

Overcoming Difficulties



**Adopting Positive Characteristics
Leads to Peace of Mind**

Overcoming Difficulties

ShaykhPod Books

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Acknowledgements

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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 short book discusses some aspects of Overcoming Difficulties. This discussion is based on Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, Verses 153-157 of the Holy Quran:

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient. 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. 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. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.”

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Adopt Positive Characteristics. Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind and Body.

Overcoming Difficulties

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 153-157

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ

الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.

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.

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.

Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

*Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy.
And it is those who are the [rightly] guided."*

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient. 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. 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. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.”

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience...”

Patience is when one avoids complaining about their difficulty through their actions or speech and maintains their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their ordeal. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of becoming patient is learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The more one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge, the more they will understand that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them, as the difficulties they face have wisdoms

behind them which are hidden from them. For example, there are many such events discussed within Islamic teachings, such as the story of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, who was separated from his parents at a young age by his brothers, abandoned in a dark and deep well, sold as a child slave and wrongfully thrown into prison. But each of these events allowed him to learn certain lessons which prepared him for saving the population of Egypt from a huge famine. If he did not endure the difficulties he faced he would not have been in a position to save millions of lives. 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.”

Believing in these wisdoms and therefore, maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is therefore a part of one's faith. It is easy to believe in Allah, the Exalted, and praise Him during times of ease but the real test is when one faces difficulties and still obeys and praises Him.

Studying Islamic teachings also helps one to compare their difficulties to other people, who were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, and endured greater difficulties. This comparison helps one to belittle their own difficulty which in turn aids them in remaining patient. This can also be achieved when one observes other people within their time period who are facing greater difficulties than them.

Islamic teachings also allows one to understand the importance of destiny and how every event they will face in their life, whether times of

ease or difficulties, is inevitable. Complaining about something inevitable and inescapable will not result in any good. A person will only lose out on the countless reward they could obtain by remaining patient on the inescapable difficulty they are destined to face. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

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

A person therefore has a choice between facing an inescapable event with patience and gain an uncountable reward or facing an inescapable event with impatience and lose the reward they should have obtained. Either way they will face the inescapable event, so it makes sense to gain benefit from it in both worlds. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you...”

Studying Islamic teachings also causes one to understand that the things they desire in this world are not necessarily best for them. 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.”

Each person has many examples within their life of this truth. There are plenty of things a person desires believing it is best for them, only for those things to become a source of stress for them. And there are plenty of things a person dislikes believing it is bad for them, only for those things to become a source of goodness for them. The one who understands this will be less impatient when dealing with situations which contradict their desires, as they understand facing the situation is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them.

In addition, just like gold is purified through heat, similarly, people obtain mental strength through facing difficulties. Those who are accustomed to an easy life, often experience mental breakdowns when facing standard and even small difficulties, such as marriage problems. Through tests, Allah, the Exalted, toughens the mental state of a muslim so that they face future difficulties with ease.

As taught by Islam, patience is required in all situations, even times of ease. In times of ease, a person must adopt patience in order to prevent themselves from misusing the blessing they have been granted, such as good health or a rise in their salary.

There are many more wisdoms behind facing difficulties in this world which have been discussed within Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to study, learn and act on them so that they adopt patience in every situation so that they obtain a countless reward in both worlds. A person must remain patient through every situation, just like a wise

patient accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Patience does not mean a person becomes inactive. An aspect of patience is dealing with the situation and attempting to correct it according to the teachings of Islam. For example, a wife who is being abused by her husband should take steps to protect herself and her children, such as separating from her husband. Behaving in this manner does not contradict patience while becoming inactive has nothing to do with patience or Islam. Similarly, showing emotions, such as crying, does not contradict patience in anyway as the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, cried so much over his grief that he became blind and yet he was never criticised by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 84:

“And he turned away from them and said, “Oh, my sorrow over Joseph,” and his eyes became white from grief, for he was [of that] a suppressor.”

There are many examples when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wept over a sad situation, such as the death of his son, Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126. Showing disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, through one’s speech and actions contradicts patience, anything other than this is acceptable and part of human nature, such as crying and feel sad.

It is important to note that patience must be shown from the onset of a difficulty until one leaves this world. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302. Showing patience after some time has passed is not real patience, it is merely acceptance which naturally occurs with everyone. A muslim must maintain patience from the onset of a difficulty by controlling their speech and actions so that they do not show signs of impatience and maintain this attitude until they depart from this world, as one can easily lose the reward of patience by showing impatience down the line.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer...”

Help is sought through the prayer as it is a means of attracting the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The mercy of Allah, the Exalted, naturally displaces difficulties and strengthens a muslim so that they remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all situations.

In addition, when it is established correctly, the prayer is a constant reminder of Judgement Day. Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one's faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically

preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

*“Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day
The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”*

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

“And when it is said to them, “Bow [in prayer],” they do not bow.”

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one’s life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him during their lives on Earth, which involves obeying Him in all aspects of their lives, will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

“On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled,

humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound.”

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

“And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], “Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.””

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“...Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing...”

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Therefore, establishing the prayers aids one to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to divine mercy and mental strength to successfully deal with any problem they may face, as Allah, the Exalted, has promised a safe exit from any situation when one remains firm on His obedience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“...And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out”

In addition, as the prayers remind one of Judgement Day, the horrors and difficulties of which surpass the difficulties of this world, this reminder will therefore aid them to belittle the difficulty they are facing, as all worldly difficulties are insignificant compared to the difficulties of Judgement Day. The more one belittles the difficulties they face in this world, the more they will face them with patience.

The one who encompasses patience and establishing the prayers will be blessed with the divine proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

“...seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient.”

The one who obtains the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they face difficulties along the way.

Just like a person cannot understand all the wisdoms behind the tests and difficulties they face in this world, similarly, they cannot fathom the reward and blessings of those who dedicate their life and worldly blessings to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 154:

“And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, “They are dead.” Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.”

To achieve this great rank, one must adopt mental strength through patience and establishing the prayers, as dedicating one’s life and blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is a difficult task, as the Devil, one’s inner devil and the material world are constantly inviting a person towards misusing the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 153-154:

“...seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient. And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, “They are dead.” Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.”

Generally speaking, this indicates that the one who dedicates their life and resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is the only one who is truly alive in this world and in the next. Whereas, the one who misuses the blessings they have been granted, is dead in both worlds, even if they are biologically alive. This is because they have failed to fulfil the purpose of their creation and there is no real difference between the living and the dead in respect to the person who fails to fulfil the purpose of their creation. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me.”

This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, that the difference between the living and the dead is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, the one who remembers Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is alive, even after they die. This is obvious when one turns the pages of history. Those who behaved in this manner, such as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were remembered positively while they were alive and are remembered after their passing. Their teachings and lives are studied in a way which gives the impression they are still alive amongst the people. Whereas, the one who forgets Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted is dead, even when they are alive. This is also obvious when one observes the rich and famous, who despite having worldly things lead a depressed and sad life, a life which appears full of life while internally it is empty, like a vase. This is not living at all. And after they die, they are hardly remembered by the world in a positive way and become footnotes in history while their fans move onto the next celebrity to follow blindly. And if the

deceased ends up in Hell, then they will be left in oblivion, neither living nor dying. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 74:

“Indeed, whoever comes to his Lord as a criminal - indeed, for him is Hell; he will neither die therein nor live.”

Therefore, the person who desires to truly live in both worlds must fulfil the purpose of their creation by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 154:

“And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, “They are dead.” Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.”

Generally speaking, the start of verse 154 indicates the importance of keeping good control over one’s speech. Speech can be split into three categories. The first is evil speech which must be avoided at all costs. The second is good speech which should be spoken at the appropriate time. The final category of speech is vain speech. This type of speech is not considered a sin or a good deed but as this type leads to evil speech it is best to avoid it also. In addition, vain speech will be a source of regret for a person on Judgement Day when they observe the opportunities and time they wasted on vain speech. Therefore, a muslim must either speak what is good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds people of the purpose of this world and the test of life in this world. 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...”

The test of life is simple: Allah, the Exalted, has granted certain blessings to a person and has commanded them to use the blessings correctly so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. In order for this test to be complete and fair, a person must behave in this manner through both times of ease and difficulties. As Allah, the Exalted, has complete and sole control of the universe and the events a person faces, questioning and challenging this test of life will not aid them in this world or in the next. Instead, one must accept the way Allah, the Exalted, created life in this world and strive to pass their test in this world, just like a wise student accepts they must experience and endure school, academic assignments, homework and exams in order to achieve success in this world, even though the vast majority of students dislike studying. Similarly, the vast majority of people would not work a job in this world if they could find a way to sustain themselves without it. But as this is not possible, in most cases, the vast majority of people must work in order to sustain themselves and their dependents. These are worldly realities everyone accepts, irrespective of their faith. Similarly, a person must accept the reality of the test of life in this world, even if it does not make sense to them, as facing it is inevitable.

As mentioned earlier, those who seek mental strength through patience and establishing their prayers will be granted the company of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.”

The company of Allah, the Exalted, leads to divine mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 155:

“...but give good tidings to the patient.”

This good news reminds a muslim that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is with them and it will strengthen them so that they can journey through every situation successfully. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, even during difficult times, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was granted peace of mind when he was thrown into a great fire. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 68-69:

“They said, “Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act.” We [i.e., Allāh] said, “O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.””

It is these patient people who recognize the innate truth that every situation they face was inescapable and unavoidable, just like an arrow which strikes its intended victim. This meaning is derived from the Arabic word used in verse 156. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“Who, when disaster strikes them...”

They understand that as they cannot escape destiny it makes sense to earn reward from situations they face by adopting patience, rather than losing countless reward by showing impatience. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you...”

The one who accepts their destiny and understands that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for them, even if they fail to recognise the wisdoms behind His choices, will be guided to patience. Chapter 64 At Taghabun, verse 11:

“No disaster strikes except by permission of Allāh. And whoever believes in Allāh - He will guide his heart...”

And 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.”

It is these patient people who recognize that they, and whatever they possess in this world, were created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, therefore, He chooses when these blessings are granted and when they are recalled to Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“...say, "Indeed we belong to Allah..."”

The same way a person has no right to question or complain when an organization or a person takes back anything they have granted someone else on a loan, such as money, neither does a person have a right to complain against Allah, the Exalted, when He takes back anything they were granted in this world, as everything they have been granted, even their own life, is simply a loan granted by Allah, the Exalted. This is why a person must use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is how one repays the blessings they have been loaned. Whereas, the blessings in Paradise are a gift which a person inherits and they will therefore be free to use them as they please. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 43:

“...And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do."”

These patient people constantly remember their return to Allah, the Exalted, and being held accountable for all their actions, including the times they remained patient through difficulties. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“...and indeed to Him we will return.”

Remembering one's accountability on Judgement Day has always been an excellent tool to encourage one to maintain patience through times of difficulties, by avoiding complaining through one's speech or actions and maintaining their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. And an excellent tool to maintain gratitude through times of ease, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, remembering one's accountability on Judgement Day is an excellent way of belittling any difficulty one faces in this world, as all worldly difficulties fade into insignificance compared to the horrors and difficulties of Judgement Day. This attitude will further encourage one to maintain patience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“...and indeed to Him we will return.”

Those who gain the mental strength through patience and establishing their prayers so that they maintain their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through every situation, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will achieve right guidance through every situation they face so that they enter and exit them with peace of mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 157:

“Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who abandons patience and fails to establish their prayers will not obtain the mental strength to remain sincerely obedient

to Allah, the Exalted, through every situation. This will only cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to stress, misery and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

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