

# Suffering

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**A**t a party to celebrate the birthday of his son my friend, Shoukat invited people of all ages to share the festivities. Shoukat invited also the Imam of the local mosque. Just before cutting the cake, the Imam, to bless the occasion, recited a few verses from the Qur'an and said a prayer wishing the family and the child a long and prosperous life.

After the ceremony and the giving of gifts, the men went to the sitting room, chatting on various matters. Our host switched on the TV to see the latest news. The news and the graphic pictures of yet another famine in Africa and a terrible earthquake in a war torn country of central Asia upset everyone in the room. Shoukat cried in great grief, "*Ya Allah, Raham*, (Oh God! be merciful). Oh, look at these innocent children! Why does God allow them die such a death?"

Before anybody else could say anything, the Imam responded, "Wickedness has reached its peak in the world, so naturally famine, wars, earth quakes, floods and other calamities are striking humanity. It is the final warning from Allah so that people may

repent and accept his sovereignty." The discussion was then cut short and went no further by the call that the dinner was served.

Good and bad, the innocent and the wicked; all face suffering. However, while the unrighteous have no hope or assurance, the righteous can have hope in God (Qur'an: 4:104; Bible: Revelation 7:15-17). The Bible says that God "will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain ..." (Revelation 21:4).

Why do people suffer? The Bible gives many reasons. It may be because of our own faults and sin. "A man reaps what he sows." (Galatians 6:7). People suffer because of the effect of the wrong doings of others. At times God allows innocent people to suffer, like Job (Qur'an 38:41). The full story is related in the book of Job in the Bible. Often, God allows suffering so that people may learn a lesson (Qur'an: 7:94; Bible: John 9:2,3; Hebrews 12:5-13). God is not obliged to state reasons for his sovereign will. He may allow that we may learn the cause of some sufferings.

The New Testament also contains many more passages on this subject, of which only a few are mentioned above. If you would like a copy in the English language, please write to the address below. Note: As we have a limited number of copies please place your request early to avoid disappointment.

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**INTO THE LIGHT**

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