

Sadness in Classical Islam: Its Relation to the Goals of Religion

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In the Gospel of John, Jesus sees fellow Jews weeping at the death of Lazarus. He is "greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved" and begins to weep with them (John 11:33-36). They remark at this, taking it as evidence of his great love for Lazarus. In the Gospel of Luke, as Jesus draws near the city of Jerusalem, he weeps over it (Luke 19:14). Is this also out of love? Or is it sorrow over its perverse condition that prompts his tears to flow? In the Second Letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul distinguishes between two kinds of sadness: one is sadness for God that brings about a lasting repentance; the other is sadness for this world that brings only death (2 Corinthians 7:10-11).

What does it mean when a man of God is sad? Abraham weeps out of mourning at the passing of Sarah (Genesis 23:2). After the Exile in Babylon, Ezra weeps in front of the House of God on behalf of the people as a sign of sincere repentance (Ezra 10:1). Similarly, in the Book of Joel, weeping is a sign of sincerity (Joel 2:12-13). Jeremiah admonishes people not to weep for the dead but rather for those who have been cut off from the land of Israel (Jeremiah 22:10). Does this echo the two kinds of sorrow of which Paul speaks? Preachers in Islam occasionally weep on the pulpit as a way to display a pious fear of God and to induce similar tears among the faithful. Do they show such emotion on stage as a way to indicate their own power over the faithful or to increase popular devotion to God?¹

In what follows, I discuss sadness in classical Islam. Since there is little work on the topic of emotions in Islam, my remarks here are exploratory.² Here, when it comes to sadness, I tentatively suggest two trends: one that echoes Stoicism on emotions, the other Neo-Platonism. Further research will no doubt uncover further trends, including one that echoes Aristotelianism. It is also worth noting that religious attitudes towards emotions have great relevance for today. Some see emotions as tantamount to lusts (*shahawāt*), making it important to suppress them in order to render oneself pleasing to God, while others see them as a means by which a people are bound together, for example, collective expressions of sadness over a national tragedy as a sign of a common piety.

¹ See Linda G. Jones, "'He Cried and Made Others Cry': Crying as a Sign of Pietistic Authenticity or Deception in Medieval Islamic Preaching," in Elina Gertsman (ed.), *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History* (New York and London: Routledge 2012), pp. 102-135.

² There are a handful of useful studies. In addition to the aforementioned article by Jones, see Zouhair Ghazzal, "From Anger on Behalf of God to 'Forbearance' in Islamic Medieval Literature," in Barbara H. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger's Past; The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1998), pp. 203-230; Peter Adamson, "Arabic Ethics and the Limits of Consolation," in Hans Baltussen (ed.), *Greek and Roman Consolations* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales 2013), pp. 177-196.

It is not our goal here to define emotions, but it is important to suggest that emotions are a kind of knowledge. They tell us about ourselves. They also tell us about others. Depending on the motive, emotions can have positive or negative consequences. Anger, for example, helps us achieve long-term goals if directed against our short-term inclinations to laziness. But it can also be destructive when we direct it against others as a way to justify our own existence, as Cain did with Abel.

Sorrow does not stand alone but is accompanied by a plethora of concepts: grief, pain, depression, fear, anxiety, tears, etc. As with other emotions, sorrow is not something we control. It is not a voluntary action. It may be a function of the soul, but it has bodily impact, especially on one's facial features. And yet being sad is not simply about being emotional. As with other emotions, it shapes our behavior and decisions. It can lead us to despair or awaken us from a state of idleness. Being sad does not mean one is of weak faith. Nor is joy necessarily a sign of strong faith. The relation between emotions and the goals of religion is complex. What place do emotions have in the life of the believers and in the life of the believing community? The Book of Psalms is one place to begin. It is replete with emotional expression. It directs our emotions towards God, making of them a kind of prayer. By expressing our emotions to God, we are able to move on from them to a better state. This is strikingly on display in the Book of Lamentations. The narrator begins by expressing sorrow at the loss of Jerusalem, calling the city to beseech the Lord in its emotional disturbance and "pour out your heart like water before the Lord" (Lamentations 2:19). This cathartic movement gives way to recollection of God's mercies and thus to renewed hope. God draws near and instructs his people not to fear (Lamentations 3:57).³ Thus, emotional expression, sadness, is vital for covenant renewal.

We clearly have a lot to consider when it comes to emotions and the goals of religion. Our goal here is quite modest: two trends in classical Islam that echo thinking on emotions in ancient philosophy.

The first trend is exemplified in the work of a fourteenth-century scholar by the name of Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350).⁴ Sadness is cast in negative terms. Its occurrence is not something we can control. Nevertheless, we should not succumb to it since it has no role in guiding us on the path of righteousness. The second school is exemplified in the work of an eleventh-century scholar by the name of Abū I-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 1072).⁵ Here, sadness is a mark of spiritual virtue. It is the state proper to the spiritual elite in this world. They should be sad simply as a result of being in this world.

³ In other words, God suffers and even weeps with his people. For a modern instantiation of this biblical theme, see Nehemia Polen, "Divine Weeping: Rabbi Kalonymos Shapiro's Theology of Catastrophe in the Warsaw Ghetto," *Modern Judaism* 7 (1987), 253-269.

⁴ In the chapter on sadness in *Stages of the Wayfarers (Madārij al-Sālikīn)*.

⁵ In the chapter on sadness in his manual on Sufism (*al-Risālat al-Qushayriyya*).

I should say that these trends are not impermeable. There is overlap. And I have not yet been able to identify a third trend of the Aristotelian type, wherein sadness is seen to have a role in guiding us on the path of virtue. There are glimmers of such a trend, but only glimmers. More research is needed.⁶

There are actually a number of works in which sadness is treated as a separate chapter or even as the main theme of a whole treatise. The term is *ḥuzn*, but there are ancillary terms: *ḥamm* (anxiety) and *ghamm* (grief). What do such emotions, if such they are, offer to the faith life of the believer?

Abū Yusūf al-Kindī (d. 873), known as the philosopher of the Arabs, wrote a treatise in which he offered techniques for dispelling sadness. The treatise shows the markings of Islam, but it is largely philosophical in outlook. This is not to suggest division between religious and philosophical thinking. The philosophical influence is undeniable, and yet the basic idea has echoes in Islam to this day, that is, that emotions, as disturbances in the soul, stand in the way of knowledge and undercut the state of piety one should cultivate before God. Those who are ignorant about the true nature of things, namely, that all things pass, become attached to things and thus sorrow at their passing. The happy person, who knows the true nature of things, is not attached and thus does not sorrow. Moreover, he is able to maintain the state of reverence that a believer should have in life, especially in prayer.

One can also find in early Islam reports on sadness that are not directly influenced by philosophical thinking. In other words, one sees a heritage of reflection on emotions that emerges from the experiences of Muslims. A contemporary of al-Kindī, a religious scholar of the ninth century by the name of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 894), wrote a treatise on anxiety and sadness. This work is a compilation of pious statements on sadness without precise explanations, making it difficult to determine what trend, if any, it represents. Still, it offers insight into the value given to sadness during the first centuries of Islam. What reports did Ibn Abī al-Dunyā see fit to include and why?

The book begins with a hadith that describes the prophet as "continuously sad, always pensive, never at rest, mostly silent, and never speaking when there is no need to do so." Was this simply the state of his prophetic soul? Or does it imply a constant concern for the progress of the faith?

Another hadith in the collection offers perspective. This one states that when the sins of the slave become numerous and he has nothing to expiate for them, God tests him with sadness in order to cover over his sins with it. It is as if God is seeking to help the sinner repent by inflicting him with sorrow as a kind of penance. There are also reports on the sadness of Jacob, who is described as crying every day since Joseph departed from him, a period of eighty years, resulting in loss of eyesight. Sadness thus far is understood positively. Indeed, it is noted that Jacob was the one most

⁶ Please see the contribution of Lale Behzadi to this collection.

honored by God in his day, and yet he long sorrowed over the loss of Joseph. Does this mean sorrow is intrinsic to the religious life? One report suggests this to be the case: a heart without sadness is a ruin, like a house without inhabitants. Does this mean faith is not complete without sorrow?

Other reports are more cautious towards sadness. Mālik Ibn Dīnār (d. 748, from the second generation of Muslims, i.e. the followers of the companions of Muhammad) is reported as saying that sadness over this world for the sake of this world removes the sweetness of the next world from the heart. In other words, do not sorrow for the things of this world lest you lose your devotion to the next world. (However, another report has him saying that sadness matured him. This seems to reflect the story of his repentance, which resulted from sadness over the loss of his young daughter after a life of dissoluteness.) Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍ (d. 803, a well-known ascetic from Khorasan who repented from a life of crime) is reported as saying that joy over this world for the sake of this world removes the sweetness of worship; and anxiety over this world removes worship entirely. In other words, your worship amounts to nothing if you are always occupied with worldly business.

In yet another report, it is said that the invocation that gets a response from God is one that is prompted by sadness. This makes the invocation a kind of imploring, the key to God's mercy (not unlike what we saw above in relation to the Book of Lamentations). Similarly, it is said that if someone sets out to pray with the community but arrives too late and is sad over that fact of his being tardy, God gives him a double reward, one for his sadness and one that he would have received for praying in community. It is not that the sadness per se that results in a heavenly reward but sadness for failing to perform one's religious duties adequately (in this case, being on time for the community prayer). In still another report, it is said that one who has not been sad should fear that he is not one of the people of the garden since a verse from the Qur'an (Q 35:34), in which the inhabitants of paradise praise God for removing their sadness, implies that they knew sadness. Is this meant in a human sense, that one who has not been sad has a cruel heart? One of the towering scholars of early Islam, Ibn 'Abbās, is cited as saying that the sadness that is removed from those who enter paradise is not sadness in any human sense. Rather, it is the end of the sadness that a believer has over the possibility of entering hell. That sadness (fear) is now over. Others see it as sadness over death. That fear, too, is behind those mentioned in the above Qur'anic verse. It is worth mentioning that we find a myriad of reports describing al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (a towering spiritual figure of the eighth century) in terms of sadness. In sum, a believer is anxious and sad in this world without rest until he meets God. One report describes being in this world as a kind of mourning (*ḥidād*). This would suggest loss. In other words, life here means being deprived of God's direct presence there.

There is a plethora of reports on sadness in classical Islam. Is it a help to the virtuous life in Islam or a hindrance? Is it a hurdle to life for God and thus something to be overcome or can it serve as a prompt to life in God? In other words, can we think of sadness in Islam in terms of continuity with classical antiquity and medieval scholasticism with their divergent views on the relation of emotions to the virtuous life? Or should we seek a unique perspective in Islam on the question of emotions?

There are numerous issues to consider before we can address the idea of continuity. What are emotions? Are they the same as passions? Are they the same as affections? Such terms need to be defined if we are to think about emotions across cultures. There are echoes of continuity between Islam and classical antiquity on emotions, but we need to be attentive to unique theological contours that the emotions might take in Islam. One finds this in Christianity, and so, as prelude to our reflection on sadness in Islam, it will be worth taking a bit of time to consider views on sadness in Christianity, some that are in continuity with antiquity and others that are uniquely Christian.

Evagrius, monk and scholar of the fourth century, defined sadness as one of the deadly sins. He saw it as based in a false image of things lost to us, for example, a happy past that we now idealize and feel sad over on account of its being lost to us. But all things pass. Feeling sad over the loss of the past is thus a misdirected desire. We should desire the only thing that cannot be lost: life with God. The martyrs knew this. They realized that physical death is no loss and need cause no remorse. One should be sad for failing to grasp the true prize. Do we glorify life with God, which, as the true reality, dispels all sadness, or do we glorify a past, which is to say that we glorify nothing, since the past no longer exists and therefore can be said to be nothing. Such sadness is but a harmful illusion.

But the idea of sadness as a deadly sin, something that hinders a full life with God, cannot be the whole story. After all, Christ expressed intense sadness in the Garden of Gethsemane. Both patristic and scholastic writers found it difficult to understand how Christ could be sad.⁷ They viewed his sadness in terms of the ideals of Stoicism, and they expected Christ to conform to these ideals. One should be sufficiently detached from worldly concerns and face trial with equanimity and with control over one's emotions, not with a soul troubled by sadness, since that would suggest that one does not have control over one's soul. Some of these writers therefore felt the need to define the sadness of Christ as voluntary rather than involuntary. There are compelling reasons to be sad, they argued, and so Christ's sadness at Gethsemane was defined as entirely rational. Indeed, it was the rationality of Christ's sadness that offered a model to Thomas More during the days prior to his execution in 1535. More wanted to confirm in his soul that his choice for death was not prompted by

⁷ See Kevin Madigan, "Ancient and High-Medieval Interpretation of Jesus in Gethsemane: Some Reflections on Tradition and Continuity in Christian Thought," *The Harvard Theological Review* 88 (1995), 157-173.

emotions that were not under the control of his mind. Indeed, on the basis of his understanding of Christ's sadness, it was rational for him to be sad over his impending loss of life. Thomas More was influenced by Augustine in his concern that he might be enthusiastic for death, which would disqualify it as a true martyrdom. If there were no sadness, his motive would be questionable, since the absence of sadness at the loss of life suggests a disturbance in the soul and a lack of reason.

Of course, biblical scholars today have quite a different view. We now see that the narrators of the life of Jesus highlighted the intensity of his sadness in order to underscore the reality of his sacrifice. The death in question was no ordinary death. It was not the final moment of a sage maintaining composure in the face of death in the fashion of Socrates. The death of Jesus amounted to a divine sacrifice. His body was the Temple in which the sacrifice reconciling humanity to God was to take place. The agony of Jesus in Gethsemane is meant to draw attention to the reality of the sacrifice he was performing as high priest and that his followers after him would perform in offering their lives to God. In some respect, the sadness connected to Christian suffering bears some relation to the suffering that comes with the performance of jihad, that is, struggle in the way of God. Those who struggle in the way of God in this world invariably suffer. The idea in Christianity is that such suffering, if it is suffering for the sake of others, has redemptive value if offered to God as Christ did, that is, as a whole offering of oneself to God in full confidence of his divine mercy and compassion.⁸

Let us now turn to sadness in Islam. As noted above, a number of classical scholars composed works on it or included chapters on it in larger works. Amidst these diverse works, one notices two trends: one that sees sadness as a trial from God to be endured; and another that sees it as the mark of spiritual virtue and thus as something that guides the believer in service of the virtuous life. One can thus speak of negative and positive attitudes towards sadness in classical Islam. There are also points of agreement across the spectrum. All agree one should be sad at the existence of evil. All agree that one should be sad for sins committed or for the failure to perform religious duties. There is also wide agreement that one should be sad over the next life, that is, the possibility of a wretched end in the world to come; and that one should not be sad over this life, that is, the loss of worldly things, which, in echo of Evagrius, are not worth our sadness since they amount to nothing in the end.

However, even when it comes to acceptable kinds of sadness, a question dividing the two trends is the following: Is there religious value in sadness itself? Or does the value lie in the reason behind the sadness? For example, one should be sad if one has no resources to offer the cause of Islam, but what is praiseworthy is not the sadness but the strength of one's faith that would lead one to be sad

⁸ Of course, the sorrow or lament expressed in Jesus' final words on the Cross, at least according to Matthew 27:46, need to be read in light of the first verse of Psalm 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The idea is that the righteous experience divine victory especially in suffering and even in the face of death.

for having no resources to contribute to its advancement. Or does sadness itself have a vital role in the path towards human happiness? Abū 'Uthmān al-Ḥīrī, the teacher of Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī, a spiritual master from eleventh-century Nishapur, claimed that sadness is always a virtue, including sadness over things of this world. Being sad does not mean one belongs to the ranks of the spiritual elite, but it does act to clarify purpose. This recalls the thinking of Aquinas on sadness.

What is sadness in Islam? It is defined in different ways, but a common definition speaks of it as a kind of internal pain that results from the loss of something desired or the occurrence of something distressing. Does sadness have a religious purpose even if it is not quite a religious duty? Does being sad offer guidance to believers? Or is it something that hinders the spiritual growth of the believer?

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya argues on the basis of the Qur'an, which often speaks of sadness in terms of a negative command: "Have no fear, and do not be sad." This is confirmed by a hadith that depicts the prophet as seeking refuge in God from sadness (among other things). And yet the qur'anic verse above has the people of paradise praising God for removing their deep sadness. This suggests that sadness is a part of the human condition. Even the people of paradise experienced some sadness. There must be some sense to it if even the people of paradise were not able to avoid it during life.

Here, in this first trend, represented by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, sorrow is at best involved in a transactional conception of religion. Sadness has no purpose in itself, but it is impossible to escape moments of sadness. Thus, if you are afflicted with sadness and you bear it patiently (and, above all, not let it affect your ability to perform your religious duties), you will be rewarded, either by being raised among the ranks of believers or by having your bad deeds reduced. This is not quite Stoicism. And sadness, here, is not quite something that prompts one to act for a purpose. Indeed, it can be a device of Satan to keep people from acting for a purpose. But this does not mean one can ever cultivate a state of soul such that one would never experience sadness. And there are praiseworthy kinds of sadness. Again, what is praiseworthy is not the sadness itself but the motive behind it. It is praiseworthy, for example, to be sad for one's sins, but being sad has no religious merit in itself. It would seem that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is responding to those who would make of sadness a religious merit, turning those who are continuously sad into a class of spiritual virtuosi above others. In other words, for Ibn al-Qayyim, one's attitude towards sadness has implications for the scope and nature of Islam. Like his teacher, Ibn Taymiyya, he seeks to sharpen the dividing line between what is religiously praiseworthy and what is not religiously praiseworthy. He also wants, like those who follow him today, to counter the concept of Islam as a religion of sadness, which suggests passivity.

The bottom line is that sadness should not be conflated with piety. One should be sad in certain situations, for example, for falling short in one's religious devotion, but that does not make sorrow itself a worship act. However, it is impossible to escape moments of sadness when the heart is pained. Sadness in this sense is like any other affliction. It is to be endured with fortitude since it has the potential to weaken the heart and enfeeble one's resolution. It even stresses the body and strains the face. And according to the Qur'an (58:10), it is a means by which Satan plants a sickness in the hearts of believers to keep them from acting with purpose. One must endure sorrow with patience and fortitude, and if one does so, one will be rewarded. The fact that one is rewarded for not succumbing to sadness does not make it part of the religion. One is rewarded for enduring trials (*baliyyāt*) as well as for undertaking things commanded (*ma'mūrāt*). Life has its moments of sadness, but one should be on one's guard against sorrow, since it weakens the heart and erodes one's determination. After all, there is no reason to persist in sadness, since it is the opposite of happiness.

So far we have seen that sadness is a test. It is involuntary. One is rewarded for passing the test with fortitude. We could also say that it has the potential to lead one astray. Such a negative view of sorrow suggests something akin to Stoicism. (Note here the interesting convergence between the philosopher al-Kindī and the theological realist Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya.) As in Stoicism one is to realize that external things are destined to pass and should therefore not be cause for sadness, so in Islam the believer is to see that all things pass and that losses in this world are nothing next to the reality of the next world. Of course, it is not quite the same. Islam, according to this trend, is not calling one to cultivate a state of soul unaffected by emotions such as sadness. Rather, when emotions occur, one is to bear them patiently. And yet there is a common idea of controlling the sadness if not actually dispelling it. It is a negative view of sadness. Is there no sense that sadness is a positive state of the soul in a religious sense; that sadness, even if not act of worship, can draw us closer to God or help us grow in virtue; in sum, that sadness is a source of guidance for the believer?

To change gears, let us recall that for Edmund Spenser, author of *The Faerie Queen*, sadness was a virtue since, as the quiet passion, it works to counter emotions such as rage, lethargy, despair, and confusion. It is not the same as melancholy, which for Spenser is not praiseworthy since it is to define sadness as a medical and thus material rather than a spiritual phenomenon. For him, sadness clarifies purpose. This echoes Abū 'Uthmān al-Ḥīrī who viewed sadness as a virtue in all its forms.

Sadness in this sense can be seen as Neo-Platonic, a necessary part of the journey of the soul back to God. Sadness is part of the process of departing the world even when one remains physically within it. And so sadness indicates that one is on the right track and heading towards one's purpose. Here, in some way, sadness is spiritually efficacious. We saw something of this in the first trend. There,

sadness indirectly contributes to the work of salvation. It is not the sadness itself that contributes to the work of salvation but the opportunity it offers to demonstrate patience and fortitude—and thus purposeful commitment. In turn, this is a way God works to increase one's merit, as suggested in the hadith, which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya accepts, that when one is afflicted by sorrow, God uses it to cover over one's bad deeds. Here, in the second trend, the situation is not entirely different. Sadness is involved in the question of religious purposefulness. But it is not the same. In the second trend, it is the sadness itself—rather than one's response to it—that is the mark of spiritual purposefulness. Here, one can be consoled by feeling sad because it is a sign that one is on the right way. Sadness is itself a sign that one is spiritually purposeful. It is in this sense that one should read the reports that suggest that sadness is a spiritual end in itself, for example, the report that the prophet was constantly sad; the report that God loves a sad heart; and the many reports on al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

This idea of sadness as a mark of devotion to God seems to be preponderant in Qushayrī's short treatment of sadness in his treatise on the conventions of Sufism. In contrast to Ibn al-Qayyim, who makes it clear that sorrow is not a *maqām* (a spiritual station), Qushayrī says that sadness is a state of the soul (*ḥāl*) that prevents the heart from getting lost in the valleys of neglectfulness. It is thus one of the characteristics of the people of the way (*ahl al-sulūk*), that is, the spiritual elite of the community. His teacher, Abū 'Alī al-Daqqāq, is quoted as saying that those in a state of sadness travel further along the path of God in a month than those without sadness do in years. A report from the Torah is narrated in which it is said that when God loves a slave, he puts a mourner in his heart, and when he hates a slave, he puts a flute in it. In other words, the mourner is the mark of one in the process of departing from the world, the flute that of one attached to it. Ibn Khafīf (d. 982, a mystic from Shiraz) is mentioned as saying that sadness works to keep one from being affected by merry song (again, like the flute, a sign of worldly attachment). Sufyān Ibn 'Uyayna (d. 815) is mentioned as saying that if a person in this *umma* (the community of Muslims) weeps with sadness, God will pardon the entire community because of his tears. The statement is a reference to the concept of the apotropaic saint whose tears indicate his spiritually elevated rank and the favor he enjoys with God and thus his ability to ward off the punishment that the community deserves from God. Dāwūd al-Ṭā'ī (d. ca. 777-782) is mentioned as asking how one might find consolation from sadness when afflictions are renewed in every moment. This suggests a spiritual sensitivity that leaves one continuously sad. Sarī al-Saqāṭī (d. 867) is mentioned as asking that the sadness of all humans be placed on him. This should not be seen as expression of a will to atone for the world's sins but a desire to have his sadness increase, thereby indicating the intensity of his disdain for the world. The sadness that is praiseworthy here is not sadness for the things of this world but sadness as a result of one's aspiration for the next (although, again, al-Ḥīrī says that sadness is a virtue in all

respects, increasing the faith of the believer so long as it is not the result of disobedience). One of spiritual masters is mentioned as saying to a companion about to hit the road: "If you see a person overcome with sadness, give him my regards." It is as if he sees a spiritual affinity in such a person. It is reported that one never saw al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī without thinking him continuously afflicted. Again, the idea is that sadness is evidence of a spiritually elevated state. When Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyāḍ died, sadness is said to have departed the world with him. A pious predecessor is mentioned as saying that most of what the believer finds in the scroll that records his good deeds is related to anxiety and sorrow. This makes it clear that sadness itself produces a heavenly reward. What does this mean? Is it at odds with Ibn al-Qayyim's view that sadness has no religious merit in itself? In the chapter on fear in this same treatise, Qushayrī notes that the mark of fear (of God) is permanent sorrow. Fear of God is a religious duty in Islam, making sorrow, by this definition, a religious duty by association. And yet it must be emphasized: The chapter on sorrow in Qushayrī's treatise does not leave the impression that it is mere religious duty. It has a spiritual depth to it, functioning more as a mark of one's desire to be elevated to a rank beyond this world than as a mark of pious fear. The final report suggests this point: The remark is made that everything has its alms. In other words, in everything, something is to be given up, and the alms demanded of the intellect is continuous sadness. In short, if you have a brain, you should be sad about being in this passing world.

In *Mi Vida: A Story of Faith, Hope, and Love*, José N. Harris (b. 1962) says, "Tears shed for another person are not a sign of weakness. They are a sign of a pure heart." We have seen two trends in classical Islam on the question of sadness, one that leans in the direction of the ideals of Stoicism, the other in the direction of those of Neo-Platonism. However, both of them, I suggest, seek to understand sadness in terms of purity of heart. For the first trend, it is a trial to determine whether one's heart is wholly committed to God and thus willing to endure sadness with patience and fortitude and not succumb to it and thus descend into Satan's trap. For the second trend, sadness is itself a sign of the purity of one's heart, of detachment from the world, and thus of spiritual purposefulness. There is much more to say about sadness in Islam. A question that I would like to pursue is that of the existence of a third trend in Islam that leans in the direction of Aristotelianism.

Such a trend would speak of sadness not as something to be patiently endured and even dispelled (the view of Ibn al-Qayyim) nor as the mark of a spiritual elevated state of soul (the view of Qushayrī). Rather, sadness in this third sense would work to direct us to our final goal without requiring us to see this world either as something to be overcome (for the trials it inflicts on us) or as something to be abandoned (for its state of contingency). Instead, sadness would be something that moves people, regardless of spiritual state, towards God, assuming that the emotion is properly

directed. That is, as one grows in virtue by taking joy in the good, so one does so by being moved to sorrow in the face of evil, until such things (joy in the good, sorrow in the evil) became a habit of the soul. Here, sorrow is occasional but positive movement within the soul rather than evil inclination or permanent state. What would that look like in Islam? Sadness here would be a way God guides us, not as a trial or spiritual state, but as something to be discerned for the insight it offers into the life of virtue, thus acting as a step on the path towards goodness and thus towards the face of God.