

Patience in Islam

BS Foad, M.D 2010

Ramadan is the month of patience, as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(The month of patience and three days of every month, this is considered like fasting all the time) Nesa'ee & Ahmad

Obviously fasting Ramadan requires patience, perseverance, resolve and commitment.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also described Sabr or patience as a light that illuminates your way

So what is the meaning and manner of Sabr in Islam? What is its reward, and do we have examples of human beings to follow in their patience and perseverance?

We will discuss the following concepts:

- 1-What is the meaning of patience and how do we exhibit patience in our lives?**
- 2-What is the reward of patience?**
- 3-God's prophets serve as examples for us in being patient and persevering**

The meaning and implication of Sabr

1-To be patient and persevere in obeying the orders of Allah:

- Establishing regular prayer
- Fasting Ramadan
- Giving Charity
- Living our lives as Allah ordered us to do
- Hastening in all good deeds and helping those who need our help

2-Being patient in avoiding sin, shameful deeds and anything that is wrong or anything that will displease Allah

3-Being patient and accepting the will of Allah and whatever tests and trials and adversity or difficulty we are subjected to

4-Not giving up or losing hope despite set backs or long years of failure, or being Subjected to test after test

Patience and perseverance in obeying Allah's orders

Those who patiently persevere, seeking the countenance of their Lord; establish regular prayers; spend out of (the gifts) We have bestowed for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and turn off Evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the (Eternal) Home.

Ar-Ra'd 13: 22

Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring: and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation):

Ar-Ra'd 13: 23

"Peace unto you for that ye persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final Home!"

Ar-Ra'd 13: 24

The three obligations mentioned in these verses are:

- 1-Establishing regular prayer
- 2-Spending out of what Allah provides
- 3-Doing good deeds to wipe out their mistakes

We should be constant, and persevere in all our activities, and understand our accountability to Allah:

O ye who believe! persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that ye may prosper.

Al-Imran 3: 200

We need to obey Allah and follow what He has commanded:

Follow thou the inspiration sent unto thee, and be patient and constant, till Allah do decide; for He is the Best to decide.

Yunus 10: 109

And:

O thou wrapped up (in a mantle)!

Al-Muddathir 74: 1

Arise and deliver thy warning!

Al-Muddathir 74: 2

And thy Lord do thou magnify!

Al-Muddathir 74: 3

And thy garments keep free from stain!

Al-Muddathir 74: 4

And all abomination shun!

Al-Muddathir 74: 5

Nor expect, in giving, any increase (for thyself)!

Al-Muddathir 74: 6

But, for thy Lord's (Cause) be patient and constant!

Al-Muddathir 74: 7

The areas where we are ordered here to patiently persevere include:

- 1-Shoulder your responsibility and do your work
- 2-Glorify your Lord: keep in constant contact with Allah, and understand your Duty in serving Him, and trying to get close to Him and seeking His pleasure
- 3-Purify yourself. This means physically and spiritually, by being honest and Truthful and not lying or cheating; by fulfilling our promises and not betraying Our trusts
- 4-Shun all shameful deeds and sin. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:
(The Muslim is the person who other Muslims fear no harm from his tongue or Hand; and the immigrant is the person who avoids what Allah has forbidden)
Bokhari, Abou Dawood
- 5-Understand that we are not asking people to reward us for our good deeds,
Our reward comes from Allah
- 6-Our life should be exemplified by our patience and perseverance for the sake Of Allah

Patience in avoiding what Allah has forbidden

The temptations are numerous in this life. We need to have a strong will and avoid what is wrong, sinful or shameful, and what Allah has made unlawful:

Say: The things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge.

Al-Araf 7: 33

In this verse we are told about some of what Allah has made unlawful:

- 1-Shameful deeds like alcohol, drugs
- 2-Committing sin like murder, adultery, lying, cheating
- 3-To oppress other people or not allow them their freedom and their rights
- 4-To worship or serve others besides Allah. Nowadays many people worship money, power and fame
- 5-To say things about Allah that we have no knowledge off.

Temptations are numerous and inviting:

Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children. Here is a similitude; how rain and the growth which it brings forth,

delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of Allah). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception?

Al-Hadeed 57: 20

And:

Say: "Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle thee; so fear Allah, O ye that understand; that (so) ye may prosper."

Al-Maeda 5: 100

These temptations are strong and many of our children can fall prey to many of them. They may lack the faith, patience and wisdom necessary to withstand constant temptations.

Patience regarding the tests and trials that everyone goes through

We will be tested and tried in various ways: illness, death of loved ones; loss of money; failure to achieve our dreams despite hard work; fame and knowledge and poverty:

Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere.

Al-Baqara 2: 155

And:

Did ye think that ye would enter Heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His Cause) and remained steadfast?

Al-Imran 3: 142

And:

And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported (mettle).

Muhammad 47: 31

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) told us that we are tested and tried according to the strength of our faith:

When asked: Who is tested severely among mankind? He said: (The Prophets are tested more severely; then the most righteous and then those less in faith. A person is tested according to his faith: if his faith and conviction is strong, then his test and trial will be more harsh; but if his faith is weak, then his test is less and according to his faith. Sometimes a person is tested so often that he is walking on earth with no sin) Termedhi after Sa'd Bin Abi Waqas

Not giving up hope or losing faith despite tests and trials and failures

Part of faith is not giving up despite repeated tests and trials, or failure despite doing our best effort. Someone who believes in Allah will never give up hope, because he knows that Allah is ever watching and knows the difficulty we are going through, and that He will reward us for our patience and for not giving up. On the tongue of Prophet Jacob:

"O my sons! go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother, and never give up hope of Allah's soothing Mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith."

Yusuf 12: 87

And on the tongue of Prophet Abraham:

He said: "And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord, but such as go astray?"

Al-Hijr 15: 56

And:

No kind of calamity can occur, except by the leave of Allah: and if anyone believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (aright): for Allah knows all things.

At-Taghabun 64: 11

And:

No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: that is truly easy for Allah:

Al-hadeed 57: 22

In order that ye may not despair over matters that pass you by, nor exult over favours bestowed upon you. For Allah loveth not any vainglorious boaster,

Al-Hadeed 57: 23

We learn from these verses:

- No calamity can occur without God's permission. Sometimes, we do not understand why God will allow such tragedy to occur.
- Allah knows what we are going through
- We are judged according to our response and reaction to the difficulty: do we Accept our fate and work to change it to another fate, or do we blame our Fortune, give up and say this is not fair?
- Once we have done our duty it is time to accept what God has willed for us, And patiently persevere and try to work and find a solution for our problem. Sometimes our efforts will fail, and it was not meant to be
- Giving up is against faith in Allah

What is the reward of patience?

- 1-God's paradise
- 2-Forgiveness of sin
- 3-Our rewards are multiplied numerous times
- 4-Allah is with those who patiently persevere

Patience leads to paradise:

But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, to them shall We give a Home in Heaven, lofty mansions beneath which flow rivers, to dwell therein for aye; an excellent reward for those who do (good)!

Al-Ankabut 29: 58

Those who persevere in patience, and put their trust in their Lord and Cherisher, Al-Ankabut 29: 59

And:

But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said: "Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good)."

Al-Qasas 28: 80

Patience results in forgiveness of sin

(Namely), those who say; "Our Lord! we have indeed believed: forgive us, then, our sins, and save us from the agony of the Fire;" –

Al-Imran 3 : 16

Those who show patience, firmness and self-control; who are true (in word and deed); who worship devoutly; who spend (in the way of Allah); and who pray for forgiveness in the early hours of the morning.

Al-Imran 3: 17

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(Whatever afflicts a Muslim from tiredness, pain, worry, sadness, hurt or injury, or sorrow or grief, even a thorn that pierces his skin, till Allah remits his sons through these afflictions)

Bokhari & Muslim after Abee Sa'eed & Abou Horaira

Our deeds are multiplied and we are rewarded according to the best of our deeds

What is with you must vanish: what is with Allah will endure. And We will certainly bestow, on those who patiently persevere, their reward according to the best of their actions.

An-Nahl 16: 96

And:

those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!"

Az-Zumar 39: 10

Those who patiently persevere and are God-conscious will be rewarded in this life

What is with you must vanish: what is with Allah will endure. And We will certainly bestow, on those who patiently persevere, their reward according to the best of their actions.

An-Nahl 16: 96

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions.

An-Nahl 16: 97

And:

And We appointed, from among them, Leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our Signs.

As-Sajda 32: 24

Allah is with those who patiently persevere

But those who were convinced that they must meet Allah, said: "How oft, by Allah's will, hath a small force vanquished a big one? Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere."

Al-Baqara 2: 249

All the affairs of a believer are good for him

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:

(All the affairs of the believer are good for him, and this only occurs to those who have faith. If he is experiencing difficulty, he patiently persevere and it is good for him; and if he is enjoying a blessing, he is grateful to God, and it is good for him)
Muslim

Patience is a characteristic of God's Prophets & Messengers

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was ordered to patiently persevere and not be sad regarding the rejection he is getting from his people, but to continue his mission of inviting to Allah:

Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) Messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers

Al-Ahqaf 46: 35

And:

Now await in patience the Command of they Lord: for verily thou art in Our eyes: and celebrate the praises of they Lord the while thou standest forth,

At-Tur 52: 48

And for part of the night also praise thou Him, and at the retreat of the stars!

At-Tur 52: 49

Other Prophets & Messengers were patient and persevered despite being rejected and abused by their people:

Rejected were the Messengers before thee: with patience and constancy they bore their rejection and their wrongs, until Our aid did reach them: there is none that can alter the Words (and Decrees) of Allah. Already hast thou received some account of those Messengers.

Al-An'am 6: 34

Prophet Ayyoub (Job) was the example of patience:

Truly We found him full of patience and constancy, how excellent in Our service! ever did he turn (to Us)!

Sa D 38: 44

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Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) described Ramadan as the month of patience (Nesa'ee & Ahmad).

We exhibit patience in obeying Allah’s orders, and in avoiding sin and shameful deeds, and in accepting what Allah wills for us, and in not giving up hope

Obeying Allah’s orders We need to safeguard our prayers, fasting and charity, and live our life as Allah has commanded upright and honest, helping those who need our help and watching our behavior

“Those who patiently persevere, seeking the pleasure of their Lord; establish regular prayers; and spend Out of what We bestowed on them for their sustenance, secretly and openly; and turn off evil with good: for such there is the final attainment of the eternal home” Ar-Ra’d 13: 22

“Follow the inspiration sent to you, and be patient and constant, till Allah do decide, and He is the best To decide” Yunus 10: 109

Avoiding what Allah has forbidden and made unlawful

The temptations in this life are numerous including money, women, power, fame, alcohol and drugs

“Say: “The things that my Lord has indeed forbidden are shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning partners to Allah, for which He has given no authority; and sayings things about Allah of which you have no knowledge” Al-Araf 7: 33

“Say: “Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle you; so fear Allah O you who understand that you may prosper” Al-Maeda 5: 100

Being patient in the face of tests, trials and adversity and accepting God’s will

“Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits of your labor, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere” Al-Baqara 2: 155

“And We shall try you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience; and We shall try your reported mettle” Muhammad 47: 31

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Never giving up hope of Allah’s mercy despite failures and adversity

On the tongue of Prophet Jacob “Never give up hope of Allah’s soothing mercy. Truly no one despairs of Allah’s mercy except those who have no faith” Yusuf 12: 87

“No kind of calamity can occur, except by the leave of Allah. If anyone believes in Allah, Allah will guide his heart, for Allah knows all things” At-Taghabun 64: 11

The rewards of patience is forgiveness of sin, entering God’s paradise, being rewarded according to the best of our deeds and being guided by Allah

“Those who believe and do righteous deeds, to them shall We give a home in heaven beneath which rivers flow...those who persevere in patience and put their trust in their Lord” Al-Ankabut 29: 58 & 59

“We will certainly bestow on those who patiently persevere their reward according to the best of their actions” An-Nahl 16: 96

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