

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 153-157)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

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Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ * وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أحيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ * وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ * الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ * أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ﴾

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. "Indeed, Allah is with the patient." (153) "And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, "They are dead." Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not." (154) "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient." (155) "Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return." (156) "Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." (157)” [Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 153-157]

Allah (swt) clarifies in these Ayaat the following:

1. After Allah (swt) told us that He had sent from us a Messenger, who recites the verses of Allah (swt), cleanses us of *Shirk* and idolatry, teaches us everything we need from the beliefs and rulings, we remember Allah (swt) and we call to Islam, then afterwards Allah (swt) ordered us to seek help through patience and prayer.

The operative meaning of this verse is an Indicating Evidence (دلالة إشارة) *Dalaalatul Ishaarah*) that the Dawah to Islam and abiding by the laws of Allah (swt) is a burden and within it there is hardship and that it is upon the believer to become sturdier through two matters that Allah (swt) clarified: patience and prayer.

2. Then Allah (swt) mentions the categories of trials that afflict humans during the campaign for Islam and call to it and Allah (swt) clarifies that which awaits the patient, the steadfast on the right (truth), those who reflect upon the affliction, saying: ﴿إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾ “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” Amongst the categories of trials that Allah (swt) mentioned and mentioned that which awaits those who pass them of Good (خير Khair), are:

a. Being killed whilst fighting for the sake of Allah (swt), killed whilst fighting the enemies of Allah (swt) to uphold His Word as the highest, maintaining a firm stand on the battlefield. He is alive with Allah (swt) which is not sensed by the people because they are absent from them, but it is a good, pure life, «من قاتل لإعلاء كلمة الله مقبلا غير مدبر فهو في سبيل الله» “Whosoever fights to raise the word of Allah as the highest, with a firm stand, is the one who is

fighting in the path of Allah (swt)." [An-Nisaa'i 3104, Ahmed 4/417, 392, Adraamee 2305], «إن أرواح الشهداء عند الله في حواصل طيور خضر تسرح في أنهار الجنة حيث شاءت» **"The souls of the martyrs are in green birds roaming free in paradise wherever they please."** [Muslim 3500, Tirmidhi 2937, Ibn Maajah 3791, Adraamee 2303, Ahmed 6/386]

b. Being afflicted with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, and he is tested by all types, any of which afflicts the believer: fear and insecurity, poverty and hunger, loss of wealth is by losses in it, loss in lives is by disease and death and the loss of fruits is by scourge. Allah (swt) mentions ﴿بِشَيْءٍ﴾ **'something'** i.e. whatever afflicted, whether small or large, it is a test and patience with it is a great reward, "RasulAllah (saaw) said Inna lilahi wa inna ilayahi raajioon when a lamp became extinguished and was told of that, saying (saaw): **"Everything that hurts the believer is a trial and has reward for him."** [Dar ul-Manthur 2/380, Tafseer Al-Baydawwi 1/125]. As agreed by Bukhari and Muslim, RasulAllah (saaw) said, «ما من مسلم يشاك شوكةً فما فوقها إلا رفعه الله بها درجةً وحط عنه بها» **"There is no Muslim who has been pricked by a thorn or anything more than that, but that Allah (swt) raises his degree by that and through it expiates sins."**

c. Allah (swt) clarified that when a believer endures the trials and responds by saying ﴿إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾ **"Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return"** he gets a great reward. ﴿صَلَوَاتٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةً وَأَوْلِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ﴾ **"blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided."** And yes, this is of the great reward: The pleasure of Allah (swt), His Mercy and Guidance, and not only this, but there is much good in the world for them as well.

Muslim narrated from Umm Salamah (ra), "She said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saaw) say: «ما من عبد تصيبه مصيبة فيقول إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون اللهم أجرني في مصيبي واخلف لي خيرا منها، إلا أجره الله تعالى في مصيبيته وأخلف له خيرا منها» **"When a person suffers from a calamity and utters: 'We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return. O Allah! Compensate me in my affliction, recompense my loss and give me something better in exchange for it (Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un. Allahumma ujurni fi musibati, wakhlu li khairan minha)."** Then Allah surely compensates him with reward and a better substitute.' She said: **When Abu Salamah died I said as the Messenger of Allah (saaw) ordered and Allah (swt) gave me a better substitute than him, RasulAllah (saaw)."** [Bukhari 5324, Muslim 1525, Tirmidhi 3433, Abu Dawood 2712].

3. Allah (swt) orders us to seek patience and Salah (prayer) in carrying Islam and inviting to it as well as steadfastness on the truth. It has been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (saaw) highlighting the importance of Salah, that it is the apple of the eye of the believer, through it he presents himself before Allah (swt) and his heart is filled with tranquility through its performance, «حبيب إلي من دنياكم ثلاث: الطيب والنساء، وجعلت قرّة عيني في الصلاة» **"Three matters of your world have been made dear to me: Perfume and women but my comfort has been provided in prayer." [an-Nisai 3878, Ahmed 3/128, 285]**

Salah gives a believer strength in the power to resist oppression and its perpetrators, and sincere determination to hold on to the Truth, rendering him a true believer without softening his defiance or weakening his resolve. Moreover, the fact that Allah (swt) mentioned patience before Salah highlights the importance of patience. For Salah is only a relationship between a person and his Lord, whereas patience is a relationship between a person and his Lord, a person with himself and a person with the people is at stake. So patience is a yardstick and a scale when the hardships, afflictions and calamities occur.

Benefits of patience (sabr):

Here we need to stop, pause and think about the subject of patience in order to remove the confusion some Muslims have about its reality and meaning.

Some people think they should cocoon themselves and isolate themselves from the people and leave the evil (munkar), and leave those who commit it and watch our sanctities being violated, the Hudud of Allah (penal code) suspended and Jihad abolished. They do not take a stand on these things. They stay away from them and abandon the duty of forbidding the evil and this is what some people think is patience.

Yet others think patience means to keep away from harm and avoid the risk of being exposed to it in case the enemies of Allah pursue them. They do not dare to speak the truth or undertake the actions that are pleasing to Allah. Instead they remain silent, crouching in a corner somewhere and saying to themselves that they are patient.

This is not the patience for which Allah (swt) has prepared His Gardens of Bliss for the patient, ﴿إِنَّمَا يُؤَفِّي الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾, **“Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account.”** [Az-Zumar 39: 10] This is nothing but weakness from which the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to seek refuge from in his Du'a العجز والكسل والجبن «أعوذ بالله من العجز والكسل والجبن والهم والحزن وغلبة الدين وقهر الرجال» **“O Allah, I seek refuge with You from incapacity, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, worry, sadness, overwhelming debt, and being overpowering by (other) men.”** [Bukhari 5894, Muslim 4908]

Patience means you speak and act upon the Truth and bear the hardship that results in the path of Allah without deviation, weakness or giving in.

Indeed, patience is that which results from the Taqwa (fear of Allah) as in the following Ayah, ﴿إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾, **“Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”** [Yusuf 11:90]

This indeed is the patience that Allah (swt) connected with those Mujahideen who fight in the way of Allah (swt), ﴿وَكَايَ مِنْ نَبِيِّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رَبِّيُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا﴾, **“And how many a prophet [fought and] with him fought many religious scholars. But they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or submit. And Allah loves the steadfast.”** [Surah Aali Imran 3:146].

It is the patience over affliction and the divine decree (*qadr*), which leads one to be steadfast and firm and not be shaken. It leads a person to hold onto the Qur'an and not neglect it under the pretext of patience. It brings the servant closer to his Lord and does not distance him from Him ﴿فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾, **“And he called out within the darknesses, “There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”** [Surah al-Anbiyyah 87].

It is the kind of patience, which strengthens the resolve and brings the path to Jannah closer. It is the patience of Bilal, Khabbab and the family of Yaasir: «صبرا آل ياسر إن موعدكم الجنة» **“Patience O family of Yasir, your rendezvous is Jannah.”** [Al-Mustadrak 3/383, Al-Mutaalib al-Aaliyah 4.34, Al-Huliyah 1/140]

It is the patience of Khubayb and Zayd: “By Allah I would not want to be safe and secure among my family while even a thorn hurts Muhammad.” [Seerah by Ibn Hisham 3/181]

It is the patience of those who restrain the hand of the tyrant without fearing any for the sake of Allah: «كلا والله لتأخذن على يد الظالم ولتأطرنه على الحق أطرا ولتقصرنه على الحق قصرا أو ليضربن الله قلوب بعضكم ببعض وليلعنكم كما لعن بني إسرائيل» **“Nay, by Allah, you must seize hold of the hand of the oppressor and conform him to act justly and stick to the truth, or, Allah will involve the hearts of some of you with the hearts of others and will curse you as He had cursed the Children of Israel.”** [Tirmidhi 2974, Abu Dawud 3774, Ibn Maajah 3996]

It is the patience of the distinguished companions of the Messenger of Allah (saw), the honest and trustworthy... The patience of the people of the Saheefah and those boycotted in the Shi'b (of 'Abd al-Muttalib), the migrants to Abyssinia (Habasha) and those punished for other than reason than saying our Lord is Allah.'

It is the patience of the Muhajireen and Ansaar in their struggle against the polytheists, Persians and the Romans... It is the patience of those taken prisoners from the troops of 'Abdullah b. Abu Huzaafah... It is the patience of the believing and honest Mujahideen.

It is the patience of the one who enjoins the good and forbids the evil and does not become weak due to the hardships in the path of Allah.

It is the patience, which says you should be a soldier in the Muslim army advancing to fight the enemy of Allah.

It is the patience where he confirms the saying of Allah (swt), ﴿لَتُبْلَوْنَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾ **“You shall certainly be tried and tested in your wealth and properties and in your personal selves, and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you from those who received the Scripture before you (Jews and Christians) and from those who ascribe partners to Allah, but if you persevere patiently, and become Al-Muttaqun (the pious) then verily, that will be a determining factor in all affairs, and that is from the great matters.”** [Surah Aali 'Imraan 3:186]... And His saying: ﴿وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَنَبْلُوَ أَخْبَارَكُمْ﴾ **“And surely, We shall try you till We test those who strive hard (for the Cause of Allah) and the patient ones, and We shall test your facts (i.e. the one who is a liar, and the one who is truthful).”** [Surah Muhammad 47: 31]... And it is His saying, ﴿الْخُوفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾ **“And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.). Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: “Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return. They are those on whom are the Salawat (i.e. blessings, etc.) (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones.”** [Surah Al-Baqarah 2:155-157]