

Patience & Gratitude

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Achieve Noble Character

Patience & Gratitude

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Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following short book discusses Two Aspects of Noble Character: Patience and Gratitude.

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Achieve Noble Character. According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of the qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, it is a duty on all Muslims to gain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to Achieve Noble Character.

Patience & Gratitude

Patience - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

First of all, patience is when one controls their words and actions so that they maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, whenever they encounter a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patience believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for everyone involved, even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice

versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a soul with more than they can handle, it leaves no one with an excuse not to show patience and maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through words and actions, from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

In addition, it is important for muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset, by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die, it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as

showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”

Patience - 2

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in, whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation, as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam, which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is important to note that success in every situation, in the main Hadith, has been indicated for the believer and not the Muslim. This is because a believer possesses stronger faith which is rooted in Islamic knowledge. As a result of their stronger faith, they adhere more strictly to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease. Whereas, the Muslim is someone who has accepted Islam but due to weak faith, which is caused by ignorance of Islamic knowledge, they may well fail to respond to different situations with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they reach the rank of a believer and therefore maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances.

Patience - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims not to question destiny as this opens the door to the Devil. He encourages muslims to challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they do not observe the wisdoms behind it because of their short sightedness and lack of understanding. This in turn leads to impatience and the loss of reward. One should reflect on their past experiences where they believed something was good when it was in fact bad and vice versa in order to inspire them to remain patient, as they will be shown these benefits sooner or later. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Patience - 4

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6470, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever sincerely tries to be patient will be granted patience by Allah, the Exalted. He concluded that there is no gift greater than patience.

A muslim must force patience on themselves especially, during times of difficulty. The best way to achieve this is by gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. For example, the one who knows Allah, the Exalted, will give an uncountable reward to the patient muslim is more likely to be patient than the one who is ignorant of this fact. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

It is important to note that real patience is shown at the onset of a situation, not later on. When one demonstrates patience later on, this is acceptance, which even the most impatient person experiences.

Finally, patience is important to adopt as it is required in each element of obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves fulfilling His commands,

refraining from His prohibitions and when facing destiny. Put simply, success in worldly or religious matters is not possible without patience. Therefore, it is a magnificent gift granted by Allah, the Exalted, to those who strive to adopt it.

Patience - 5

In a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 492, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim does not face any type of physical difficulty, irrespective of its size, such as a prick of a thorn, or any emotional difficulty, such as stress, except that Allah, the Exalted, erases their sins because of it.

This refers to minor sins, as major sins require sincere repentance. This outcome occurs when a muslim remains patient from the onset of the difficulty until the end of their life. This is important to understand, as many people believe they can complain initially and then show patience after. This is not true patience, instead it is only acceptance, which naturally occurs with the passing of time. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1870. In addition, patience needs to be shown throughout one's life, as a person can destroy their reward by showing impatience down the line.

A muslim should remember that it is far better to have their minor sins erased through these difficulties than to reach the Day of Judgment while still possessing them. A muslim should constantly repent and strive to perform righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. And if they encounter any physical or emotional difficulties, they should remain patient hoping for their minor sins to be erased and to obtain an uncountable reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

The one who faces every difficulty with patience, which involves avoiding complaining or disobeying Allah, the Exalted, through speech or actions, and adds sincere repentance to their behaviour, will have both their minor and major sins erased. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and the people who have been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, sincerely promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and it includes, making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The one who faces difficulties in this manner and faces times of ease with gratitude, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will find peace and success in every situation they face in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Patience - 6

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3127, warns that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forbade people from wailing.

Unfortunately, some believe it is not permitted to cry in times of difficulty, such as losing a loved one. This is incorrect as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried on many occasions when someone passed away. For example, he wept when his son Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him, passed away. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126.

In fact, crying on someone's death is a sign of mercy which Allah, the Exalted, has placed in the hearts of His servants. And only those who show mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1284. This same Hadith clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, cried over his grandson who passed away.

A Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2137, advises that a person will not be punished for crying over the death of someone or the grief they feel in their heart. But they may well face punishment if they utter words showing their impatience with the choice of Allah, the Exalted.

It is clear that feeling grief in one's heart or shedding tears is not prohibited in Islam. The things which are prohibited are wailing, showing one's impatience through words or actions, such as tearing one's clothes or shaving one's head in grief. There are severe warnings against those who act in this way. Therefore, one should avoid these actions at all costs. Not only may a person face punishment for acting in this way but if the deceased desired and commanded others to act like this when they passed away, they too will be held accountable. But if the deceased did not desire this then they are free of any accountability. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1006. It is common sense to understand that Allah, the Exalted, would not punish someone because of the actions of another when the former did not advise them to act in that manner. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 18:

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another...”

Patience - 7

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over a specific wisdom why people face difficulties and the loss of blessings, such as health. Often when Muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a Muslim's attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a Muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a Muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, Muslims should remember this truth every time they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

Patience - 8

I had a thought which I wanted to share. I was pondering over the great tests and difficulties the righteous predecessors faced during their lives and how they overcame them through patience and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. One of the ways of achieving this is by always comparing one's difficulty to harder and more severe difficulties. When one does this it will make their problem seem small and less significant. This change in focus can aid a Muslim to be patient and remain obedient to Allah, the Exalted. This can be explained through a worldly example. A person suffering from a severe migraine can be effected in such a way that it seems to them that the world is collapsing around them. But if this same person was on a ship which is about to hit an iceberg and sink in the middle of a freezing ocean then their severe migraine will not seem like a big deal. In fact, they would probably not even be effected by it at all as their whole focus would become shifted to the imminent life threatening danger namely, the sinking ship. This is how a Muslim should behave during difficulties. When they encounter a difficulty they should realise it could have been much worse and try to shift they focus on greater difficulties they could have encountered. This can be achieved by observing others who are in more difficult situations than them. For example, a person who suffers from back pain can ponder over the person who is physically disabled. Or they could ponder over much greater difficulties such as death and Judgment Day. This comparison will reduce the significance of their difficulty and its effects, which in turn will aid them in remaining patient and steadfast on the obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

Patience - 9

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Parents often take away things or prevent their children from obtaining certain things such as unhealthy food in order to protect them. This behaviour often causes the child to become sad or angry as they are completely unaware of the wisdom behind the actions of their parent. This parental behaviour is something which is widely accepted in society and is rightfully believed to be a characteristic of a good and responsible parent. Similarly, in life people often lose or are prevented from obtaining certain worldly things by Allah, the Exalted. A Muslim must understand that the same way parents keep harmful things away from their children even though their children do not understand the reason behind their choice similarly Allah, the Exalted, acts in this manner according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge in order to protect His servants even if people do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. Therefore, every time a Muslim finds themselves in this situation they should reflect on this simple example, which no one would reject irrespective of their faith, so that they are inspired to remain patient and show gratitude for the divine protection Allah, the Exalted, has granted them. They should not act like an immature child by becoming angry and impatient as adults are meant to behave better than children. In fact, children are excused from behaving in such a manner as they lack knowledge and experience whereas adults should not lack this and will therefore be held accountable for their behaviour in both worlds.

Patience - 10

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Every day people lose their loved ones. It is an inevitable outcome. A Muslim can remember and act on many things which can aid them during this difficulty. One thing is to observe the situation in a positive way. Meaning, instead of being sad over what one has lost they should concentrate on the good things that they gained through the person who has departed, such as their good advice and guidance. When one reflects on this they will understand that it was better to know the person before losing them instead of not knowing them at all. It is similar to the statement, it is better to have loved and lost than not loved at all. Though in most cases, this statement is taken out of context and misused but when used in this way it is correct and helpful.

In addition, a Muslim who undoubtedly believes in the hereafter should always remember that people do not meet in this world only to leave each other. But instead they only leave this world in order to meet again in the next world. This attitude can aid one in remaining patient during such a difficulty. And it should inspire them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience so that they can reunite with their loved one in their final resting place in the gardens of refuge, forever.

Patience - 11

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on dealing with a severe calamity, such as the death of a loved one and the importance of moving on. It is important to understand that when a severe difficulty, such as the death of a loved one occurs, it is better to return to one's normal daily routine and life as quick as possible, instead of leaving everything in order to grieve for a prolonged time. Even though, Islam does not prohibit mourning for those who have passed away yet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5339, that people should not mourn for more than three days with the exception of a wife for her deceased husband, which is extended to four months and ten days. One of the wisdoms behind this is that when one drops everything in order to mourn, it only gives them time to ponder over the difficulty excessively. This can cause one to become impatient and challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they dedicated so much time going over and over the calamity in their minds. In fact, a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, warns that replaying the calamity over in one's mind and thinking it could have been avoided, only opens the door to the Devil, which leads to impatience. Whereas, moving forward and returning to one's normal life, after the recommended three days, allows one to mourn but without falling into the difficulty too deeply. A normal routine distracts a person from their calamity and helps them to refocus on the bigger picture, which prevents them from becoming impatient. Muslims should therefore busy themselves in performing righteous deeds which attracts the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, or they should busy themselves in lawful worldly activities, like their job. And they should avoid dropping everything in order to mourn for days on end, as this often leads them to a dark place which becomes difficult to escape.

Patience - 12

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the important role of doctors and their impact on their patients. It is important for muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine, which their doctor prescribes, fully trusting in their knowledge, experience and choice, all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human and prone to errors. Yet many muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings, just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining, knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them, even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them, just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 51:

“Say, “Nothing will ever befall us except what Allah has destined for us. He is our Protector.” So in Allah let the believers put their trust.”

Even though, in most cases, they will never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take, a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. Patience involves avoiding complaining verbally or

through one's actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Patience - 13

In a Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the importance of understanding that every difficulty a person faces will be followed by ease. This reality has also been mentioned in the Holy Quran for example, chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 7:

“...Allah will bring about, after hardship, ease [i.e., relief].”

It is important for muslims to understand this reality as it gives rise to patience and even contentment. Being uncertain over the changes in circumstances can lead one to impatience, ingratitude and even towards unlawful things, such as unlawful provision. But the one who firmly believes all difficulties will eventually be replaced with ease will patiently wait for this change fully trusting in the teachings of Islam. This patience is much loved by Allah, the Exalted, and greatly rewarded. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

This is the reason Allah, the Exalted, has mentioned numerous examples within the Holy Quran when difficult situations were followed by ease and blessings. For example, the following verse of the Holy

Quran mentions the great difficulty the Holy Prophet Nuh, peace be upon him, faced from his people and how Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the great flood. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 76:

“And [mention] Noah, when he called [to Allah] before [that time], so We responded to him and saved him and his family from the great affliction [i.e., the flood].”

Another example is found in chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 69:

“We [i.e., Allah] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced a great difficulty in the form of a great fire but Allah, the Exalted, made it cool and peaceful for him.

These examples and many more have been mentioned in the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that muslims understand that a moment of difficulty will eventually be followed by ease for those who obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Therefore, it is important for muslims to study these Islamic teachings in order to observe the countless cases where Allah, the Exalted, granted ease to His obedient servants after they faced difficulties. If Allah, the Exalted, has saved His obedient servants from great difficulties mentioned in the divine teachings then He can and will save the obedient muslims facing smaller difficulties also.

Patience - 14

A Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that being patient over the things one dislikes leads to a great reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Patience is a key element required in order to fulfil the three aspects of faith: fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny. But a higher and more rewarding level than patience is contentment. This is when a muslim deeply believes that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants and they therefore prefer His choice over their own. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

A patient muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud

over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register¹ before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that when something occurs a muslim should firmly believe it was decreed and nothing could have changed the outcome. And a muslim should not have regrets believing they could have prevented the outcome if they somehow behaved differently as this attitude only causes the Devil to encourage them towards impatience and complaining about destiny. A patient muslim truly understands that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. The one who is patient does desire a change in their situation and even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they

encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

It is important to know that Allah, the Exalted, tests those He loves. If they show patience they will be rewarded but if they are angered it only proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2396.

A muslim should be patient or content with the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and hardship. This will reduce one's distress and provide them with much blessings in both worlds. Whereas, impatience will only destroy the reward they could have received. Either way a muslim will go through the situation decreed by Allah, the Exalted, but it is their choice whether they desire reward or not.

A muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

A muslim should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when the divine decree matches their wishes they praise Allah, the Exalted. And when it does not they become annoyed acting as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

A muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content muslim. Deep reflection on this will inspire a muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. It advises that when those who patiently faced trials and difficulties in the world receive their reward on Judgment Day those who did not face such trials will wish they patiently faced difficulties such as their skin being cut off with scissors.

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

"...and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel.""

If a muslim cannot reach this high level of faith they should at least try to reach the lower level mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier. This is the level where one is constantly aware they are being observed by Allah, the Exalted. The same way a person would not complain in front of an authoritative figure they feared, such as an employer, a muslim who is constantly aware of the presence of Allah, the Exalted, will not complain about the choices He makes.

Patience - 15

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. When one observes the suffering of people around the world, especially Muslims who believe in Allah, the Exalted, they may question the lack of divine aid based on outward appearances. But it is important for a Muslim to make certain realities about Allah, the Exalted, clear in their mind, as this aids in sincerely obeying Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One of these realities is that divine help does not occur according to the way people often expect or desire. A person's perception and thinking is extremely limited, whereas the divine perception and knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite. He therefore decrees things, such as His help for those being oppressed, according to His plan and method, which takes into consideration things which are beyond human perception and understanding, to ensure the best thing occurs for the people involved. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

This is similar to how a doctor may prescribe a bitter medicine, which outwardly seems to not help the sick patient yet in the long run it favors them, as in it lies their cure.

There are many examples of the divine aid of Allah, the Exalted, which in the short term, seemed absent yet in the long term and taking into consideration the bigger picture, was more beneficial than anyone could have comprehended. For example, the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, was thrown into a desolate well and abandoned by his brothers, while he was only a child. He was then sold into slavery and then unjustly imprisoned. Any person observing what occurred to him would believe that the help of Allah, the Exalted, was completely absent from him. Yet, in the long run these events ensured that the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, would become the finance minister of Egypt which allowed him to prevent the deaths of millions, through a great famine which occurred in his time. So in reality, the help of Allah, the Exalted, was never absent from him or the general population at all. Instead, the divine aid occurred in a way which was beyond human understanding and resulted in the best outcome for everyone involved. Therefore, the help of Allah, the Exalted, does not often come in a way which is obvious nor according to the desires and expectations of people, as this would not result in the best outcome for those involved.

In conclusion, it is important to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so certain realities in respect to Allah, the Exalted, can be learned and understood. This in turn will strengthen one's belief and their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 214:

"...Unquestionably, the help of Allāh is near."

Patience - 16

I had a thought, which I wanted to share. In the third year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca decided to take revenge for the loss at the Battle of Badr which occurred in the previous year. This led to the Battle of Uhud. When the battle commenced the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, quickly overcame the non-Muslim army which caused them to retreat. But some of the archers the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded to stay on a small mountain, Jabal Al Rumah, which is in front of Mount Uhud, irrespective of the outcome of the battle, believed that the battle was over and the command no longer applied. When they descended Jabal Al Rumah, it exposed the rear of the Muslim army. The non-Muslim army then rallied together and attacked the Muslims from both sides. This led to the martyrdom of many Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and their bodies were mutilated by the non-Muslims. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Pages 29-30.

It is clear that the main reason why the Muslims suffered so many losses was the misjudgment of the archers. They unintentionally disobeyed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they believed the war was over and his command no longer applied. This indicates that as long as a Muslim sincerely obeys the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will be granted success but if they disobey him, this support will be withdrawn. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“Whoever obeys the Messenger has truly obeyed Allah...”

and chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], “If you should love Allāh, then follow me, [so] Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.””

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 63:

“Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among yourselves as the call of one of you to another. Already Allāh knows those of you who slip away, concealed by others. So let those beware who dissent from his [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] order, lest disaster strike them or a painful punishment.”

In addition, it is customary for the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, to sometimes gain the upper hand over their enemies and on some occasions their enemies gain the upper hand, even though the ultimate victory is always in favour of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The reason for this alternating of circumstances is to separate the true believers from the hypocrites and the opportunists, who always join the successful group in order to reap worldly benefits. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, always won, then the hypocrites and opportunists

would become inextinguishable from the sincere believers. If the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, always lost, then this would hinder their mission. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 140:

“If a wound should touch you - there has already touched the [opposing] people a wound similar to it. And these days [of varying conditions] We alternate among the people so that Allāh may make evident those who believe and [may] take to Himself from among you martyrs...”

Another reason for this alternating of victory and defeat is to teach the believers how to adopt both patience and gratitude. If they lost all the time, then they may well become patient but would find it difficult to be grateful. If they won all the time, then they may well adopt gratitude but will struggle to adopt real patience. The alternating of situations allows for them to adopt both patience and gratitude, two halves which are vital to obtain success in both worlds.

Gratitude - 1

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that every situation is blessed for a believer. The only condition is that they need to respond to each situation they encounter while obeying Allah, the Exalted, specifically, patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease.

There are two aspects of life. One aspect are the situations people find themselves in, whether they are times of ease or difficulties. The control of what situation a person faces is out of their hands. Allah, the Exalted, has decided this and there is no escaping them. Therefore, stressing over the situations one faces does not make sense as they are destined and therefore inevitable. The other aspect is a person's reaction to each situation. This is in each person's control and this is what they are judged on for example, showing patience or impatience in a difficult situation. Therefore, a muslim must concentrate on their behaviour and reaction in each situation instead of stressing over being in a situation, as this is unavoidable. If a muslim desires to succeed in both worlds they should assess each situation and always act in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. For example, in times of ease they must use the blessings they possess as prescribed by Islam, which is true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

And in times of difficulty they must show patience knowing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants even if they do not understand the wisdom behind the choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is important to note that success in every situation, in the main Hadith, has been indicated for the believer and not the Muslim. This is because a believer possesses stronger faith which is rooted in Islamic knowledge. As a result of their stronger faith, they adhere more strictly to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves patience in difficulties and gratitude in times of ease. Whereas, the Muslim is someone who has accepted Islam but due to weak faith, which is caused by ignorance of Islamic knowledge, they may well fail to respond to different situations with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is vital for one to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they reach the rank of a believer and therefore maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, under all circumstances.

Gratitude - 2

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less, showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others, such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands, as He is the source of the blessing and they must show gratitude to the person who helped them, as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness, according to their means, even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The one who does not show gratitude to the outward manifestation of the help of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, a person, will less likely show it directly to Allah, the Exalted.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

If a muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

Gratitude - 3

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to observe those who possess less worldly things than them instead of those who possess more, as this will prevent them from becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Unfortunately, some incorrectly observe the lives of others, which appear to be better than their own life. For example, normal people often observe celebrities and mistakenly believe their life is better. In most cases, this concept is not true, as people who appear to be in a better situation may well be facing difficulties which would make others not wish to trade places with them. An outsider will only observe things from one shallow point of view. But if they could see the whole story they would realise everyone faces problems and no one has the perfect life irrespective of what they own or how famous they are. Often this misconception is caused by the media. But people fail to remember that the aim of the media is to paint a certain picture of the lives of celebrities which look appealing to read about. In most cases, if they only reported facts without sugar coating them, the majority of their customers would turn away from them.

Muslims must avoid this false belief as it is a tool of the Devil who uses it to inspire people to become ungrateful over what they possess. The correct mind-set, which has been advised in this Hadith, will prevent one becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted. Whenever a muslim feels ungrateful they should shift their focus to the countless people who are living in severe poverty and facing much greater hardships than them.

This will encourage them to be grateful to Allah, the Exalted, for what He has granted them. This gratitude is practically shown by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will lead to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence, it is in fact green enough on one's own side. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

But in respect to one's religion, they should always observe those who are more dedicated to Islam than them. This attitude will prevent one from adopting laziness when they observe those who are less dedicated to Islam than them. Observing others who are less dedicated to Islam can even encourage one to justify and belittle their sins, which is a dangerous path to adopt. Observing those who are more dedicated to Islam will also encourage one to strive harder in their dedication to Islam in order to fulfil their potential. The root of this is gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Gratitude - 4

I read a news article a while ago, which I wanted to briefly discuss. It reported on the Corona Virus and the physical restrictions associated with it, such as not leaving one's house unnecessarily.

It is important for muslims to realize the countless blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, as this realization will inspire them with true gratitude, which is to use each blessing they possess correctly, according to teachings of Islam. Muslims often fail to acknowledge these blessings, such as having the freedom to leave one's house whenever they wish.

In addition, this true gratitude is extremely important as the Holy Quran warns that those who changed in a negative way, such as failing to show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, were tested with difficulties by the removal of these blessings. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 11:

"...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves..."

For example, it is obvious to anyone who observes most Mosques during the obligatory congregational prayers that the vast majority of local muslims do not attend them. Attending the Mosques is the very

essence of showing gratitude for being granted a Mosque by Allah, the Exalted. But as many muslims failed to show this true gratitude, Allah, the Exalted, changed the situation by closing them through this virus outbreak.

Muslims should therefore regularly assess the blessings they possess so that they show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using them according to His pleasure and commands. This will cause things to change in a positive way and increase the blessings they are granted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

In addition, these social restrictions should also remind muslims to make use of the blessings they possess, which normally pass away with time, such as good health and time. The one who utilizes their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as their good health, will find that they receive the same support and reward from Allah, the Exalted, even when they eventually lose this blessing. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 500. But those who fail to utilize their blessings correctly will lose out on gaining reward while they possess them and when they eventually lose them. This is a manifest loss.

Gratitude - 5

I had a thought which I wanted to share. Muslims often increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as attending the Mosques for the congregational prayers or reciting more spiritual exercises in times of difficulty. But in times of ease they often relax and become lazy. But it is important to note, that generally it is more important to be more on guard and increase one's obedience during times of ease than times of difficulty. This is because one often sins more during times of ease than difficulty, such as abandoning their obligatory duties. If one reviews the different misguided people in history, such as Pharaoh and Quroon they will observe that their sins only multiplied during times of ease. Someone who is facing a difficulty where they are stuck and have no option but to patiently wait for relief is less likely to sin as they desire to be relieved of their difficulty. Whereas, a person experiencing times of ease will be in a better position to enjoy and over indulge in worldly things which often leads to sins. For example, a person facing poverty is less likely to sin as many sins require wealth. Whereas, a wealthy person is in an easier position to commit those sins, such as purchasing alcohol or drugs. Therefore, Muslims should take note of this and ensure they maintain or even increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during times of ease so that they do not fall into sins and disobedience.

In addition, the one who is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions during times of ease will gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, during their times of difficulty which will aid them to overcome them successfully. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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