

## Class 1

## ‘Sabr - Virtues &amp; Categories’

## Definition

Sabr is an Arabic word which comes from a root meaning to detain, refrain and stop. In the spiritual sense, patience means to stop ourselves from despairing and panicking, to stop our tongues from complaining, and to stop our hands from striking our faces and tearing our clothes at times of grief and stress.

Some scholars have defined patience as a good human characteristic or a positive psychological attitude, by virtue of which we refrain from doing that which is not good. Human beings cannot live a proper, healthy life without patience. Some quotes by scholars:

- "the one who has patience is the one who trained himself to handle difficulties."
- "Patience means to keep close to Allah and to accept calmly the trials He sends, without complaining or feeling sad."
- "Patience means to adhere to the rules of the Qur'an and Sunnah."
- "Patience means to refrain from complaining."
- "To have patience means that one's common sense and religious motives are stronger than one's whims and desires."

## As-Sabr

Allah says,

- *And seek help in patience and As-Salah (the prayer) and truly, it is extremely heavy and hard except for Al-Khashi'in (i.e., the true believers in Allah) (2:45)*
- *you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salāt (the prayer). Truly! Allah is with As-Sābirīn (the patient ones, etc.). [Surah al-Baqarah 2:153]*

After Allah commanded that He be appreciated, He ordained patience and prayer. It is a fact that the servant is either enjoying a bounty that he should be thankful for, or suffering a calamity that he should meet with patience. A Hadith states:

*“Amazing is the believer, for whatever Allah decrees for him, it is better for him! If he is tested with a bounty, he is grateful for it and this is better for him; and if he is afflicted with a hardship, he is patient with it and this is better for him”. (Sahih Muslim)*

Patience (*sabr*) is a comprehensive virtue in Islam that encompasses perseverance, endurance, forbearance, diligence, and restraint. It is a characteristic of enlightenment that develops in the heart of a Muslim.

Allah has made patience like a horse that never gets tired, an army that can never be defeated and a strong fortress that can never be breached. Patience and victory are twin brothers, for victory comes with patience, relief comes with distress and ease comes with hardship. Patience is of more help to the one who has it than men, as it helps without any need for equipment or numbers and its relationship to victory is like that of the head to the body.

If the slave of Allah considers the entire religion, he will see that it returns in its entirety to patience and gratitude, this is because there are three types of patience.

### Three Types of Patience

1. Patience in carrying out acts of Ibaadah or acts of obedience to Allah
2. Patience from refraining from prohibitions
3. Patience with what one is afflicted with

*We will study about each one in the upcoming classes InShaAllah.*

### Opposing Forces

Psychologically speaking, every person has two forces at work within him or her. One is the "driving force", which pushes him towards some actions, and the other is the "restraining force", which holds him back from others. Patience essentially harnesses the driving force to push us towards good things, and the restraining force to hold us back from actions that may be harmful to ourselves or others.

Some people have strong patience when it comes to doing what is good for them, but their patience is weak with regard to restraint from harmful actions, so we may find that a person has enough patience to perform acts of worship (Salah, Sawm, Hajj) but has no patience in controlling himself and refraining from following his whims and desires, and in this way he may commit harmful deeds. Conversely, some people may have strong patience in abstaining

from forbidden deeds, but their patience in obeying commandments and performing 'ibddah is too weak. Some people have no patience in either case! And, needless to say, the best people are those who possess both types of patience.

So, a man may have plenty of patience when it comes to standing all night in prayer, and enduring whatever conditions of heat or cold may be prevalent, but have no patience at all when it comes to lowering his gaze and refraining from looking at women. Another may have no problem controlling his gaze, but he lacks the patience which would make him enjoy the good and forbid the evil, and he is so weak and helpless that he cannot strive against the kuffdr and mushrikun. Most people will be lacking in patience in any one case, and a few lack it in all cases.

## VIRTUES OF PATIENCE

### Patience in the Qur'an

#### 1. Instruction. Patience in enjoined upon believers

- *"And be patient for your patience is but by Allah..."* (an-Nahl 16:127).
- *"Now await in patience the command of your Lord..."* (at-tur 54:48).

#### 2. That which is opposite to patience is forbidden

- *"...and be in no haste about the (unbelievers)..."* (al-Ahqaf 46:35).
- *"So lose not heart nor fall in despair..."* (Al Tmran 3:139).
- *"By (the Token of) Time (through the Ages), verily Man is in loss, except such as have Faith, and do right actions, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of the Truth, and of Patience and Constancy"* (al-'Asr 103:1-3)

#### 3. Success and prosperity

*"O you who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that you may prosper"* (Al Tmran 3:200).

4. The rewards of those who exercise patience will be doubled

- *"Twice will they be given their reward, for that they have persevered..."* (al-Qasas 28:54).
- *"...Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!"* (az-Zumar 39:10).

5. Patience and iman are prerequisites for leadership in religion

*"And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our commands, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have faith in Our Signs"* (as-Sajdah 32:24).

6. Allah is with the patient

*"...and be patient and persevering: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere"* (al-Anfal 8:46).

7. Allah will reward those who have patience with a threefold reward: blessings, mercy and guidance

*"...but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere - who say, when afflicted with calamity: 'To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return' - they are those on whom (descend) blessings from their Lord, and Mercy and they are the ones that receive guidance"* (al-Baqarah 2:155-7).

8. Patience is a means of seeking Allah's help

*"...seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer..."* (al-Baqarah 2:45). So whoever has no patience has no help.

9. The angels will salute the people of patience in Jannah

"...and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation of): 'Peace unto you for that you persevered in patience! Now how excellent is the final Home!' " (ar-Ra'd 13:24).

#### 10. Forgiveness and Great reward

"Not so those who show patience and constancy, and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness (of wrong actions) and a great reward!" (Hud 11:11).

#### 11. Allah's support and victory

"...The fair promise of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel, because they had patience and constancy..." (al-A'raf 7:137).

#### 12. His love

"...And Allah loves those who are firm and steadfast (as-sdbirin)" (Al 'Imran 3:146).

#### 13. Many blessings

- "But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said: 'Alas for you! The reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness: but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good)' " (al-Qasas 28:80).
- "And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint - none but persons of the greatest good fortune" (Fussilat 41:35).

#### 14. Will benefit from the Signs of Allah

- "Do you not see that the ships sail through the Ocean by the grace of Allah? - that He may show you of His Signs? Verily in this are Signs for all who constantly persevere and give thanks" (Luqman 31:31).
- "And among His Signs are the ships, smooth-running through the ocean, (tall) as mountains. If it be His Will, He can still the Wind: then they would become motionless

*on the back of the (ocean). Verily in this are Signs for everyone who patiently perseveres and is grateful" (ash-Shura 42:32-33).*

## 15. Salvation

*"Then will he be of those who believe and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion. Such are the companions of the right had" (al-Balad 90:18).*

Allah has made patience the means for attaining His love, His companionship, His help and support, and His good rewards. This is sufficient honour and blessings.

### Hadeeths about Patience

The Prophet ﷺ said,

- *"As-Sabr (the patience) is illumination"* (Sahih Muslim)
- *"...whoever is patient Allah will bestow patience upon him, and no one is ever given anything better and more generous than patience."* (Bukhari & Muslim)
- *"No affliction befalls a Muslim but Allah forgives his wrong actions because of it, even if it be no more than a thorn "* (Bukhari & Muslim)

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (RA) said: "I asked the Prophet ﷺ who among the people are most severely tried? He ﷺ said, *'The Prophets, then the right acting people, and so on down through various categories of people. Man will be tested according to the strength of his faith. The stronger his faith, the more severe his trial, and the weaker his faith, the lighter his trial. The believer will be continually tested until he walks on earth with all his wrong actions forgiven '.*" (al-Bukhari)

To conclude, Sabr is when, regardless of how harsh life gets, you remember wholeheartedly that Allah has beautiful things in store for you. Sabr is the act that is maintained, regardless of how horrible you feel internally, you never inflict pain on others or let this affect how you treat others.

Remember, most of our lives are not ones of pure bliss. After all, this is the Dunya, right? Prophet Muhammad, ﷺ, told us that the 'dunya is a prison to the believer'. May our trials and tribulations be a source through which we can exercise sabr and pave the way for the expiation of our sins.

In the upcoming classes we will study about...

- Explanation and tips about the different types of Patience
- How to attain or increase our patience.
- Levels of Patience
- Sabr & Shukr

