

On the Anniversary of the Chilean Miners' Rescue

As-salámu 'alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!"

"A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta'eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana'oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a'maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhoo warasooluh"

In the Name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are fast approaching the anniversary of an event which had the whole world at a standstill last October. A group of Chilean miners were trapped in a tunnel for over 60 hours, waiting under 2,000 feet of rock for some kind of liberation.

The miners were eventually safely hoisted back up to daylight and celebrated the triumphant rescue. Everything comes from Allah (SWT) alone and two of his beautiful names spring to mind whilst contemplating the difficulty that these brothers had to endure – Al Qabid, the constrictor and Al Basit, the expander.

Al Qabid translates to mean the constrictor, the seizer, the one who withholds, the restrainer. It is He who can lay the earth like a carpet for us to dwell on and it is He who can fold it up and cocoon us in. Al Qabid is the one who can eradicate the sustenance of whoever he wills. At times of restraint we learn to be patient and have faith in Allah (SWT). Every hardship is a test and at such times of crisis one should turn to Allah to pray for relief and mercy. Not only does Al-Qabid refer to the physical restraints inflicted upon us in the literal sense but also the constraints we experience within us such as chest cramping, breathlessness, anxiety and nervousness.

Yet fear not my dear brothers and sisters as Allah (STW) gives in abundance to those who love and glorify him. He says, "... *Allah accepts repentance from His servants and takes the alms*" (*Quran, 9:104*).

Al Qabid is a way of taking control of any given situation in order for one to glorify Allah (SWT). In the Qur'an it says: "... *and Allah straightens and amplifies...*" (*Quran, 2:245*). From this we understand that He straightens, withholds, His sustenance for some whilst extending and amplifying it for others. Another name of Allah (SWT) which compliments Al Qabid is Al Basit, He who is the expander, the one who relieves.

Allah, the Almighty is most just and rewards those who worship him alone and loves all of his creations. He grants physical and spiritual abundance to those who submit to him sincerely, to those who make 'tawbah' (seek forgiveness) and to those who take refuge in him.

Is there anyone who will make Allah a generous loan so that He can multiply it for him many times over? Allah both restricts and expands. And you will be returned to Him. (Surat al-Baqara, 2:245)

As the earth mounted on top of the Chilean miners, the tunnel became a tomb for them, in that some believed that that would be their deathbed and one man even requested to be sent down a photograph of the sun, in fear that he would never see its beautiful rays again. The time that the men spent in this constricted tunnel was an opportunity for them to reflect upon the beauties of the world such as, fresh air, water, the sun, their families and loved ones which are all blessings from Allah (SWT). At such instances one realises how fragile life is and how something given and taken so naturally can be restricted and withheld from them. That is exactly what happened to the Chilean Miners. The tears of joy and unforgettable smiles and laughter that the world witnessed upon their rescue said it all. Allah (SWT) was testing their patience and giving them an opportunity to turn to him and glorify him for the blessings they have been given.

It is He who places heavy burdens on the heart and inflicts man with restrictions and difficulty and it is He who eases them. Let us glorify Allah and be thankful for the heavens and the seas in which he has created so that he can expand our breasts and relieve us of our woes and worries.