

CLASS 8

TESTS FROM ALLAH

Tests And Trials

Al-Hamdulillaah (all praise is due to Allaah), the Most High, the One who said (in the translation of the meaning): *And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient ones. Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allaah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return." They are those on whom are the Salawat (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)

It is clear that this life is filled with calamities, tests & trials and that every believer will be subjected to many of these. Sometimes these trials are within himself, sometimes with his wealth and sometimes with his loved ones. These preordained trials & calamities, from the One who is All-Wise, will touch the believer in various ways & manners; if the believer does not have the correct view regarding the matter of testing, then he may err seriously, especially since some of the calamities are painful and profound.

Many people are negligent about the wisdoms behind trials and testing; they may not understand that Allaah does not test us as a punishment, but rather as a mercy. The believer should look at the matter of ibtilaa' (testing and trials) through the textual proofs in the Qur'aan and authentic Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ so that he can stand on a firm ground regarding these matters.

Yes, life is a test and a trial; we are tested everyday in this life. Our wealth is a test; the spouse is a test; the children are tests; poverty and wealth are tests, and likewise health and illnesses are tests. We are tested in everything we possess and in that which we encounter in this life until we meet Allaah, the Most High.

Allaah said (in the translation of the meaning):

- *Everyone is going to taste death, and We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good, and to Us you will be returned.* – Surah al-Anbiyaa' (21:35)
- *Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: "We believe," and will not be tested. And We indeed tested those who were before them. And Allaah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allaah knows all that before putting them to test).* – (29:2-3)

Even the one who is healthy is tested, and also, the one who is ill is tested. The one who is healthy may not know this until he is touched by a trial, and the one who is ill will may not feel that he is in a testing situation until he is cured. No one is safe from trials because of their prestige or status; such things do not safeguard us from the tests as proven by the hasan (good) hadith in which the Prophet ﷺ said: *"The people who receive the severest trial are the Prophets, then those most like them and then those most like them."* (at-Tirmidhi and ibn Maajah)

Response of the Believer to Tests and Trials

Amongst us, there is no one who possesses the ability to reject the tests, but there are those who are tested and succeed through good faith in Allaah, patient persevering, and by anticipating Allaah's reward. Also, amongst us are those who are tested but fail because of weak faith and objection to Allaah; we seek refuge in Allaah from that.

al-Fudayl ibn 'Iyaad (rahimahullaah) said: "As long as people are in a state of good welfare, then once they are tested, they will return to their reality. The believer will go to his faith, and the hypocrite will go to his hypocrisy."

Calamities and disasters are a test, and they are a sign of Allaah's love for a person, because they are like medicine: even though it is bitter, despite its bitterness you give it to the one whom you love – and for Allaah is the highest description. In the saheeh hadeeth it says: *"The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allaah loves a people He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath."* (Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Maajah).

Calamities are good for the believer in the sense that reward is stored up for him the Hereafter thereby; how can it be otherwise when he is raised in status thereby and his bad deeds are expiated? The Prophet ﷺ said: *"When Allaah wills good for His slave, He hastens the punishment for him in this world, and when Allaah wills ill for His slave, he withholds the punishment for his sins from him until he comes with all his sins on the Day of Resurrection."* Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2396).

Al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "Do not resent the calamities that come and the disasters that occur, for perhaps in something that you dislike will be your salvation, and perhaps in something that you prefer will be your doom."

Al-Fadl ibn Sahl said: "There is a blessing in calamity that the wise man should not ignore, for it erases sins, gives one the opportunity to attain the reward for patience, dispels negligence, reminds one of blessings at the time of health, calls one to repent and encourages one to give charity.

Through calamity the believer seeks reward, and there is no way to attain it but patience, and there is no way to be patient except with resolute faith and strong will.

Remember the words of the Messenger ﷺ *"How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him."* (Narrated by Muslim, 2999).

So if calamity befalls a Muslim, he must say Inna Lillaahi wa inna ilayhi raaji'oon (Verily to Allah we belong and unto Him is our return), and say the du'aa's that have been narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

How wonderful are those moments in which a person turns to his Lord and knows that He alone is the One Who grants relief from distress. How great is the relief when it comes after hardship. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

- 155. "but give glad tidings to As Saabiroon (the patient).
- 156. Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: 'Truly, to Allaah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return.'
- 157. They are those on whom are the Salawaat (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" [al-Baqarah 2:155-157]

Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyah] (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: A calamity that makes you turn to Allaah is better for you than a blessing which makes you forget the remembrance of Allaah."

Sufyaan said: What a person dislikes may be better for him than what he likes, because what he dislikes causes him to call upon Allaah, whereas what he likes may make him heedless.

EXAMPLES OF BEAUTIFUL PATIENCE AND THEIR REWARDS

Umm Salamah when Abu Salamah Died.

Muslim (918) narrated that Umm Salamah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ say: "There is no Muslim who is stricken with a calamity and says what Allaah has enjoined (the below dua). She said: When Abu Salamah died, I said: Who among the Muslims is better than Abu Salamah, the first household to migrate to join the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? Then I said it, and Allaah compensated me with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

انا لله وانا اليه راجعون؛ اللهم اجرني في مصيبي واخلفني خيرا منها

"Inna lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Raji'un. Allahumma ajurni fi musibati wakhlu' li khayran minha."

"Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return. O Allah! Reward me for my calamity, and replace it for me that which is better." – but Allaah will compensate him with something better."

The Prophet ﷺ on His son (Ibraheem) passing away.

Anas bin Malik reported that: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered the room and we accompanied him... And Ibrahim breathed his last. The eyes of Allah's Messenger ﷺ were filled with tears. Abdur Rehman Ibne Auf said: 'you are weeping, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ'. He ﷺ replied: "Ibne Auf, This is mercy". Then he ﷺ said: "Our eyes shed tears and our hearts are filled with grief, but we do not say anything except that by which Allah is pleased. O, Ibrahim we are sorrowful due to your separation." (Agreed upon).

The Amazing Patience of Prophet Ayoub A.S.

Allah's Praises of Ayoob A.S. Allah the Almighty praised His worshipper Ayoob in His Glorious Quran: *"Truly! We found him patient. How excellent a slave! Verily, he was ever oft returning in repentance to Us!"* (38:44)

The Prophet Ayub (peace be upon him) was a prosperous man with firm faith in Allah. He possessed vast farms, enormous wealth, many cattle and valuable property but these things did not make him arrogant. His wealth provided him with a medium by means of which he sought Allah's grace.

Allah (Glory be to Him) tested him with poverty and diseases until he reached a bad state of sickness, poverty and isolation. Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him) provided great example of unbelievable situations in infinite patience and immense satisfaction of Allah's destination.

When the test went for long his wife said to him: "How long are you going to bear this torture from our Lord? Are we to remain without wealth, children or friends forever? Why don't you call upon Allah to remove this suffering?"

Ayoob A.S. sighed, and in a soft voice replied "Iblis must have whispered to you and made you dissatisfied. Tell me how long did I enjoy good health and riches?" She replied: "eighty years."

Then Ayoob replied: "How long am I suffering like this?" She said: "seven years." Ayoob then told her: "In that case I am ashamed to call on my Lord to remove the hardship, for I have not suffered longer than the years of good health and plenty. It seems your faith has weakened and you are dissatisfied with the fate of Allah."

Ayoob A.S. was repentant, remembering Allah with thankfulness, patience, and steadfastness. This was the cause of his rescue and the secret of Allah's praising him.

Lessons from the Stories

- Allah will test a man with the things that are dearest to him. His wealth, health and children. We must remember that Allah has given us all of that and to him it belongs. He can take it away whenever he wants.
- Do not despair and lose hope in Allah. Indeed everything he takes away from us will bring us closer to Jannah if we accept his decree and be patient.
- Our sincerity and worship of Allah should not be dependent upon His blessings on us.

Rewards Associated with Tests and Trials

Sins are Removed

The sins will be removed as the leaves of a tree fall down, as the Prophet ﷺ said: *"No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn but that Allaah expiates some of his sins for that."* (al-Bukhaari)

Rewarded for patience

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiya Allaahu 'anhu) narrated: *"I visited the Prophet ﷺ during his ailments, and he was suffering from a high fever. I said, 'You have a high fever. Is it because you will have a double reward for it?' He said, 'Yes, for no Muslim is afflicted with any harm but that Allaah will remove his sins as the leaves of a tree fall down.'"* (al-Bukhaari).

The reward is affirmed regarding every kind of harm or hurt, tangible or intangible, if the believer is patiently persevering and anticipates the reward. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Allaah said, 'If I deprive my slave of his two beloved things (i.e. his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them.'"* (al-Bukhaari)

Raise one to a higher degree in Paradise

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Allaah says to His angels when they take the soul of a person's child, 'You took the fruit of his heart.' They (the angels) say, 'Yes.' So Allaah says, 'What did My slave say (upon that)?' They say, 'He praised you and made istirjaa' (meaning he said, Innaa lillaahi wa inna ilayhi raaji'oon' – verily to Allaah we belong and to Him we shall return). So Allaah says, 'Build for My slave a house in Paradise and name it the house of praise.'"* (Imaam Ahmad).

Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ said in the authentic hadith: *"No Muslim is hurt by a thorn or something greater than a thorn except that Allaah elevates him in rank or effaces his sins because of that."* (Muslim)

The believer's degree will be raised until he reaches his final degree in Paradise; this will be due to his patience and more importantly because of the favor of Allaah. Allaah, the Most High, said (in the translation of the meaning): *"Only those who are patient shall receive their rewards in full, without reckoning."* – Surah az-Zumar (39:10)

It is a sign of Love of Allah

Calamities, trials, and tests are signs of Allaah's love for the believer. Indeed, they are like a cure; although it may be bitter, we accept them since they are from the One whom we love, and to Allaah belongs the best example. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"The greatest reward comes with the greatest trial. When Allaah loves a people, He tests them. Whoever accepts that wins His pleasure, but whoever is discontent with that earns His wrath."* [at-Tirmidhi (2396) and ibn Maajah (4031)]

Saved from the Punishment in the Hereafter

Certainly, the affliction by test and trials is better to the believer than punishment in the Hereafter, and in that, there is an elevation of his rank and expiation for his sins. Therefore, it is better for him. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"When Allaah wills good for His slave, He hastens the punishment for him in this world, and when Allaah wills ill for His slave, he withholds the punishment for his sins from him until he comes with all his sins on the Day of Resurrection."* (at-Tirmidhi 2396)

Lessons of the Tests and Trials

1. Beneficial to one's Tawheed The tests and trials are beneficial to the believer's tawheed, imaan (Faith), and tawakkul (reliance upon Allaah). They force mankind to examine the reality that they are in fact a weak creation who has no power or strength, except in their Lord, Allaah. As such, we should resort to Him and depend upon Him, at which point arrogance, false pride, puffing, and negligence will be removed.
2. The tests unravel the reality of this life. They show that this life is a temporal stay for amusement, and the perfect life is the one after that
3. We are reminded of Allah's favour upon us and how this is only a transitional existence.
4. Puts a Check on our behaviour as remind us that we should not be in such a state of joy that we feel arrogant. Likewise, we should not be in such a state of sadness and grief that one feels despair.
5. Gives one a chance to Repent of his shortcomings and defects so that he can repent from them and hence given a chance for repentance before the greater torment may occur.
6. Learns Patience. We cannot stand on the truth and obedience, except with patience, and we cannot stay away from falsehood, except with patient perseverance.

I ask Allaah to make us from those who when afflicted with a calamity, truly remember and manifest the saying of Allaah, *"Innaa lillaahi wa inna ilayhi raaji'oon,"* asking Him to help us with the calamities, testing, and trials, to persevere patiently, to overcome, to ask Him for reward, to anticipate the reward from Him, and to compensate us with that which is better.

All Praise is due to Allaah, and may the salaah and salaam be on Prophet Muhammad, his household, the noble companions and those who follow them until the Day of Resurrection.