

Hard Times

I must admit that I suffered poverty in my early youth. There was nothing to eat or drink, no home or any clothing! Poverty is a cruel situation. It brings all kinds of misery and pain. How did it affect my life? Did it destroy me? Was I strong enough to pass the experience successfully? In fact, it was an experience that caused me to learn the importance of faith in the human life. It made me understand the great Prophet's (SWAS) saying: **"Whoever does not comprehend the Qur'an is not among my followers."**

Anyone can undergo the experience of poverty and financial difficulty and if one lacks tolerance and self-control, one may suffer an unimaginable situation. Tolerance and self-control stem from faith that can help man to successfully overcome difficulties. It teaches him to be master of himself and of others. Whatever earthly pleasures a man gets, will soon come to an end. It is no wonder that I was content with the little I had. I never thought poverty meant disappointment or failure. On the contrary, I tried to benefit from my spiritual strength and make use of it in fruitful deeds. I lacked the material necessities to help me carry on in life.

Hence it was necessary for me to stand on the firm ground of constructive and creative values and ethics which help one to form a character completely aware of the dimensions of one's existence. I came to understand the real meaning of poverty and richness. I came to know that a poor person is one whose social worth depends on his wealth. It is high when one's bank balance is high, and low, when it is low.

He needs money to prove his social existence, property to make people point at him, and luxuries to make others gather around him. He considers money as being the pivot of his existence and his dignity. He is careful to keep it because its disappearance means his own non-existence. I never let such thoughts about poverty poison my life with weakness and gullibility. I never allowed it to make me look at life with feelings of deprivation.

I was happy despite my poverty. I was carefree, busy gaining religious knowledge that could shape my personality. The very little knowledge that I gained gave me so much pleasure and self-contentment that it gave success its real meaning. I was, thank God, happy with the little I had. It is a Divine Blessing in a believer's life.

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