

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We seek forgiveness from Allah

We stand witness to Allah that there is no God but Him

That Muhammad (saww) is his slave and messenger

Introduction

- The night of 27th Rajab is the night of *bi'tsah*, where the Prophet assumed the Prophetic office. There is an opinion among many Muslims that our Prophet attained the *nabuwat* at the age of forty. But it is evident from undoubted traditions that Muhammad (saww) was always a Prophet as he himself said: “*I was a Prophet when Adam was yet earth and water or uncreated.*” [*Hayat al Qulub*, pg 182] It was that after completing forty years he then first publicly appeared as a Prophet.
- Similarly Hazrat Isa was a Prophet ever since he was born.¹ When Hazrat Isa was born many people started pointing fingers at Hazrat Maryam. Then Hazrat Isa, even though he was a baby, spoke from his cradle, and told the people that he was a servant of Allah, who gave him a book and made him a Prophet. [*Surah Maryam* 19:27-30].

Merits of the soul: Patience (Shabr)

The definition of *shabr*

- The famous scholar Nasir al-Din al-Tusi said: “***Shabr* means restraining the self from agitation when confronted with undesirables.**”
- The great gnostic (*arif*) Khwajah `Abd Allah al-Ansari said: “***Shabr* means restraining the self from complaint about hidden anguish.**”

Surah Baqarah 2:155

- In Surah Baqarah 2:155 Allah swt says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ
وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

*And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger
and loss of property and lives and fruits;
and give good news to the patient*

¹ However, the similarity is not exact since the Nur of Prophet Muhammad (saww) came into existence even before the world was created.

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- In the above verse, Allah swt has emphasized the importance of *shabr* or patience. Allah says that he will test his slaves and will reward the ones who are patient. The test of Allah can take various forms, for example, loss of children, property, wealth, etc.

Allah tests his loved ones

- Indeed, we cannot fully understand the taste of sweetness unless we have tasted bitterness. Hence it may be the case that one might not fully value the bounties of Allah unless he has been tested with miseries. Surely Allah swt knows better than we know ourselves.
- It is said that if Allah loves someone, he immerses the ones he loves in miseries and let the miseries run him. Whenever he prays, Allah says “*I am here at your service. If only I hasten answering what you asked then you will not pray to me although I am All Powerful. I therefore will preserve and accumulate it which is indeed good for you.*” [*Mizaanul hikmah* # 1947]. Even if our prayers are not answered immediately, we should not be disheartened because it may be a sign that Allah likes hearing our voice and our prayers. Hence we should always have *husnu dhann*, *ie. good opinion towards Allah*. Allah will ultimately remove all our miseries.
- It is said that the more Allah loves someone, the more he will be tested. Prophet Muhammad (saww), who was the best creation of Allah, said that nobody had been tested the way he was tested. Similarly, Hazrat Fatima sa said that if the *masibah* or pain that she went through had been endured by the day, then the days would have turned into nights. [*Mausuu’ah Al Musthafa Wal ‘Itrah* vol 1 page452]
- Perhaps the best example of *shabr* is the incident of Karbala. The decision of Hazrat Ibrahim to sacrifice his son Ismail was only the beginning. The pinnacle of the great sacrifice or *zibha azeem* was reached in Karbala. We should all learn patience and obedience from the exemplary example of Imam Hussain, Hazrat Zainab sa and their family.

The example of Ayub

- A good example is that of Hazrat Ayub. Hazrat Ayub was enjoying a happy and prosperous life and Satan challenged Allah that if he withdrew all his bounties from Hazrat Ayub then his Prophet will no longer be obedient to his Lord. Allah then tested Prophet Ayub and took away all his bounties and health. However, to the dismay of Satan, Hazrat Ayub became even more obedient and passed his time in utmost gratitude to Allah in spite of all the calamities that befell him. Later when Hazrat Ayub prayed to Allah to relieve his miseries, Allah swt returned all the bounties back to his Prophet given his exemplary patience.

Indeed in Surah Anbiya 21:83-84, Allah swt says:

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ
الضَّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

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فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ
وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ
عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَابِدِينَ

*And Ayub, when he cried to his Lord, (saying): Harm has afflicted me,
and Thou art the most Merciful of the merciful.
Therefore We responded to him and took off what harm he had, and We gave him his family and the like of
them with them: a mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers.*

Short du'as in the Holy Quran on *shabr*

- In Surah Baqarah 2:250 there is a short dua which is as follows:

رَبَّنَا
أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أقدامَنَا
وَأَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

*Our Lord,
pour down upon us patience, and make our steps firm
and assist us against the unbelieving people*

- Further, in Surah A'raf 7:126 there is another short dua pertaining to patience, which is as follows:

رَبَّنَا
أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ

*Our Lord:
Pour out upon us patience and cause us to die in submission.*

Thus as stated in the Quran we should always ask Allah swt to give us patience. There is no ambiguity in the fact that patience is a virtue.

- Also, in Al-Ma'arij 70: 5, Allah says:

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا

Therefore endure with a goodly patience

In the above verse, the Arabic word *jameela* has been used. The Arabic word *jameela* refers to the one who does not complain when in anguish or pain. That surely is genuine or sweet patience.

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- Genuine patience is without complaints, expressed or suppressed. The patience the Holy Prophet and his Ahl ul Bayt exercised was contentment with and total submission to the will of Allah; because they knew and believed that whatever He does is good, so they used to bear with patience persecution and torture inflicted upon them by their enemies. They always cared for the well being of their adversaries and prayed to Allah to make them see the path of salvation. Such patience arises from the purest faith and trust in Allah. The best example of such patience, after the Holy Prophet, was demonstrated by Imam Husayn in Karbala.

Some hadiths on *shabr*

- Regarding shabr Imam Ja'far al-Shadiq has said:
“Verily, shabr is to faith what the head is to the body. The body perishes without the head, and so also when shabr goes, faith also disappears.”
[Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, bab *al-shabr*, p. 128, hadith # 2]
- Regarding the comparison of mankind and angels, Imam Ali as in a hadith said:
“Surely Allah has characterized the angels by intellect without sexual desire and anger, and the animal with anger and desire without reason. He exalted man by bestowing upon him all these qualities. Accordingly, if man’s reason dominates his desire and ferocity, he rises to a station above that of the angels because this station is attained by man in spite of the existence of hurdles which do not vex the angels.”
[*Jami al Sa adat*, The collector of felicities page 15].
- When Imam ‘Ali (a) was asked about faith (*iman*), he replied: “The structure of faith is supported by four pillars: Patience (*shabr*), Conviction (*yaqin*), Justice (*‘adl*) and Struggle (*jihad*). Then he explained further: ‘Patience comprises of four attributes: Eagerness, fear, piety and anticipation (of death). So, whoever is eager for Paradise will ignore evil temptations; whoever fears the fire of Hell will abstain from sins; whoever practices piety will easily bear the difficulties and hardships of the life of this world and whoever anticipates death will hasten to perform good deeds.’”
[Al-Amidi, *Ghurur ul Hikam wa Durar ul Kalim*, hadith # 2897].
- Imam Zain ul Abideen before his *shahadat* left a *wasiyah* or will for his elder son. The *wasiyah* stated: “*Exercise patience on haq and righteousness even though it may be bitter.*”
- In a hadith, Imam Ja'far Shadiq has stated that if Allah blesses a nation but they remain ungrateful then their blessings turn into *balah* or miseries. On the other hand, if Allah tests a nation and the nation endures patience, then their *balah* or miseries would turn into blessings.
[Al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, bab *al-sabr*, page 98 hadith #18].
These hadiths are indications of the importance of *shabr* in our religion.

The patience of Imam Ali

- In Nahjul Balaghah (sermon of shiqshiqiyah) it is narrated that in one of his *khutbas*, Imam Ali said: “*...I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat. I watched the plundering of my inheritance...*”

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One question that arises is what would have happened if Imam Ali had not exercised endurance and patience when his right of Khilafat was taken away?

This question is answered in a beautiful way by Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.² The Sheikh said that the Khilafat being taken away from the Imam was analogous to someone kidnapping our son and then later stating that our son was his. Further, if after the kidnapping we claim that the son is ours, then we are aware that the kidnapper would kill our son. What would be the best thing for us to do in such a situation? In order to safeguard our son we will have to exercise restraint and patience. Similarly, Imam Ali in order to safeguard Islam decided to exercise patience and *shabr*. If the Imam had not exercised patience, then that would have had a detrimental effect on Islam.

- It is said that Imam Ali could bear any misery with *shabr* but there was only one misery for which even his patience would become futile. That misery is the separation from Allah. As stated in Dua Kumayl, it is said, "I can endure your punishment but I cannot endure your separation." Of course, Imam Ali given his virtuousness can never be separated from Allah. Thus, in Dua Kumayl, the Imam has taught his *ummah* that they should be able to exercise patience from any miseries apart from exercising patience from the separation of Allah swt.
- In a hadith it is stated that whoever cannot bear an hour seeking knowledge will remain ignorant forever (Mizaanul hikmah # 13538). Therefore even when seeking knowledge we need to have *shabr*. We hope that Allah will grant us *shabr* and commitment so that we can increase our knowledge Insha Allah.

Mind Blowing Story

Haroun Rashid's Question About Amin and Makmun

One day Bahlool was going to Haroun's palace, but they coincidentally met each other. Haroun asked, "*Bahlool, where are you going?*"
"I was going towards you."

² *A faqih and muhaddith, an expert in tafseer and scholastic theology, a rijali and historian, an author and speaker, a poet and linguist-this is Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. His sincere zeal, armed with these qualities, has made him one of the greatest Muballighs the Shia world has ever known. He initiated the plan of tabligh among Africans; is a Founder and the Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. His books and correspondence have been instrumental in spreading the Original Islam from Philippines to Guyana. Before him Tabligh among Africans was taboo; his endeavors have turned it into a badge of honor; and now many youths spend their times in various Tabligh activities. He speaks and writes in Urdu, English, Arabic, Persian and Kiswahili; and knows Hindi and Gujrati. More than a hundred books are to his credit; some of them have been translated into seventeen languages. He has been given Ijazah (authorizations) by fourteen Grand Ayatullahs for riwayah, Qazawah, and Umur-e-hasbiyah.*

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Haroun said, *"I want to go to school so I can closely observe Amin and Makmun. If you want, you can also come with me."*

Bahloul agreed and went to school with Haroun, but at that time Amin and Makmun had gone outside with the teacher's permission.

Haroun asked particular questions about Amin and Makmun. The teacher said, *"Amin is the son of the chief of Arab women, Zubaydah, but he is very foolish and stupid. Contrarily, Makmun is very understanding, intelligent, and full of dignity."*

Haroun said, *"I don't believe you."*

The teacher put a piece of paper under the sheet of the place where Makmun sat and a brick under Amin's seat. A few moments later Makmun and Amin entered. As soon as they saw their father, they paid their respects and sat down at their places. Makmun worriedly glanced at the ceiling, and looked to his right and left.

The teacher asked him, *"What has happened to you that you are so worried?"*

Makmun answered, *"From the time I left school till when I returned, either the floor got one (width of a) paper higher, or the ceiling got that much lower. Briefly, my seat is a piece of paper higher."*

Then the teacher asked Amin, *"Do you feel like that too?"*

Amin answered, *"I don't feel anything at all."*

The teacher laughed, and sent the two outside again. After they left, he said to Haroun, *"Thanks be to Allah that I proved my statement in front of you."*

The Khalifa said, *"At least tell the reason why."*

Bahloul said, *"If I get assurance of my life, I will narrate the reason."*

"I assure you. Tell whatever you know."

Bahloul said, *"There are two reasons why children are bright and intelligent. The first reason is that when a man and a woman meet with mutual love, then their child is clever, bright, and intelligent. The second reason is that when a man and a woman keep connections with (people of) different blood and race, then their child becomes wise, intelligent, and keen. This is exactly what has been experienced in the case of trees and animals; if a fruit tree is grafted with another fruit-bearing tree, and then their offspring will be very delicious and refined. Also, if two animals; for example, a donkey and a horse, are bred together, then they have a mule, which is very strong, sharp, and smart.*

Therefore, the lack of understanding in Amin is because the Khalifa and Zubaydah are of one blood and lineage; but Makmun is very bright and intelligent because his mother is of a different blood and family; and in this respect, very different from the Khalifa."

The Khalifa laughed at Bahloul's answer and said, *"You can't expect more than this from a lunatic."* But the teacher believed Bahloul with all his heart.

Disclaimer:

In this tafseer class, there might be shortcomings in imparting the knowledge of the tafseer. If there is any information that requires correction, please do not hesitate to let us know via e-mail: jaafari_tafseer_committee@yahoo.com.sg.
Allah knows best.