

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

[The Power of Patience](#)
Patience's High Spiritual Rank

Allah in the Holy Qu'ran speaks of *sabr*:

**O you who securely believe, seek help in steadfast patience and in the *salah*.
Truly, Allah is with the patient.**

Again in this Surah al-Imran:

Indeed, Allah aided you at Badr when you were utterly weak, so guard yourselves in order that you may be thankful. And is it not sufficient for you that your Lord should help you with 3,000 angels sent down from the heavenly realms? Assuredly, if you are steadfastly patient, guard yourselves for Allah. And if your enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will aid you with 5,000 angels sweeping down.

Again, in Surah al-Imran:

O you who have gained to secure belief, endure and be steadfast and strengthen each other. And guard yourselves in order that you may be successful.

These are just four or five of over 90 '*āyāt* in the Qur'an that Allah speaks about patience and steadfastness. We know that *sabr* means to be enduring in resisting pain and suffering and difficult, and dealing calmly with your problems. We say "patience," which is one of the more important aspects of our heart, but it's also regarded as half of one's religious life. The other half is thankfulness. Half of one's religious or spiritual life is patience – patience in the terms I've just described – and half is thankfulness. It's also associated with *ibada*. When we make praises upon the Prophet (sal), as I did in the

opening, the implication is not just that he worships Allah, but that he is steadfast in his worship. He is patient in his worship; and he is accepting of what comes to him in his life. This Qur'an orders patience in many *āyāt*, and mentions other aspects of patience. For example, if you endure patiently, it is better. It advises patience as a preferable way in dealing with disbelievers when communicating to them Allah's message.

“And We most certain bestow upon the patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do.” He consoles the patient with the best of rewards that are given here and in the Hereafter. He tells us that if you have patience and guard yourself against evil and disobedience, Allah will send you 5,000 angels if your enemies attack you. How remarkable a believer's life and circumstances are! The condition of the believer is to have patience, and receive the rewards of patience. If something good happens, he thanks Allah, which is to the advantage of the person. If something wrong or bad happens to one, you endure it, which is also to your advantage. The only thing that is not to your advantage is being impatient, and being not thankful.

There are different ways people have looked at patience. One way is in categories like this: enduring difficulties in association with being a true servant of Allah Swt, or steadfastness in performing acts of worship; resisting the temptations of the lower self to commit wrong actions and sins; enduring the difficulties and calamities that come from being a human being, that come from Allah, like natural calamities and difficulties which we see every day on tv: tornadoes, earthquakes, climate issues. It also includes resignation to the decrees of Allah; being patient and steadfast in following the path; not allowing yourself to be distracted by worldly attractions; to be patient and not making haste in realizing your plans that normally would take some time to achieve. This is very typical of us in our younger years, when we have an idea of what we want to do, but don't want to go through the steps to get there and do it. You may want to be a doctor, but if you don't go to university and then medical school, you are not going to get to be a doctor, or a lawyer, or get a good job, whatever.

It takes patience, but in this case, steadfastness, and accepting what Allah has placed before us as the guidelines and rules for attainment for realizing what the intentions are. There are degrees to this patience, and with regard to those, we can show patience *fi sabīli-Llāh*. We can show patience and attribute that patience to Allah, and be convinced that Allah Swt enables us to have that patience. It's not coming from "me," but if it wasn't for Allah, I wouldn't have it. We can endure patiently whatever comes from Allah, knowing that there is another level of wisdom behind what has been given to us. We can become resigned to whatever happens in the way of Allah. We can show patience by not disclosing what one has achieved spiritually, that is to be humble, in order to preserve our nearness to Allah. When we don't show humility, we become distanced. We talked recently about nearness and closeness and the difference between the two. In resolving to fulfill one's mission or purpose in life, to communicate through our life and our actions the message of Allah Swt to others, despite whatever happens, we want to be, we say in modern times, good examples.

There are other ways of looking at this topic of patience as part of *ibāda*: preserving one's *adab* in the face of difficulties – not losing your *adab*, your manners; being persevering, being steadfast when confronted with surprising events; not showing signs of being distracted; not giving into one's lowest nature or low quality of temperament; accepting the commands / *amr* of Allah as they come from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Rasūlu-Llāh (sal); being ready to sacrifice whatever one has in this physical world, including one's own soul, for the sake of Allah. These are obviously much more subtle and demanding areas of patience.

“Vie with each other in endurance and continue with your relationship with Allah (to compete in goodness).” Those people, who have made *tafsir* of Qur'an and were interested in the secrets of the inner meanings, have said in relationship to this 'āyat,

Be steadfast in performing your religious duties. Endure whatever displeasing thing happens to you. Maintain your love for Allah and your desire to meet with Him.” Or, “Be steadfast in performing all your responsibilities fī sabīli-Llāh, and to please Him, and to endure the difficulties, always being aware that He is constantly present in your life.”

Another way of saying it is to be steadfast in following the *sirata-l-mustaqīm* without any deviation, even when Divine bounties come to you, because those Divine bounties could be a distraction also. Resolve to endure all difficulties and hardships to maintain your connection with Allah. The other side of it is to give thanks for what appears to be pleasing and desirous and beneficial, and being resigned to what appears to be displeasing and questionable in its benefit to you. When a person who is a true believer, Muslim, relieves him or herself of difficulties and worries and misfortunes in order to overcome hardships and difficulties, which is very, very difficult. In the midst of hardships, it is very hard to relieve yourself of them by being patient – or sins that have been or might be committed.

A person has to be thankful to Allah for that intention, even; and not complain to Allah that He is not saving them from themselves. This is a subtlety. A true believer’s way of asking Allah for help and seeking refuge in Allah is by taking responsibility and, not just repenting, but being thankful to Allah for that capacity, capability, and knowledge. We think of the Prophet Ayyub (Job). The diseases, trials, and tribulations came to him, and he said, *“Truly distress has seized me; but You are the most compassionate of the compassionate. I only complain of my anguish and my sorrow to Allah, and they are supplications and entreaties for His pity and His compassion.”* Then Allah heaped praises upon Ayyub for being an excellent ‘abd. He was distinguished by his patience and supplications. **“We found him patient. How excellent a servant! Truly, he was ever turning to Allah with supplications.”**

Do we do that? Do we do it spontaneously? Do we do it at the beginning of a difficulty? Do we show gratitude at the moment of something good happening to us, or do we wait until we are told, or until we try everything else? I have given this message many times. I give it 40% for you and 60% for me. We have to remember that if we want something, we have to make the supplication to Allah. I sent you a *du'ā* today. I will send one on provisions; what to do after different prayers for *rizq*. The question is do we start with this? Where does patience begin? We usually think patience begins after everything else. We say, "This has happened, and that has happened... you have to be patient." Isn't that the way it usually goes? But patience and steadfastness have a different implication. From the very beginning, [one should try] to be patient. If you are not patient from the very beginning, at least when you hear this or think about it, start being patient in your supplication.

What is it you really, really, really want? Are you consumed by your wanting, or by your supplication and your patience and perseverance, in the sense that you are turning to Allah and saying, "I am grateful. Thank you, in advance. I know You will provide for me what I need. I have to be at peace – my mind at peace, my emotions at peace, my body at peace, my heart at peace." That's not where most of us are, most of the time! And so the tests and trials come. They would not have the same momentum or power if we began with *sabr* and *shukr*. Just think about what we sometimes say in the US, "Before you say anything bad, say two things good." Somebody has told you that sometime in your life, especially if you were a complainer. Maybe you wake up in the morning, and it's a miserable, cold winter morning, and you say, "Thank you Allah for the beautiful day." It's crazy. You say, "Oh my God, it's snowing and slushy on the road and what am I going to do?"

It's such a silly example. But it tells us of our mentality. It's very hard to wake up in the morning with pain, and say, "Thank you Allah. This pain reminds me that I should do my exercise today." How many of us do that? I do that all the time! *Astaghfirh -Llāh*. This

is what is meant by patience, because it is an essential aspect of one's character. Those people who are patient are the most advanced in belief. They are the most advanced in spirituality. They are the nearest to Allah, and they are the ones who guide others to the truth. Think of it also in this way: I will go out on a limb here and tell you – and may Allah support what I say – the people who are the most steadfast in their practices, the most sincere and who have the deepest belief in them, will find peace and healing and balance coming to them much more and much faster than those who are not, who are always struggling mentally with the philosophy, or the practice, or the meaning of it, or the commitment to it, or whatever. Sometimes, those people are given the most difficult tests because Allah deems them the most able to be examples to others. Please try to remember that, and see if it is not so.

You can drive yourself crazy. People say, "If you worry all the time, you will make yourself sick." What's behind that? Flip it around. If you don't worry so much, maybe you won't get as sick. Is that possible? Isn't that the implication? Why not try that? You ask, "How do I stop driving myself crazy?" *Durūd, durūd, durūd. Du'ā, du'ā, du'ā.* Hazrat used to say, "*Du'ā* makes life easier. *Dhikr* removes your attachment to the world." Someone is sitting outside, waiting for the *khutbah* to begin, doing Hizb ul Bahr. It's a beautiful day; why not look around? A friend is sitting right next to you; why not talk to the friend? But choosing to do Hizb ul Bahr. That sister has some ailments, but so far, *alhamdulillah*, from a very disabling ailment she has come back to being able to do almost full and complete work if she's careful and appreciative. That's the truth. That's an example. It's right here.

Another sister, sitting in this room, diagnosed a number of years ago with a very debilitating disease. Now, healthy, *alhamdulillah*, working hard, and has a job as a long-distance truck driver! Driving a lot, anyway. Doesn't that mean something? We all have an ailment of some kind. Another sister, sitting in this room (notice I'm only talking about the women. All the men are healthy) recovered from many different

ailments, always sincerely listening to the *dars*, always sincerely doing the practice. Always sincerely hoping and thanking Allah for the cure. I know this as a fact. There are more in this room, and there are not a lot of people in this room right now. This is also *sabr*.

You see the link between this and *ibāda*/worship. If you want to drive yourself crazy, you will. You can make yourself sick. How do you stop it? Some of us have to arrive at the “diet” finally. Then you have to hold to it very disciplined. It make take a week, a month, 6 months, a year, two years, four years. You get up in the morning and look in the mirror and say, “Uff!” Or the phrase in Arabic, “Oi Vey!” “Ya Allah, what am I going to do about this? I’m failing miserably.” But you are patient and persevere, and then one day, *alhamdulillah*. Then you have to sustain it, because it’s steadfastness and patience. Steadfastness. That’s the message.

If suffering has to be endured, then there is more of a difficulty in fulfilling your responsibilities. The pressure of that circumstance, that pain, that suffering, that sin, whatever it may be, is there. But it also contains mercy. That mercy is attracted by your *sabr*, and by your *shukr*. When we are subjected to these kinds of difficulties, we should unburden ourselves to Allah Swt. One Sufi said, “*You say you are a lover. Then do not complain of the afflictions of love. By complaining, do not make others informed of your affliction.*” That’s more than just don’t wash your dirty laundry in public. That’s a secular analog to it. That’s the ‘you don’t want to be embarrassed’ part of it. That’s not what this means. That means, don’t dissipate your energy by speaking of it to someone who isn’t going to be able to help you. Talk to the One Who can help you. It has a secular, cultural component to it.

If you are on the *sayr ul suluk*, and you have a fever that makes you ill, you should know how to burn the fever out with love. If you are consumed by affliction, you should know how to consume the affliction. Not to complain of the affliction, even if one feels totally

overburden, crushed by the difficulties or responsibilities, which has been described as heavy as mountains. You shouldn't complain. Rumi said,

In order to be sustenance for man, a source of strength for his knees, a light for his eyes, and a substance for the maintenance of his life, a grain of wheat must be buried in the bosom of the earth, germinate under it, and grow to emerge into the air. It must come into the air after a fierce struggle with the earth, and then be sown and threshed and ground in a mill. And after that, must be kneaded and baked in an oven, and finally chewed by the teeth, sent to the stomach, and digested.

This is not an easy process for a grain of wheat. To attain true humanity, each individual has to be sieved and distilled and the chaff removed, many times, to discover our essence. It is expected of Allah's servant to suffer, and "*of an aloe wood to burn,*" he says. Patience is essential, and a most important dimension of *ibāda* and *abdallah*. It is crowned, he says, with resignation. The highest spiritual rank in the sight of Allah is patience and *shukr* to whatever Allah has destined for us. *Asalaamu aleikum.*