah. Thank you and keep writing as Allah "the Great" has blessed you with this quality. May Allah accept all duaa's (supplications) I'm making for you ....actually this the only one thing I can say, because no words are enough!

—Maryam I.

Your words hit me so hard I had to slow down whilst reading and breathe. I always took pride in not being superficial, in not being materialistic all the while depending on people I loved to make me happy. And when they let me down or left me, it shook my world, the very ground I stood on. There is a constant need to be loved, and from love I derive happiness. But it is a constant battle to realize that this love is to come from my relationship with Allah and not people. I'm an idealist, a giver, giving joy to others makes me happy; but it is so hard to understand and remember that no, these people, this life, is not to be expected of. Alhumdulillah reading your words was like taking a good hard look at myself, one that I wasn't ready to take... this helps so much. God bless you for being real.



—Mehar

I just want to take this time to tell you that I absolutely love your articles. I am an avid reader since I was 8. I have devoured the self-help sections in book stores, I love Rumi, Ghazzali, Iqbal, and many many amazing writers who speak to the soul. Why am I telling you this- because after reading the writings of so many brilliant people, I have found my heart and soul in your work. You are definitely one of my favorite writers. Whenever I need inspiration I go back to your articles. Also I have found someone I love dearly, I consider him my soul mate, and my love for him has made me so attached to him. It is only through your work that I am learning to love the One who is never lost and holding on to the Bond that never breaks! You have taught me what true love is really about! I love your work. You inspire me immensely. And yes my brother too loves your work, so do my friends. I pray that Allah gives you everything of the best and continues making you a means to inspire us all towards His love! With much love, hugs and duas!

—Mohsina, South Africa

I chanced upon your website and videos not too long ago. Just before that I've been seeking out 'food for my soul' for my heart. Words that would heal my rusty heart. Then I came across your blog and videos. Mashallah, sister I have no words to describe the effect your writings have on my heart and soul. Each word you write touches my heart and crumbles my nafs (ego) and brings me to tears. I cannot thank you enough for your inspirational work and for the constant reminders that you give us through your work. May Allah (swt) grant you the highest Jannah and reward you in dunya and aakhira. Thank you thank you and thank you.

—Muneera, Singapore

Tawakkul Karman reminds me of Yasmin Mogahed. The former sparks an outer revolution and the latter sparks an internal revolution.

—mA

Yasmin, I don't know you and you don't know me, but I feel that you're so close to me! Every single word you wrote touches me deeply!

—Noor

I think I was living a hypocritical life, where I just say that I love Allah, but my actions do not reflect the same. The Transformation in my life came when I started knowing the real essence and meaning of LOVE Allah from your articles and lectures. Alhamdulillah. And soon then EVERYTHING in my life set STRAIGHT..!

—Nazeer

MashAllah, Allah has gifted you with the ability to penetrate right to one's heart, shake it and get it to start working the way it should! Thank You Allah for people like Yasmin Mogahed :)

—Ghazi A.

May Allah bless you and protect you forever and ever. May you go to heaven and live there happily ever after. Never under estimate the lives your words touch. Inshallahrabanayanthur 3aleiki be3ayn al rida tonight (May God look at you with the eye of contentment tonight)! If there was a place deeper than the heart then it would have been from there. I just truly wanted you to know what an amazing gift and inspiration you have been to the Muslim society-in particular the youth. You may or may not realize it, but so many of your points really hit home with all of the problems we are dealing with in this world.

In this current world where everything seems to be going downhill, you represent more than just a "good writer" or a "good lecturer"; you represent hope! Hope that there are still genuine and pure people out there. Also you may not know this but what people often say about you is that there is something ever so comforting about your presence and not something one can put their finger on. I personally put this down to truth. When someone speaks such true words in your presence the heart cannot help but react.

You have helped many people make it through the darkest of times and for that may Allah reward you. You have gotten a lot of people to do good deeds which they wouldn't have done before and for that may Allah reward you. Inshallah your hasanat (good deeds) keep rolling over like the

millionaire's dollars keep rolling. But the difference is on the day of Judgment. Inshallah you will be a billion times wealthier than they are and I hope to bear witness to that. I hope you are welcomed by the Prophet Muhammed ﷺ with the biggest of smiles and warmest of hugs as you are one of his followers who have genuinely tried to make a difference in this world and you HAVE made a difference.

I'm sorry if this seems slightly exaggerated but in your writing I found strength to hold onto Allah at my weakest. I only wish I grew up around you as I could do with a friend with strong iman. This is on behalf of thousands of people inspired by you all the way here in London.

Jazak Allah Alf Alfkheir inshallah.

I think I should stop now or I will go on forever. Salam Aleikum.

—Mohamed A.

I am reading this article after a year and thinking that THIS is the article that in fact changed me. I was never really into Islam nor was I practicing that much. My life was in darkness, with people who only brought me down to a person who wasn't meant to be. So I fell deep into the dunya. I did things that I am not proud of, at all. I kept failing and failing and falling and falling. I was stumbling and I didn't know myself anymore until one night something terrible happened and I knew at that moment that Allah was in fact always there but it was me, who was ignoring Him. Ignoring the creator. That night, I told myself that enough was enough and I came back into Islam. I came back to Him. After that night, I went on a journey to change my life. That journey, with Allah being my captain, I was able to turn my life 360. Today, I don't remember my life without the hijab. Today, I don't remember my life without praying or going daily to the Masjid or going to my daily halaqas. Yasmin, I cannot thank you enough for posting this article and really getting deep into everyone's hearts. I listened to what you said; I took the keys from the dunya and gave them to the Creator. You are such an inspiring woman and I look up to you :) Thank you so so much.

—Humaira

May Allah (swt) reward you with Firdous (the highest heaven). Ameen. I cannot even express what a blessing you are sister Yasmin. Your coming into my life through your writing strengthens my emaan (faith) day by day alhamdulillah (all praise is due to God) and inspires so many of my friends and loved ones with whom I often share your work with! Allah swt has truly answered your dua if you prayed to be used as a tool to guide the ummah! :)

—Hajera M.

## **Dedication**

"This book is dedicated, in its entirety, to the One who has raised me even before I was in my mother's womb. It is dedicated to the One who has taught me, inspired me and guided me throughout my life. I dedicate this humble endeavor to God, and I only pray that in spite of my weakness, it may be accepted, and to my family who has supported me throughout the journey."

## Introduction

*Reclaim Your Heart* is not just a self-help book. It is a manual about the journey of the heart in and out of the ocean of this life. It is a book about how to keep your heart from sinking to the depths of that ocean, and what to do when it does. It is a book about redemption, about hope, about renewal. Every heart can heal, and each moment is created to bring us closer to that transformative return. *Reclaim Your Heart* is about finding that moment when everything stops and suddenly looks different. It is about finding your own awakening. And then returning to the better, truer, and freer version of yourself.



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Niche

Keep Walking



*This world cannot break you—unless you give it permission. And it cannot own you unless you hand it the keys – unless you give it your heart. And so, if you have handed those keys to dunya for a while—take them back. This isn't the End. You don't have to die here. Reclaim your heart and place it with its rightful owner: God.*





## *Why do people have to leave each other?*

When I was 17 years old, I had a dream. I dreamt that I was sitting inside a masjid and a little girl walked up to ask me a question. She asked me, "Why do people have to leave each other?" The question was a personal one, but it seemed clear to me why the question was chosen for me.

I was one to get attached.

Ever since I was a child, this temperament was clear. While other children in preschool could easily recover once their parents left, I could not. My tears, once set in motion, did not stop easily. As I grew up, I learned to become attached to everything around me. From the time I was in first grade, I needed a best friend. As I got older, any fall-out with a friend shattered me. I couldn't let go of anything. People, places, events, photographs, moments—even outcomes became objects of strong attachment. If things didn't work out the way I wanted or imagined they should, I was devastated. And disappointment for me wasn't an ordinary emotion. It was catastrophic. Once let down, I never fully recovered. I could never forget, and the break never mended. Like a glass vase that you place on the edge of a table, once broken, the pieces never quite fit again.

However the problem wasn't with the vase, or even that the vases kept breaking. The problem was that I kept putting them on the edge of tables. Through my attachments, I was dependent on my relationships to fulfill my needs. I allowed those relationships to define my happiness or my sadness, my fulfillment or my emptiness, my security, and even my self-worth. And so, like the vase placed where it will inevitably fall, through those dependencies I set myself up for disappointment. I set myself up to be

broken. And that's exactly what I found: one disappointment, one break after another.

Yet the people who broke me were not to blame any more than gravity can be blamed for breaking the vase. We can't blame the laws of physics when a twig snaps because we leaned on it for support. The twig was never created to carry us.

Our weight was only meant to be carried by God. We are told in the Qur'an: "...whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And God hears and knows all things." (Qur'an, 2: 256)

There is a crucial lesson in this verse: that there is only one hand-hold that never breaks. There is only one place where we can lay our dependencies. There is only one relationship that should define our self-worth and only one source from which to seek our ultimate happiness, fulfillment, and security. That place is God.

However, this world is all about seeking those things everywhere else. Some of us seek it in our careers; some seek it in wealth, some in status. Some, like me, seek it in our relationships. In her book, *Eat, Pray, Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert describes her own quest for happiness. She describes moving in and out of relationships, and even traveling the globe in search of this fulfillment. She seeks that fulfillment--unsuccessfully--in her relationships, in meditation, even in food.

And that's exactly where I spent much of my own life: seeking a way to fill my inner void. So it was no wonder that the little girl in my dream asked me this question. It was a question about loss, about disappointment. It was a question about being let down. A question about seeking something and coming back empty handed. It was about what happens when you try to dig in concrete with your bare hands: not only do you come back with nothing—you break your fingers in the process. I learned this not by reading it, not by hearing it from a wise sage, I learned it by trying it again, and again, and again.

And so, the little girl's question was essentially my own question... being asked to myself.

Ultimately, the question was about the nature of the dunya as a place of fleeting moments and temporary attachments. As a place where people are with you today and leave or die tomorrow. But this reality hurts our very being because it goes against our nature. We, as humans, are made to seek, love, and strive for what is perfect and what is permanent. We are made to seek what's eternal. We seek this because we were not made for this life. Our first and true home was Paradise: a land that is both perfect and eternal. So the yearning for that type of life is a part of our being. The problem is that we try to find that here. And so we create ageless creams and cosmetic surgery in a desperate attempt to hold on—in an attempt to mold this world into what it is not, and will never be.

And that's why if we live in dunya with our hearts, it breaks us. That's why this dunya hurts. It is because the definition of dunya, as something temporary and imperfect, goes against everything we are made to yearn for. Allah put a yearning in us that can only be fulfilled by what is eternal and perfect. By trying to find fulfillment in what is fleeting, we are running after a hologram...a mirage. We are digging into concrete with our bare hands. Seeking to turn, what is by its very nature temporary into something eternal is like trying to extract from fire, water. You just get burned. Only when we stop putting our hopes in dunya, only when we stop trying to make the dunya into what it is not—and was never meant to be (jannah)—will this life finally stop breaking our hearts.

We must also realize that nothing happens without a purpose. Nothing. Not even broken hearts. Not even pain. That broken heart and that pain are lessons and signs for us. They are warnings that something is wrong. They are warnings that we need to make a change. Just like the pain of being burned is what warns us to remove our hand from the fire, emotional pain warns us that we need to make an internal change. We need to detach. Pain is a form of forced detachment. Like the loved one who hurts you again and again and again, the more dunya hurts us, the more we inevitably detach from it. The more we inevitably stop loving it.

And pain is a pointer to our attachments. That which makes us cry, that which causes us the most pain is where our false attachments lie. And it is those things which we are attached to as we should only be attached to Allah which become barriers on our path to God. But the pain itself is what makes the false attachment evident. The pain creates a condition in our life that we seek to change, and if there is anything about our condition that we don't like, there is a divine formula to change it. God says: "Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves." (Qur'an, 13:11)

After years of falling into the same pattern of disappointments and heartbreak, I finally began to realize something profound. I had always thought that love of dunya meant being attached to material things. And I was not attached to material things. I was attached to people. I was attached to moments. I was attached to emotions. So I thought that the love of dunya just did not apply to me. What I didn't realize was that people, moments, emotions are all a part of dunya. What I didn't realize is that all the pain I had experienced in life was due to one thing and one thing only: love of dunya.

As soon as I began to have that realization, a veil was lifted from my eyes. I started to see what my problem was. I was expecting this life to be what it is not, and was never meant to be: perfect. And being the idealist that I am, I was struggling with every cell in my body to make it so. It had to be perfect. And I would not stop until it was. I gave my blood, sweat, and tears to this endeavor: making the dunya into jannah. This meant expecting people around me to be perfect. Expecting my relationships to be perfect. Expecting so much from those around me and from this life. Expectations. Expectations. Expectations. And if there is one recipe for unhappiness it is that: expectations. But herein lay my fatal mistake. My mistake was not in having expectations; as humans, we should never lose hope. The problem was in \*where\* I was placing those expectations and that hope. At the end of the day, my hope and expectations were not being placed in God. My hope and expectations were in people, relationships, means. Ultimately, my hope was in this dunya rather than Allah.

And so I came to realize a very deep Truth. An ayah began to cross my mind. It was an ayah I had heard before, but for the first time I realized that it was actually describing me: "Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the present, and those who heed not Our Signs." (Qur'an, 10:7)

By thinking that I can have everything here, my hope was not in my meeting with God. My hope was in dunya. But what does it mean to place your hope in dunya? How can this be avoided? It means when you have friends, don't expect your friends to fill your emptiness. When you get married, don't expect your spouse to fulfill your every need. When you're an activist, don't put your hope in the results. When you're in trouble don't depend on yourself. Don't depend on people. Depend on God.

Seek the help of people—but realize that it is not the people (or even your own self) that can save you. Only Allah can do these things. The people are only tools, a means used by God. But they are not the source of help, aid, or salvation of any kind. Only God is. The people cannot even create the wing of a fly (Qur'an, 22:73). And so, even while you interact with people externally, turn your heart towards God. Face Him alone, as Prophet Ibrahim (as) said so beautifully: "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah." (Qur'an, 6:79)

But how does Prophet Ibrahim (as) describe his journey to that point? He studies the moon, the sun and the stars and realizes that they are not perfect. They set.

They let us down.

So Prophet Ibrahim (as) was thereby led to face Allah alone. Like him, we need to put our full hope, trust, and dependency on God, and God alone. And if we do that, we will learn what it means to finally find peace and stability of heart. Only then will the roller coaster that once defined our lives finally come to an end. That is because if our inner state is dependent on something that is by definition inconstant, that inner state will also be inconstant. If our inner state is dependent on something changing and temporary, that inner state will be in a constant state of instability, agitation,

and unrest. This means that one moment we're happy, but as soon as that which our happiness depended upon changes, our happiness also changes. And we become sad. We remain always swinging from one extreme to another and not realizing why.

We experience this emotional roller coaster because we can never find stability and lasting peace until our attachment and dependency is on what is stable and lasting. How can we hope to find constancy if what we hold on to is inconstant and perishing? In the statement of Abu Bakr is a deep illustration of this truth. After the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ died, the people went into shock and could not handle the news. Although no one loved the Prophet ﷺ like Abu Bakr, Abu Bakr understood well the only place where one's dependency should lie. He said: "If you worshipped Muhammad, know that Muhammad is dead. But if you worshipped Allah, know that Allah never dies."

To attain that state, don't let your source of fulfillment be anything other than your relationship with God. Don't let your definition of success, failure, or self-worth be anything other than your position with Him (Qur'an, [49:13](#)). And if you do this, you become unbreakable, because your hand-hold is unbreakable. You become unconquerable, because your supporter can never be conquered. And you will never become empty, because your source of fulfillment is unending and never diminishes.

Looking back at the dream I had when I was 17, I wonder if that little girl was me. I wonder this because the answer I gave her was a lesson, I would need to spend the next painful years of my life learning. My answer to her question of why people have to leave each other was: "because this life isn't perfect; for if it was, what would the next be called?"





## *People leave, but do they return?*

Leaving is hard. Losing is harder. So a few weeks ago I asked the question, ‘why do people have to leave each other?’ The answer took me into some of my life’s deepest realizations and struggles. However, it has also led me to wonder: After people leave, do they ever return? After something we love is taken from us, does it ever come back? Is loss permanent—or just a means for a higher purpose? Is loss the End itself, or a temporary cure for our heart’s ailments?

There’s something amazing about this life. The very same worldly attribute that causes us pain is also what gives us relief: Nothing here lasts. What does that mean? It means that the breathtakingly beautiful rose in my vase will wither tomorrow. It means that my youth will neglect me. But it also means that the sadness I feel today will change tomorrow. My pain will die. My laughter won’t last forever—but neither will my tears. We say this life isn’t perfect. And it isn’t. It isn’t perfectly good. But, it also isn’t perfectly bad, either.

Allah (glorified is He) tells us in a very profound ayah (verse): "Verily with hardship comes ease." (Qur'an, [94:5](#)). Growing up I think I understood this ayah wrongly. I used to think it meant: after hardship comes ease. In other words, I thought life was made up of good times and bad times. After the bad times, come the good times. I thought this as if life was either all good or all bad. But that is not what the ayah is saying. The ayah is saying **WITH** hardship comes ease. The ease is at the same time as the hardship. This means that nothing in this life is ever all bad (or all good). In every bad situation we're in, there is always something to be grateful for. With hardship, Allah also gives us the strength and patience to bear it.

If we study the difficult times in our lives, we will see that they were also filled with much good. The question is—which do we chose to focus on? I think the trap we fall into is rooted in this false belief that this life can be perfect—perfectly good or perfectly bad. However that’s not the nature of dunya (this life). That’s the nature of the hereafter. The hereafter is saved for the perfection of things. Jannah (paradise) is perfectly and completely good. There is no bad in it. And Jahannam (hell—may Allah protect us) is perfectly and completely bad. There is no good in it.

By not truly understanding this reality, I myself would become consumed by the momentary circumstances of my life (whether good or bad). I experienced each situation in its full intensity—as if it was ultimate or would never end. The way I was feeling at the moment transformed the whole world and everything in it. If I was happy in that moment, past and present, near and far, the entire universe was good for that moment. As if perfection could exist here. And the same happened with bad things. A negative state consumed everything. It became the whole world, past and present, the entire universe was bad for that moment. Because it became my entire universe, I could see nothing outside of it. Nothing else existed for that moment. If you wronged me today, it was because you no longer cared about me—not because this was one moment of a string of infinite moments which happened to be tinted that way, or because you and I and this life just aren’t perfect. What I was experiencing or feelings at that instant replaced context, because it replaced my entire vision of the world.

I think in our experiential nature, some of us maybe especially susceptible to this. Perhaps that is the reason we can fall prey to the "I’ve never seen good from you" phenomenon which the Prophet ﷺ (peace be upon him) referred to in his hadith. Perhaps some of us say or feel this way because at that moment, experientially we really haven’t seen good, because our feeling at that instant replaces, defines and becomes everything. Past and present becomes rolled up into one experiential moment.

But, the true realization that nothing is complete in this life transforms our experience of it. We suddenly stop being consumed by moments. In the understanding that nothing is limitless here, that nothing here is kamil (perfect, complete), Allah enables us to step outside of moments and see

them for what they are: not universes, not reality, past and present, just that—a single moment in a string of infinite moments...and that they too shall pass.

When I cry or lose or bruise, so long as I am still alive, nothing is ultimate. So long as there is still a tomorrow, a next moment, there is hope, there is change, and there is redemption. What is lost is not lost forever.

So in answering the question of whether what is lost comes back, I study the most beautiful examples. Did Yusuf return to his father? Did Musa return to his mother? Did Hajar return to Ibrahim? Did health, wealth and children return to Ayoub? From these stories we learn a powerful and beautiful lesson: what is taken by Allah is never lost. In fact, it is only what is with Allah that remains. Everything else vanishes. Allah (swt) says, "What is with you must vanish: what is with Allah will endure. And We will certainly bestow, on those who patiently persevere, their reward according to the best of their actions." (Qur'an, 16:96)

So, all that is with Allah, is never lost. In fact the Prophet ﷺ has said: "You will never give up a thing for the sake of Allah (swt), but that Allah will replace it for you with something that is better for you than it." (Ahmad) Did not Allah take the husband of Umm Salamah, only to replace him with the Prophet ﷺ?

Sometimes Allah takes in order to give. But, it's crucial to understand that His giving is not always in the form we think we want. He knows best what is best. Allah says: "... But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not." (Qur'an, 2:216)

But if something is going to be returned in one form or another, why is it taken at all? Subhan'Allah. It is in the process of 'losing' that we are given.

Allah gives us gifts, but then we often become dependent on those gifts, instead of Him. When He gives us money, we depend on the money—not Him. When He gives us people, we depend on people—not Him. When He gives us status or power, we depend on, and become distracted by these

things. When Allah gives us health, we become deceived. We think we will never die.

Allah gives us gifts, but then we come to love them as we should only love Him. We take those gifts and inject them into our hearts, until they take over. Soon we cannot live without them. Every waking moment is spent in contemplation of them, in submission and worship to them. The mind and the heart that was created by Allah, for Allah, becomes the property of someone or something else. And then the fear comes, the fear of loss begins to cripple us. The gift—that should have remained in our hands—takes over our heart, so the fear of losing it consumes us. Soon, what was once a gift becomes a weapon of torture and a prison of our own making. How can we be freed of this? At times, in His infinite mercy, Allah frees us...by taking it away.

As a result of it being taken, we turn to Allah wholeheartedly. In that desperation and need, we ask, we beg, we pray. Through the loss, we reach a level of sincerity and humility and dependence on Him which we would otherwise not reach—had it not been taken from us. Through the loss, our hearts turn entirely to face Him.

What happens when you first give a child a toy or the new video game he's always wanted? He becomes consumed by it. Soon he wants to do nothing else. He sees nothing else. He doesn't want to do his work or even eat. He's hypnotized to his own detriment. So what do you do, as a loving parent? Do you leave him to drown in his addiction and complete loss of focus and balance? No.

You take it away.

Then, once the child has regained focus of his priorities, regained sanity and balance, once things are put in their proper place in his heart and mind and life, what happens? You give the gift back. Or perhaps something better. But this time, the gift is no longer in his heart. It is in its proper place. It is in his hand.

Yet in that process of taking, the most important thing happened. The losing and regaining of the gift is inconsequential. The taking of your

heedlessness, your dependence and focus on other than Him, and the replacing it with remembrance, dependence and focus only on Him was the real gift. Allah withholds to give.

And so sometimes, the ‘something better’ is the greatest gift: nearness to Him. Allah took the daughter of Malik Ibn Dinar in order to save him. He took his daughter, but replaced her with protection from the hell-fire and salvation from a painful life of sin and distance from Him. Through the loss of his daughter, Malik ibn Dinar was blessed with a life spent in nearness to Allah. And even that which was taken (his daughter) would remain with Malik ibn Dinar forever in Jannah.

Ibn ul Qayyim (may Allah be pleased with him) speaks about this phenomenon in his book, *Madarij Al Salikin*. He says: "The divine decree related to the believer is always a bounty, even if it is in the form of withholding (something that is desired); and it is a blessing, even if it appears to be a trial and an affliction that has befallen him; it is in reality a cure, even though it appears to be a disease!"

So to the question, ‘once something is lost, does it return?’ the answer is, yes. It returns. Sometimes here, sometime there, sometimes in a different, better form. But the greatest gift lies beneath the taking and the returning. Allah tells us: "Say, ‘In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy—in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they hoard.’" (Qur'an, 10:58)

