

4. Perseverance

Allah, the Wise, has said:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَ مَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ

*(Then stand you fast (O' Our Apostle Muhammad) (on the right path) as you are commanded, (by your Lord) as also he who has turned (to Allah) with you.)*¹⁴⁰

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said:

مَنْ ابْتُلِيَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِبَلَاءٍ فَصَبَرَ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ أَلْفِ شَهِيدٍ

*(Every Mu'min, who happens to be afflicted with a misfortune and (then) exhibits patience in the face of it, shall be granted rewards equivalent to that of a thousand martyrs.)*²

Short Explanation

Endurance and perseverance can reduce the severity of misfortunes and calamities.

A person who possesses faith does not exhibit impatience when faced with trials, lest his faith should suffer.

It has been said: *A Mu'min is more resolute than a mountain.* This is because he is steadfast against the enemies and displays fortitude in the face of misfortune, to the extent that no grief ever finds a way into the heart of a perfect Mu'min.

Life, with its many troubles, will not present a problem for those with a firm resolve. It is only those who lack sincerity in their perseverance who tend to break down at the slightest of calamities. After all, if the

religion of God has reached us today, it is due to the perseverance of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) and the patience of Imam Ali (a.s.).

1) The Family of Yasir

In the initial period of Islam, a small and oppressed family of four embraced the religion. Each of them displayed an incredible degree of perseverance in facing up to the ruthless tortures of the polytheists. These four persons were Yasir, his wife Sumaiyyah and their two children A'mmar and A'bdullah.

Yasir stood steadfast in his religion, suffering the abuses of the enemies, till he eventually died. His wife Sumaiyyah, in spite of her advanced age, resolutely bore the tortures of the enemies till eventually Abu Jahl inflicted her final injury. Sumaiyyah therefore attained martyrdom as a result of a blow to her abdomen.

Abu Jahl, in addition to physically torturing Sumaiyyah, also tortured her psychologically at a time when she was old and frail. He used to taunt her saying:

“You have brought faith upon Muhammad not because of God, but because you are enamoured with Muhammad and captivated by his good looks.”

Yasir's son, A'bdullah, was also subjected to great tortures but he too remained steadfast. The other son, A'mmar, would be taken to the scorching desert, stripped under the hot sun and have an iron coat-of-mail placed over his half-burnt body. He would then be forced to lie on the heated sand, the particles of which were like tiny smouldering pieces of iron from the blacksmith's furnace. As a result, the chains of the coat-of-mail would penetrate into A'mmar's body and he would be told, “Reject Muhammad (s.a.w.) and worship Lat and U'zza,” but A'mmar never succumbed to their torture.

The burning metal left such traces imprinted upon his body that when the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) saw him, A'mmar appeared to resemble someone who was afflicted with leprosy. The disease-like marks upon the face, arms and body of A'mmar gave him the appearance of a leper.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) used to say to this family:

“O' Family of Yasir! Be patient and remain steadfast, for undoubtedly Paradise is your abode.”³

2) You are not Inferior to an Ant

Amir Taimur Gurgaan, was someone who was so firm and unfaltering in every predicament, that he did not cower from any misfortune. When the reason for this was sought from him, he said:

“Once, having fled from my enemies and seeking refuge in the ruins of a worn down and dilapidated building, I was reflecting over my future when my eyes suddenly fell upon a small and weak ant, carrying

a grain bigger than itself, endeavouring to climb to the top of a wall.

“Looking carefully and counting accurately, I found that the grain had dropped from its clutches sixty seven times before the ant finally managed to make it to the top of the wall with it. The spectacle of this effort on the part of the ant infused within me strength of such great magnitude that I am never able to forget it.

“I said to myself: *O’ Taimur! You are by no means inferior to an ant. Arise and get back to work.* I got up and gathered my resolve till I eventually came to acquire the courage that I now possess.”⁴

3) Hadhrat Nuh (a.s.)

Hadhrat Nuh (a.s.) lived a very long and difficult life which resulted from his spending a lot of time among stout idol worshippers, attempting to rid them of their false beliefs. However, in spite of this, he persevered and exhibited steadfastness, withstanding their tortures and troubles.

At times, the people would beat him up to such an extent that for three whole days he would be in a state of unconsciousness while blood continued to ooze out of his ears. They would pick him up and throw him in a house but upon regaining consciousness, he would pray:

“O’ Lord! Guide my people for they comprehend not!”

For approximately nine hundred and fifty years, he invited people towards God, but the people only increased in their rebellion and obstinacy. They would bring their children towards Nuh (a.s.), point him out to them and say:

“O’ Children! If you happen to remain alive after us, beware that you do not follow this insane person!”

Then, they would say to him, “O’ Nuh! If you do not stop your speeches, you shall be stoned to death. These people who follow you, are base and ignoble ones, who have listened to your talks and accepted your invitation without the slightest of reflection and deliberation.”

When Nuh (a.s.) spoke to them, they would insert their fingers into their ears and pull their clothes over their heads so that they would neither hear his words nor see his face. The situation reached such an unbearable point that Nuh (a.s.) saw no alternative but to seek God’s help and so he supplicated:

*“O’ Allah! I am overpowered. Assist me and grant me relief from them.”*⁵

4) Sakkaki

Siraj al-Deen Sakkaki was an Islamic scholar and a native of *Kharazm*.

Sakkaki was a blacksmith by profession. Once, having constructed a tiny and delicate iron chest with

great effort and trouble, he decided to present it to the king of the time. The king and his ministers appreciated the delicate piece of work but while Sakkaki stood by awaiting his reward, a scholar entered the courtroom, whereupon everybody honoured him and sat before him in veneration and respect. Sakkaki was very impressed and asked who he was. He was informed that he was one of the scholars of that period.

Sakkaki lamented the nature of his own profession and decided to seek knowledge instead. He was thirty years of age when he approached a school and expressed his desire to gain knowledge. The teacher of the school said to him:

“At your age, I doubt if you can make any progress. Go away and do not waste your time unnecessarily.”

But after a great deal of insistence, Sakkaki procured the permission to engage himself in seeking knowledge. His memory was very weak. Once, his teacher asked him to memorize the following religious ruling: *The skin of a dog becomes pure by means of tanning*; but the next day, when he had to recite it before his teacher, he said:

“The dog said: The skin of the teacher becomes pure by means of tanning.”

Hearing this, the students as well as the teacher burst out laughing and ridiculed him.

Ten years of effort did not yield any result for Sakkaki, who became sad and despondent. He turned towards the mountains but as he wandered, he reached a place where drops of water were falling from a height onto a large slab of stone. The persistent falling of water had carved a hole in the stone.

Sakkaki studied the stone for some time and then said to himself:

“Surely your heart is not as hard as this rock. If you persevere, you shall finally succeed.” Having resolved on this, he returned to his school and from the age of 40, began his studies with even greater diligence, vigour and patience. Sakkaki finally reached a stage whereby, in the field of Arabic grammar and literature, the scholars of his period looked upon him with wonder and awe.

He wrote the book *Miftaah al-U'loom*, which comprises twelve sciences of Arabic literature and is regarded as one of the greatest and most distinguished works on the subject.⁶

1. Holy Qur'an, ch. Hud (11), vs. 112.

2. *Jaame' al-Sa'adaat*, vol. 3, pg. 404.

3. *Hikaayat-ha-e-Shanidani*, vol. 5, pg. 25; *Tafsir al-Manaar*, vol. 2, pg. 367.

4. *Namunah-e-Ma'arif*, vol. 1, pg. 174; *Akhlaaq-e-Ijtima'ee*, pg. 41.

5. *Taareekh-e-Anbiya*, pg. 48-52.

6. *Dastaan-ha-e-Maa*, vol. 3, pg. 45.

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