

264679 - How to apply patience when faced with tests

the question

How do people react angrily to tests? For example, if Musab ibn Umayr (radiallahu anhu) were to show discontent with his test regarding his mother, then what are some of the things he would have done? To be clear, I am not saying he had shown discontent. I am asking for an example of failing a test but in Musab's case.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

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 (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his companions, and our early generations, and see how they bore tests and hardships with patience, so that we can follow their example.

It is no secret that patience brings great reward and high standing before Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and Allah congratulated the patient and gave them glad tidings: “but give good tidings to the patient” [al-Baqarah 2:155].

See the answer to question no. [71236](#) .

Secondly:

There is nothing in the story of Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr (may Allah be pleased with him) to suggest that he panicked or was not patient. Rather what is narrated is that he bore with patience detention in Makkah, and he used to call his mother to become Muslim when he

was in chains and detained. There is no report to suggest what is mentioned in the question.

Ibn Ishaq narrated in his Maghaazi that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaas said: We were people who endured a hard life in Makkah with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and faced difficulties. When calamity befell us, we regarded it as a test and bore it with patience. Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr was a young man who lived a life of the greatest ease in Makkah, and his garments were the finest, as his parents spent generously on him. Then I saw him, when he became Muslim, looking very tired and unwell, to the extent that I saw his skin peeling off like the skin of a snake.... Then Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, honoured him with martyrdom on the day of Uhud.

End quote from as-Siyar wa'l-Maghaazi, p. 193.

Thirdly:

Some of the Sahaabah were afflicted with calamity, and they reacted in a way that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) disliked. So he would enjoin them to be patient and teach them the right thing to do and say, and they would correct themselves immediately (may Allah be pleased with them).

It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) passed by a woman who was weeping at a grave, and he said: "Fear Allah and be patient." She said: Leave me alone, for you have not suffered my calamity! And she did not recognise him. It was said to her: He is the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). She came to the door of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and did not find any doorkeepers there. She said: (I am sorry), I did not recognise you. He said: "(True) patience is only when calamity first strikes."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1283) and Muslim (926).

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Fath al-Baari (3/149).

Al-Qurtubi said: What appears to be the case is that there was something excessive in her weeping, such as wailing and the like, hence he told her to fear Allah. I (Ibn Hajar) say: This is supported by the fact that in the mursal report of Yahya ibn Abi Katheer mentioned above, it says: He heard from her something that he disliked, so he stood beside her. At-Teebi said: The words “Fear Allah’ are an introduction to the words “be patient”; it is as if it were said to her: Fear the wrath of Allah if you do not be patient, and do not be impatient, so that you might attain the reward.

The words “she did not recognise him” mean: she addressed him in that manner because she did not realise that he was the Messenger of Allah.

Muslim added in a report that he narrated: she was mortified, i.e., because of the distress that she felt when she realised that he was the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), out of embarrassment and out of awe and respect for him.

What is meant by the Prophet’s words “(True) patience is only when calamity first strikes” is: if someone is able to show patience in the beginning, when feeling that one is about to be overwhelmed by panic and impatience, that is the perfect patience that leads to reward.

At-Teebi said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said this in response to her saying, “I did not recognise you.” This was a wise answer; it is as if he was saying to her: You do not have to apologise, for I do not get angry for anything other than the sake of Allah; rather examine yourself.

Az-Zayn ibn al-Muneer said: the reason why he answered the woman in that manner when she showed her obedience to what he enjoined of fearing Allah and showing patience, and apologised for what she had said out of grief, was that he explained to her that the correct thing to do with regard to patience is to show patience when calamity first strikes, for that is what brings reward. End quote.

This is supported by the report of Abu Hurayrah mentioned above: She said: I will be patient, I will be patient.

From this hadith we may learn things other than those mentioned above...

Whoever is enjoined to do something good must accept the advice, even if he does not know the one who is giving it.

Panic and impatience are forbidden, because he instructed her to fear Allah in addition to instructing her to be patient.

It is encouraged to put up with people's rudeness when offering advice or exhortation. End quote.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Qawl al-Mufeed (2/215):

At times of calamity, 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 (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "No worry, grief or anything else befalls a believer but it becomes an expiation for him, even a thorn that pricks him." Narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim.

A person may also increase in faith thereby. End quote.

Finally:

We say to you that what you should ask about and seek to understand is that which will benefit you in terms of your religious commitment and strengthen your faith, not that which may undermine and weaken it.

If you want to ask questions, then you should ask about stories of patience and acceptance (of the divine will and decree) among the Sahaabah and righteous early generations, and how they set the best example of steadfastness and patience, and did not panic or become impatient. This is the trait that we should seek out in their biographies, for that is what we should emulate.

As for panic and impatience, if that happened, it only reflects a moment of human weakness that should be overlooked and not talked about. In other words, we should not seek it out and ask about it, because it is not an example to be followed.

If we knew that a woman showed weakness when calamity befell her and she lost her child, this weakness is not an example to be followed, and it is not anything that is worth seeking out, discussing and asking about.

Rather what should be focused on in this story is the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to that woman and his instruction to her to be patient, so that we will be careful lest we miss out on the opportunity to show patience. For if we panic in the first instance, until we calm down, come back to our senses and start to think aright, no patience will benefit us at that stage, after showing impatience in the beginning, because true patience is only that which is shown when calamity first strikes.

Conclusion:

The one who is fortunate and guided should ask about that which will benefit him in both his religious and worldly affairs, not that which may harm him; he should ask about sublime characteristics and not talk about foolish behaviour; he should seek out stories of the righteous early generations in situations in which they set an example to be followed, and not search for and seek out moments of human weakness, from which no one is entirely free as they go through the ups and downs of life. The one who does this is the fortunate one whom Allah has guided to seek beneficial knowledge and look for the right examples to follow.

May Allah help us and you to do and say that which He loves.

And Allah knows best.