

## LOOKING AFTER YOUR SPIRITUAL, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING DURING LOCKDOWN

With the increased uncertainty around the length of the lockdown in the greater Sydney region, and observing the empty streets and shopping centers, I think it is important to shine a light on the risks that are associated with extended lockdowns and the strategies we can implement to ensure we are minimizing the damage from the lockdown.

It can be hard to imagine deriving benefit from bad circumstances. In this article I will provide some advice on how we can continue to look after ourselves despite the limitations to our current routines.

### The 3 Domains

The 3 domains of spirit, mind and body are interrelated. A deficiency in one will cause a person to struggle in maintaining the other 2. Likewise, devoting oneself excessively to 1, at the expense of the others is also a problem.

### Mindset

We often view responsibilities as chores; something that requires "effort" and we often don't like to do them as they come at the expense of comfort. For this reason, many people miss the mark in their understanding of the following *hadith*:

إن لربك عليك حقاً، وإن لنفسك عليك حقاً، ولأهلك عليك حقاً، فأعط كل ذي حق حقه – صحيح البخاري

Indeed, you have a duty towards your Lord, and you have a duty towards yourself, and you have a duty towards your family; therefore, give to everyone their due – Narrated in Sahih Al Bukhari.

Many Sheikhs and speakers when speaking of this matter only mention this portion of the *hadith*. With only this portion one may understand how people view this matter in an effort-requiring sense. Let's take a look at it however within its context:

أخى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بين سلمان وأبي الدرداء، فزار سلمان أبا الدرداء، فرأى أم الدرداء متبذلة فقال: ما شأنك قالت: أخوك أبو الدرداء ليس له حاجة في الدنيا، فجاء أبو الدرداء فصنع له طعاماً، فقال له: كل فإني صائم، قال: ما أنا بأكل حتى تأكل، فأكل، فلما كان الليل ذهب أبو الدرداء يقوم فقال له: نم، فنم، ثم ذهب يقوم فقال له: نم، فلما كان من آخر الليل قال سلمان: قم الآن: فصلباً جميعاً، فقال له سلمان: إن لربك عليك حقاً، وإن لنفسك عليك حقاً، ولأهلك عليك حقاً، فأعط كل ذي حق حقه، فأتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فذكر ذلك له، فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم "صدق سلمان"

The Prophet peace and blessings upon him made a bond of brotherhood between Salman and Abud-Darda'. Salman paid a visit to Abud-Darda' and found Umm Darda' (his wife) dressed in shabby clothes and asked her why she was in that state. She replied: "Your brother Abud-Darda' is not interested in (the luxuries of) this world. In the meantime, Abud-Darda' came in and prepared a meal for Salman. Salman requested Abud-Darda' to eat (with



him) but Abud-Darda' said: "I am fasting." Salman said: "I am not going to eat unless you eat." So, Abud-Darda' ate (with Salman). When it was night and (a part of the night passed), Abud-Darda' got up (to offer the night prayer) but Salman asked him to sleep and Abud-Darda' slept. After some time Abud-Darda' again got up but Salman asked him to sleep. When it was the last hours of the night, Salman asked him to get up and both of them offered (Tahajjud) prayer. Then Salman told Abud-Darda': "You owe a duty to your Lord (Allah), you owe a duty to your body; you owe a duty to your family; you should give to everyone his due. Abud-Darda' came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and reported the whole story. The Prophet peace and blessings upon him said, "Salman is right".

This *hadith* is not reminding us about effortful chores. It is reminding us to look after ourselves. To give ourselves time to relax, to spend time on ourselves and time with our loved ones. During times of extended lockdown, it is easier for us to slip in relation to our own wellbeing. A recent survey interviewed 1200 Australians and found that mental health and wellness is now the most important societal issue. One in four of the respondents reported mental illness and distress in the past 12 months<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, Converge International, a counselling service, reported a 15% increase in counselling requests following the announcements of Sydney's latest restrictions<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, in these times of uncertainty, loss, and extended lockdowns, what can we do to ensure our spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing? Below I will mention 3 things to keep in mind for each domain:

### Spiritual well-being

During times of difficulty we remind ourselves of the following verse and *hadith*:

((إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا)) – سورة الانشراح 6

Indeed (undoubtedly), along with hardship there is ease – Al Quran 94:6

عجبا لأمر المؤمن إن أمره كله له خير، وليس ذلك لأحد إلا للمؤمن : إن أصابته سراء شكر فكان خيرا له، وإن أصابته ضراء صبر فكان خيرا له – صحيح مسلم

How amazing is the case of a believer; there is good for him in all his matters, and this is for none other than the believer. If a cause for happiness befalls him (or her), he is grateful and it becomes good for him; and if adversity befalls him (or her), he endures it patiently and it becomes good for him – Narrated in Sahih Muslim

1. Engage in regular *dhikr* (words of remembrance such as *subhan Allah, Alhamdu lillaah, Allahu Akbar*)
2. Regularly make *dua*. Ask Allah to grant you patience during this difficult time and to lift this calamity from you and everyone else.

<sup>1</sup> The survey, commissioned by Atlassian and conducted by PwC, is referenced here: [Mental health is becoming our biggest lockdown concern \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au/mental-health-is-becoming-our-biggest-lockdown-concern-20200414)

<sup>2</sup> [Workers' requests for counselling spike under latest lockdowns \(afr.com\)](https://www.afr.com/workers-requests-for-counselling-spike-under-latest-lockdowns)



3. Dedicate some time between you and Allah.

### **Mental wellbeing**

1. Stay Connected with others: This could include phone conversations and connecting online. Maintain communication with people in your household and your neighbours.
2. Spend time outdoors: This will help increase serotonin levels and vitamin D levels, both of which improve mood.
3. Give yourself learning goals, even if only small: This could include picking up a new book, learning more about your own field or learning about a new field. This will give you a feeling of achievement and may inspire new realisations.

### **Physical wellbeing**

1. Maintain exercise: Add stretches and exercise to your daily routine.
2. Spend time outdoors: You could set your alarm at 1 hour intervals as a reminder to step away from your work and into the sunlight. In addition to the benefits mentioned to our mental well-being, Vitamin D is also an immune system booster, which is needed during a pandemic.
3. Maintain a balanced diet.

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