

Benefits of Tests & Trials

PodSeries - Vol I



Achieve Noble Character

Benefits of Tests & Trials

PodSeries, Volume 1

ShaykhPod Books

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BENEFITS OF TESTS & TRIALS

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All praises are for Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds, who has given us the inspiration, opportunity and strength to complete this volume. Blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad whose path has been chosen by Allah, the Exalted, for the salvation of mankind.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the entire ShaykhPod family, especially our little star, Yusuf, whose continued support and advice has inspired the development of ShaykhPod Books.

We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

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 treatise discusses some of the benefits and wisdoms of the tests and trials people encounter during their lives in order to adopt an important aspect of Noble Character namely, patience.

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 Judgement Day will be Noble Character. It is one of 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.

Benefits of Tests & Trials

The Holy Quran has made it clear that muslims have been guaranteed to face difficulties and tests throughout their lives. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 155:

“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.”

Therefore, it is important to understand some of their benefits and wisdoms so that one can increase their patience and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during them.

The first benefit is that through tests and difficulties a muslim better understands the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. This can occur when a muslim faces a difficulty they cannot remedy with the resources they possess, such as private healthcare. This realisation inspires one to live in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience, throughout their life full well knowing no wealth or social influence will protect them from the decree of Allah, the Exalted. So a test or difficulty which drives a muslim in this direction may well be the cause of their obedience and therefore, a cause of their salvation on the Final Day.

The next wisdom and benefit of tests is that they can result in a muslim becoming humble to Allah, the Exalted. When a person always experiences times of ease it is easy for them to become arrogant and proud of their life and what they possess. It is important to note that only an atom's worth of pride is needed to take one to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Tests and difficulties can break this pride and remind muslims that they should behave as the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, it is important for muslims who face difficulties to ensure

they remove any signs of pride from themselves by acknowledging that every blessing they possess has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. In fact, being proud of something which was created and innately belongs to someone else is simply foolish.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they encourage muslims to adopt true sincerity in their actions meaning, to only perform righteous deeds in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A muslim experiencing difficulties understands that the only One who can aid them in their moment of need is Allah, the Exalted, and He will only respond to them when they possess sincerity. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 17:

“And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him. And if He touches you with good - then He is over all things competent.”

In fact, even many non-muslims supplicate sincerely to Allah, the Exalted, when they face dire circumstances. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 65:

“And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allah, sincere to Him in religion [i.e., faith and hope]. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him.”

A muslim is truly blessed if they can maintain this sincerity in all their actions as it is the foundation of all good. It is vital to remember that the one who acts in order to please others will be told to gain their reward from those who they acted for on the Day of Judgment, which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. So a test and difficulty can prevent this from occurring to a muslim as it encourages them towards sincerity.

The next benefit of tests and difficulties is that they cause a muslim to return to Allah, the Exalted, through sincere repentance knowing He alone can forgive them and thus remove their difficulty. It is commonly known that Allah, the Exalted, forgives the one who turns to Him in sincere repentance.

The conditions for sincere repentance include: being remorseful, asking for forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who was wronged, promising not to return to the sin and making up for any rights which were violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

A test or difficulty which drives one to sincere repentance is in fact a great blessing as it may well be the cause of their salvation on Judgement Day. Conversely, the one who fails to understand this particular wisdom behind the test or difficulty they are facing will not sincerely repent. This behaviour will only take them closer to Hell. For example, the one who fails to seek forgiveness from those they have wronged will face justice on Judgement Day. Their victims will be given their good deeds and if necessary they will be given the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is to inspire muslims to perform an important act of worship namely, supplication to Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3371.

Supplication is an extreme sign of one's humility and their acknowledgment of the Lordship of Allah, the Exalted. The one who is guided to this righteous deed has been guided to obtaining blessings in both this world and the next. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6936, guarantees that each

supplication, which is performed correctly, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted, in some form or fashion. Unfortunately, when one only experiences times of ease they often neglect this righteous deed. So a possible wisdom of a test or difficulty is to drive a muslim towards this great act.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they provide a muslim an opportunity to adopt forbearance. This is a much loved characteristic which is declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2011. Forbearance includes remaining sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and difficulty by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Forbearance prevents one from worshipping Allah, the Exalted, on the edge whereby they are satisfied with Him in times of ease but turn away from His obedience in times of difficulty. Preventing this attitude is extremely important as this person will ultimately lose out in both worlds. 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. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter...”

Without tests and trials a muslim may fail to adopt and demonstrate true forbearance and would therefore be deprived of obtaining much reward through it.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties in cases where one has been wronged by another is to gain reward and the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, by forgiving their oppressor. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“...and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

All muslims desire the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, but in some cases they do not perform sincere repentance to erase their major sins or they fail to perform enough righteous deeds in order to erase their minor sins. In these cases a test or difficulty caused by another provides a muslim the perfect opportunity to obtain the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, by forgiving their oppressor for His sake. In the absence of this difficulty a muslim may face Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day without obtaining His forgiveness, which is a disastrous outcome.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is for a muslim to obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 146:

“...And Allah loves the steadfast.”

In addition, the love of Allah, the Exalted, can be obtained when a muslim sincerely fulfils their obligatory duties and performs voluntarily righteous deeds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. But the muslim who fails to act on this advice can still obtain the love of Allah, the Exalted, by demonstrating patience during a difficulty or test. According to the Hadith quoted earlier when Allah, the Exalted, loves a muslim He empowers every organ of their body to only obey Him. This muslim very rarely commits sins. In addition, Allah, the Exalted, fulfils their supplications and grants them refuge. The one who obtains this will surely succeed through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. And the origin of this success is the test and difficulty a muslim faces with patience for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This is an aspect of the uncountable reward granted to the patient which is mentioned in chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they can lead to great happiness for those who possess true knowledge. The knowledgeable are aware of the great blessings which result from being patient during difficulties. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023, that Allah, the Exalted, tests each person according to the strength of their faith. So an intelligent muslim knows they are being tested because they possess strong faith and this is an excellent indication of one's salvation in both worlds. Another example is a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. On Judgment Day when the people who did not face great tests in the world observe the reward given to those who patiently endured tests they will wish they faced similar difficulties during their lives on Earth, such as having their skins cut off with scissors. When a muslim facing difficulties ponders over these teachings it can lead to much happiness as they hope to receive a great reward in both worlds from Allah, the Exalted. This is like the one who happily swallows a bitter medicine in anticipation of the joy which good health brings. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they can lead to true gratitude of Allah, the Exalted. This is when one internally acknowledges that each blessing they possess has been granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. They verbally show gratitude by praising Allah, the Exalted, for these blessings. And most importantly they demonstrate true gratitude by using each blessing according to teachings of Islam. This in turn leads to an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“...’If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

When a person temporarily and even permanently loses a blessing, such as their good health, they are more likely to appreciate its value and therefore use the blessing and other blessings correctly, which is true gratitude. This appreciation of blessings, in some cases, does not occur without a person facing difficulties and tests first.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they are a means to erasing one's sins. In cases where one either fails to sincerely repent or fails to perform enough righteous deeds to erase their minor sins, tests and difficulties are a means of purification. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5640, which advises that every calamity or difficulty a muslim faces with patience leads to their sins being erased even if the difficulty is as small as being pricked by a thorn. In addition, the bitter truth is that in the case where one must face the consequences of their sins they would rather face them in this world than in the next. Difficulties in this world are insignificant compared to the hardships of the hereafter. Therefore, a muslim should firstly avoid all types of sins and if they occur they should sincerely repent from them. If they face difficulties they should remain patient and accept that it might be a means of purification of their sins which is far better than being purified from sins through the fire of Hell in the next world.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they can inspire muslims to empathise for others who are also facing difficulties. This can encourage them to help others according to their means. It is easier to appreciate someone else's difficulties when one is in the same boat as them meaning, when they are also facing difficulties. It is easily understood that the one who has never felt real hunger is less likely to help those suffering from hunger. So in this respect, a test and difficulty can lead one to helping others, which is a great deed they could have missed out on if they did not face difficulties themselves.

This is connected to the next wisdom behind difficulties and tests namely, an opportunity for the muslims who are not facing difficulties to help those who are. If the needy did not exist then how could muslims gain countless rewards by helping them? Therefore, muslims should always strive to help others in difficulties so that they gain the support of Allah, the Exalted, in all their affairs and difficulties. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they are a means for a muslim to receive blessings. On many occasions in a person's life they might have believed something was bad only to change their mind later on. And many times they may have believed something was good yet it became a burden for them. So the muslim who faces tests and difficulties should understand that there are benefits and blessings within them which they may not immediately observe and realise. For example, the death of a child is an extreme difficulty and test. But through patience a parent may be forgiven and permitted into Paradise with their child on Judgement Day. This has been indicated in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1249. In this case the death of a child can become a means for the parents to obtain Paradise. 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.”

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that they are a sign of the love of Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4031. But it is important to note that the proof of one's love for Allah, the Exalted, is their patience and even contentment with the test. This muslim will earn the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds which has been indicated at the end of this Hadith.

The next wisdom behind tests and difficulties is that the more one is tested and faces difficulties the closer they are to the tradition of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, as they were tested the most. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4023. The closer one is to the traditions of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon him, the closer they are to right guidance and the proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Undoubtedly, this is a great blessing which one should rejoice in. This is one of the reasons why the righteous predecessors took great pleasure in trials and difficulties.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they can increase their patience during times of difficulties and tests in order to earn an uncountable reward in both this world and the next. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

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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