

Class 6

‘Sabr To Shukr’

THIS WORLD IS A TEST

The nature of this world is that it is a test. Unless the believer convinces himself of that and instills this idea in his mind, and equips himself with patience (in the face of tests), his life will become more difficult and he will miss out on reward.

We Muslims should reflect upon the Book of our Lord and what He has enjoined upon us of patience. We should study the life of our Prophet ﷺ and his companions, and our early generations, and see how they bore tests and hardships with patience, so that we can follow their example.

A person who loves Almighty Allah finds it much easier to be patient and to persevere. This is because he sees everything as coming from Allah, and if it comes from Allah, there must be a reason for it. A person who loves wants the Beloved to see him in the best of states, and so he proves the best of patience. Patience is a virtue, which enables the individual to proceed towards worthy goals.

If we don't get the reward of Patience in this world then it will surely be saved by Almighty Allah for the Hereafter that will never end. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: *“Whoever persists in being patient, Allah will make him patient. Nobody can be given a blessing better and greater than patience.”* (Al-Bukhari)

WHEN TESTED, PEOPLE RESPOND IN FOUR WAYS

1. Anger. This is something that may be either felt in the heart, such as when a person is angry with his Lord and is discontent with what Allah has decreed for him, which may lead to disbelief, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *“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 [to the other direction]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter”* [al-Hajj 22:11];

Or it may be verbal, such as saying, “Woe is me” and the like;

Or it may be expressed in physical actions, such as slapping one's cheeks, rending one's garment, pulling out one's hair, and so on.

2. Patience, which is as the poet said:

Patience, as the name sounds [in Arabic] is something bitter, but its outcome is sweeter than honey.

A person may find something burdensome and dislike it, but he bears it with patience and steadfastness. Whether it happens or not is not the same for him; rather he dislikes what he is going through of hardship, but his faith protects him from becoming discontent.

3. Acceptance (rida), which is of a higher degree than patience. Acceptance is when both ease and hardship are the same to a person, in that he accepts that both happen by the will and decree of Allah, even though he may feel sad when calamity strikes, because he is a man who accepts the divine will and decree; whatever the divine will and decree dictates, he will accept it. The divine will and decree may dictate that he will have either a time of ease or a time of difficulty, either a blessing will be bestowed upon him or a calamity will befall him; it is all the same to him, not because he has no feelings, but because he is completely pleased with his Lord, may He be glorified and exalted, and accepts that Allah will cause him to alternate between times of ease and times of hardship, but it is all the same to him, because he thinks of it as being the decree of his Lord concerning him. This is the difference between acceptance and patience.

4. Gratitude. This is the highest status. It means that a person is grateful to Allah for whatever befalls him of calamity, and is thus included among the grateful slaves of Allah. When he realises that there are calamities greater than what has befallen him, and that calamity affecting one's worldly interests is easier to bear than calamities that affect one's religious commitment, and that punishment in this world is easier to bear than punishment in the hereafter, and that this calamity may be a means of expiating his sins and increasing his hasanaat, he will give thanks to Allah for that. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"No worry, grief or anything else befalls a believer but it becomes an expiation for him, even a thorn that pricks him."* (Bukhaari & Muslim).

Ways of Strengthening Patience

As patience is obligatory, and for us to go from Patience to Acceptance to Shukr we need to first strengthen our patience Allah the Most Merciful has provided us with ways and means of obtaining and strengthening the quality of patience, for He has never instructed us to do something without providing us with help and support to do it, and ways and means of achieving it.

A few verses which tells us how to seek and increase patience:

- Dua, {*And be patient, and your patience is not but through Allah*} (An-Nahl 16:127)
- Learn & Imitate, {*Be patient over what they say and remember Our servant, Dawud ...*} (Saad 38:17)
- Learn the Rewards, {*... So be patient; indeed, the [best] outcome is for the righteous*} (Hud 11:49)
- Think of the blessings, {*So, be patient over what they say and glorify the Praises of your Lord ...*} (Taha 20:130, Qaf 50:39)
- Keep righteous company, {*And keep yourself patiently with those who call on their Lord ...*} (Al-Kahf 18:28)

Allah has never created a disease without creating a cure for it, and He has guaranteed cure when medicine is used. Even so, patience is difficult, but it is not impossible to attain. Patience consists of two elements: knowledge and action, and from these two elements are derived the remedies for all spiritual and physical troubles. Knowledge and action, combined, are always essential.

KNOWLEDGE

The element of knowledge is necessary in order to realize the benefits of following the commands of Allah and the sense of happiness and fulfillment that one may attain by following them; and to understand what it is in the forbidden things that causes harm, imperfection and evil. When a person realizes that, and adds strong willpower, the desire for spiritual achievement and the wish to live as a complete human being (as opposed to as animal-like existence), then it will become easy for him to attain the quality of patience. The bitterness of patience will become sweet and the pain of patience will become joy.

The knowledge that can help increase patience :

- Knowing about the rewards of patience
The rewards that Allah will give for those who are patient are without any accounting. Would we not want our Day of Judgement to be one where there would be no accounting?
- Surrender and Submit to Allah's Will
- Understand Allah Has a Purpose for Your Life and Knows What's Best for You
- Recognize That Impatience Affects Your Relationships
- Know Allah Wants to Hear Your Troubles

- He loves you, after all, and wants you to look to Him for relief from your sadness and suffering.
- Understand Even Tribulations Come From Allah, Not Just Blessings

ACTION

As we have already seen, patience is a constant battle between the motives of reason and religion on the one hand, and the motive of whims and desires on the other. If a person wants reason and religion to overcome whims and desires, then he has to strengthen the former and weaken the latter, just like promoting good health and reducing the risk of illness.

Actions that can help increase Patience

Keep track of situations that trigger impatience, and how many times it happens

Take time one day to see how many times you get impatient in that particular day, and/or what situations it is that trigger your impatience. If you do not know the enemy how will you fight it!?!

First, take a week to track how many times you get worked up and impatient

Secondly, track what it is that makes you impatient? What is/are the triggers? Is it the traffic? Is it too many phone calls? Is it just your spouse? Is it your kids creating havoc? Is it just anything that doesn't go according to your plan?

Look out for these triggers. Once you know how many times you get impatient, you will know how much work you need to do. Once you know what it is that triggers you, you will know what is that is making you lose it!

Track your self-talk and replace your thoughts

One of the very common things that happens during a bubble of impatience which then festers into unease and then into full blown rage session is self-talk. In our head there are millions of things going on and a million different voices! Track these thoughts, if needed write them down. You will see a pattern building up, a pattern of re-occurring thoughts, a pattern that just repeats itself over and over again. Track these thoughts, and replace them with an alternative positive one. For example, if I am getting impatient because someone is

late for a meeting, I might go “he is always late, what will I do now”. I can change that to “perhaps he has had a bad day, and has been caught up with something unexpected. May Allah alleviate his problems”.

Moreover, a lot of “self-talk” is also *waswasah* (whispers) of the *Shaytan*. Surah Falaq is one of the surahs revealed by Allah to specifically seek protection from waswasah.

Dua, Wudhu and Disconnection

Allah has taught us multiple duas for patience in the Quran. For example,

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أقدامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

Rabbana afrigh 'alayna sabran wa thabbit aqdamana wansurna 'alal-qawmil-kafirin

Our Lord, pour patience on us, make us stand firm, and help us against the disbelievers.

Seek Solace in Prayer

“And seek help through patience & prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive (to Allah).” (Noble Quran 2:45)

Reclaim Your Passion and Productivity

When you’re frustrated about your troubles or impatient for your life to go the way you want it to, you’re likely not focusing on your work, your spiritual life, or anything that makes you happy. This will only increase your anxiety and will likely lead to sadness. Though Allah wants you to turn to Him in these moments, He also wants you to be accountable for your responsibilities in life. Your job, taking care of your home, and caring for your children, parents, or anyone under your guardianship. If you fail to meet these obligations and instead wallow impatiently in distress, you’ll sink further into depression. Once in this state, it’s even more difficult to trust in Allah that the wrongs in your life will right themselves and you may drift ever farther and farther from Allah.

Be patient; we shouldn’t be hasty in obtaining an answer from Allah. And remember, Allah, most merciful loves us and everything that befalls us is for the best.

Stay away from sins.

We have studied the ill effects sins and how to stay away from it in “Class 3 – Abstaining from Sins”.

Remember, desire is often stimulated by eyes gazing and, thus, a person should lower his or her gaze as much as possible. The motivation of one’s will and desire, with which the heart may be moved, is stirred by gazing.

Indeed, such gaze is a poisoned arrow of Satan. Satan sends its arrows against an unarmored heart. *A armor* here connotes either lowering one’s eyes or diverting them. Such an arrow is thrown from the bow of physical forms. If one keeps away from it, it misses its target; otherwise the heart would be smitten.

Repent, Engage yourselves in repentance in an extensive way.

When Adversity Strikes, Pause Then Ponder on the blessings and thank Allah

Say *Alhamdulillah* first.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “*The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity*” (Bukhari).

Be proactive by being thankful in times of ease

“...And whosoever has Taqwa of Allah, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose. Indeed Allah has set a measure for all things” [65:2-3].

SHUKR

If Allah opens the slave’s heart to the doors of contemplation over the benefits of the affliction and all that it contains of favours and grace, he turns from being patient to being grateful and pleased with it. In truth, the affliction transforms into a blessing and both his heart and tongue continue to call out: “My Lord! Help me to remember You, thank You and worship You well”

This condition is either strengthened or weakened in accordance to the strength and weakness of the slave's love for Allah. In fact, we often find this is a reality of life, as the poet said, addressing his beloved (who harmed him in some way), "" Though it grieves me that you defamed me with evil, It pleased me to know that I crossed your mind,""

(Shukr & Shaakreen)

وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

... and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:172)

Allah has mentioned gratitude alongside iman. He keeps reminding us to be grateful (50 times). Why? Because human beings tend to be ungrateful! This is something we need to put extra care on, since Allah keeps warning us about it so many times in the Quran. In fact the Quran begins with Alhamdulillah. The very first chapter of the Quran starts with "Praise be to Allah."

The purpose of fasting in Ramadan is to make us grateful. "The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an ... Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful". [2:182-188]

Allah is ash-Shakir. "What would Allah do with your punishment if you are grateful and believe? And ever is Allah Appreciative and Knowing". [4:147]

Allah is testing us if we will be grateful

- *And it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat and to extract from it ornaments which you wear. And you see the ships plowing through it, and [He subjected it] that you may seek of His bounty; and perhaps you will be grateful.* [16:14]
- *And Allah has extracted you from the wombs of your mothers not knowing a thing, and He made for you hearing and vision and intellect that perhaps you would be grateful.* [16:78]

This uncertainty of our gratefulness at the end of these verses is to make us more concerned about being grateful to Allah. He has given us so much and yet we find it difficult to even express our gratitude. In fact, we can't even thank Him enough for all of His favours on us.

It was reported that the Prophet ﷺ stayed up all night, standing until his feet became swollen. When he was asked, "Why are you doing this when Allah has forgiven all your past

and future wrong actions?" He ﷺ replied: "Should I not be a grateful slave?" [Bukhari and Muslim]

The Prophet ﷺ told Muath, RadhiAllahu Anhu: "By Allah, I love you, so do not forget to say at the end of every salah,(the below dua)" [Ahmad and Tirmidhi]

اللهم أعني على ذكرك وشكرك، وحسن عبادتك

Allahumma a'inni 'ala dhikrika wa shukrika, wa husni 'ibadatika

'O Allah help me to remember You and to give thanks to You and to worship You well.'

WHY BE GRATEFUL?

There are countless blessings and we cannot list them all here but we will try to enlist some here as to why is it a must for all of us to be grateful of Allah (make Shukr)?

1. We can never count Allah's Blessings: Be ever grateful to Allah for everything that you possess including your wealth, health, status, intellectual abilities and life. Allah says: "*Is, then, He Who creates comparable to any that cannot create? Will you not, then, take heed? For should you try to count Allah's blessings, you could never compute them*" (An-Nahl 16:17-19).

2. Shaytan challenged Allah that we wouldn't be grateful. "*Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You].*" [7:17] Are we going to let Shaytan have what he wants, or are we going to give him a fight?

3. The opposite of Shukr (gratitude) is Kufr (disbelief):

- "*If you reject (Allah), truly Allah has no need of you; but He likes not ingratitude from His slaves; if you are grateful, He is pleased with you.*" (Surah az-Zumar 39:7)
- "*Then remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me, and do not reject Me*" (Al-Baqarah 2:152).

- *"We showed him (i.e. man) the way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)" (Surah al-Insan 76:3)*

4. True worship means sincere thankfulness to Allah. *"... and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship" (Al-Baqarah 2:172).*

5. Shukr leads to Allah's pleasure:

Allah says, *"If you are grateful, He is pleased with you..." (Az-Zumar 39:7).*

The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Allah is pleased with His servant if, when he eats something, he thanks Allah for it, and when he drinks something, he thanks Allah for it" (Muslim).*

6. The last call of the people of Paradise is Alhamdulillah. *"Their call therein will be, 'Exalted are You, O Allah ,' and their greeting therein will be, 'Peace.' And the last of their call will be, 'Praise to Allah , Lord of the worlds!'" [10:10]*

7. Gratitude is a purpose of our creation: *"It is He Who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing; and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affection: that you may give thanks (to Allah)"(An-Nahl, 16:78).*

8. Shukr is a quality of success in this life and in the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Let one of you acquire a thankful heart, a tongue that remembers Allah and a believing wife who will help him with regard to the Hereafter." (Ibn MAjah & Tirmidhi)*

9. Being grateful and patient in times of difficulty: The Prophet ﷺ said: *"How wonderful is the case of a Believer! There is good for him in whatever happens to him -and none, apart from him, enjoys this blessing. If he receives some bounty, he is grateful to Allah and this bounty brings good to him. And if some adversity befalls him, he is patient, and this affliction, too, brings good to him" (Muslim).*

10. Shukr leads to abundance in Allah's favors: "*If you are grateful, I will surely give you more and more*" (Ibrahim 14:7).

THREE WAYS TO EXPRESS SHUKR:

- Shukr of the heart, what is meant is that the heart senses the value of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon His slave, and fully acknowledges that the one who has bestowed these great blessings is Allah alone, with no partner or associate. This is an obligation on us.
- Shukr of the tongue, which involves celebrating the praises of Allah, such as utterance of Alhamdulillah, and expressing gratefulness to Allah with our tongue.
- Shukr of the limbs, which is fulfilled by using our external senses (physical) to do good. Every time Allah gives us a blessing, we must use it in a way that benefits humanity and that pleases Allah.

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اللهم أعني على ذكرك وشكرك، وحسن عبادتك



'O Allah help me to remember You and to give thanks to You and to worship You well.'


May Allah make us amongst As-Saabiroon & Ash-Shaakireen, those whom He is pleased with.
May Allah make things easy for Muslims and give them strength and patience to overcome oppression.



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TIPS OF TEST

1. Do not have to memorise the ayahs or hadeeths word for word and their references, but remember their meanings and the msg being given.
2. Remember the Dua
3. Remember how to increase patience