

Chapter 5: Historical Examples

For example let us consider the two very prominent faces of Islamic History and compare them with each other. One of them is enlightened, honourable and exciting while the other one is hated and condemned. These two faces belong to two persons who have been offered exactly similar and equivalent opportunities. Or it may be said that they both travelled together and reached simultaneously at an intersection, and in action, each one selected a different direction.

One of them because of choosing the right path becomes the greatest and most honourable Islamic personality, and the another one, because of his choosing the wrong path becomes the most detested and deplorable face of Islamic history. One of them is Omar bin Sa'd who is the commander of the Omayyad army to suppress the rising of Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a.s.). The other one is Hurr bin Yazid Riyahi¹ who is another commander of the same army and who had been dispatched earlier on an assignment to follow and keep strict vigilance on the movements of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his followers, and had already committed an act of Aggression against the revolutionary army of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Each of them started their march on the road almost simultaneously. The ruling Omayyad regime was being threatened by a revolutionary force. The revolutionary freedom-giving fire was behind the ashes all over the Hijaz and was about to ignite inside Iraq. Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a.s.) considering the Islamic obligations and realising great responsibility upon his shoulders had taken a giant revolutionary step by rising against the corrupt and dictatorial regime of the Omayyads. He took this giant heroic step to register forever in the history of Islam, the most practical and fundamental lesson for the coming generations.

This rising therefore was a dangerous and a serious threat for the ruling regime, and naturally it was forced to mobilise all the resources at its disposal to suppress and crush this revolutionary uprising. The above two persons (Omar bin Sa'd and Hur bin Yazid) were part of the vast resources of that tyrant regime, which were mobilised against this revolutionary movement and against its founder Imam Husayn ibn Ali (a.s.).

Therefore, in the very beginning both these persons manifest themselves as the two important pawns (of chess play) on the playground for the game which was actually being played by an usurper caliph (Yazid ibn Mua'wiyah). They were the mercenaries of the caliph to execute his decisions and commands in Karbala. But apart from that, they too voluntarily accepted this assignment for the sake of their love for self, love for material gains, and desires and temptations aroused by their animal instincts.

Omar bin Sa'd came to Karbala because of his obsession for achieving power and position. Since his birth he was ignorant about religion and faith. For him the promise made by the Caliph for the governorship of Rayy (presently the southern suburb of modern Tehran), was the most valuable and dearest thing than Yazid and obedience to his command.

Hur bin Yazid too started his assignment for accomplishing similar goals. Both of them were aware that whatever they were going to accomplish meant committing a sin and a major one. But human passions and transgression of instinct for power and ambitions did not allow them to ponder about the consequences of their would-be assignment (war with Imam Husayn [a.s.]), and ultimately put them on the road, which terminated into the most filthiest and beastly happening in human history.

Both of them were faced with the most critical and sensitive decisions of their lives. One of the road was leading them towards the sensual desires which are the same natural instincts such as love for power and ambitions, and the other one was leading them towards discharging their Islamic duty by joining the righteous forces of Imam Husayn (a.s.).

At this critical juncture, the thing which could have rescued both of them was supposed to be nothing else but patience. Yes! By practicing patience one may overcome these destructive selfish passions. These strange destructive forces can only be controlled by the power of patience. Patience may enable you to resist against the temptations for committing sins and transgression of the Laws of Allah.

At this sensitive and determining moment, Omar bin Sa'd could not resist against these deadly passions, and therefore failed. The knotted rope of love for power and position was fallen over his neck, and he was being pulled towards hell. Although being a powerful and strong person, he was helpless to offer any resistance about his being fallen into this disgrace. Eventually he was overcome with impatience and was vanquished by the motives of lust for power. And finally pulled by the rage of deadly instinctive passions, fell down all the way into the bottom of Hell.

Hur bin Yazid too encountered the same situation. He was being confronted with a critical dilemma. If he would have allowed himself to be led by the desires and passions of his soul, he would have completed the assignment satisfactorily (which was assigned to him by Yazid), and would have ignored the awakening inner voice of his conscience by believing himself to be only an executioner of orders issued by the caliph, and thus, could have achieved the highest position of power.

For him if the governorship of Rayy was not into consideration, certainly something equivalent to that was kept in mind. For he too, after all was a human being, and therefore a knotted rope of greed, desire,

and rage of instinctive passions was tied to his neck and was pulling him towards hell. He was pulled almost to the brink of fire i.e. the line dividing the two opposing camps in the plains of Karbala.

The camp of Husayn (a.s.) was manifestation of ready paradise, fountainhead of genuine Islamic values, splendour of human spirit, and the defender of real Islam. It was in a direct face-to-face confrontation with the Yazidi camp. Which was the manifestation of ready hell, the degradation and humility of mankind, the scene of hypocrisy, deceit and lies, and the bastion of ignorance which, in the name of Islam was imposed upon the society.

Yes! The negative forces of degradation pulled him up to these limits (i.e. brink of hell), but suddenly a heroic grand power, an awakening from within, at the right moment took control of him and rescued him from this sudden fall. It gave him, a severe jolt and sheared off the rope of desires and passions which was tied to his neck.

By offering resistance against this violent instinctive passion, and by remaining patient against this great sin, which was tantamount to waging war against the forces representing the total truth for the sake of forces which were the manifestation of total blasphemy, not only did Hur rescue himself, but jumped into the kingdom of paradise from the very brink of fire.

In the above event there is a lesson for those who are interested in in-depth studies of human history. It clearly shows the importance of this branch of patience (against sin), in organising the great struggle between truth and falsehood, which ultimately determines the interpretation of history, and decides the destiny of a society.

Some other Examples of Patience against Sin

In order to study in detail the examples of this branch of patience, we must recollect a series of different kind of deviations and great sins. It will be proved that patience has played the most crucial role in each situation, such as follows:

A powerful strong mounted fist has been raised and is about to fall over the head of an innocent person, and there is absolutely –no obstacle in its path, is a scene requiring this branch of patience. The strong instinctive forces consisting of anger, pride, selfishness, and other desires, urge this raised fist to strike against the innocent person's head. In this situation patience means offering resistance against these instinctive motives and to control oneself against committing this transgression.

Someone may have an easy access to lot of money and wealth, only if he could cross over the bridge, namely committing a murder, or indulging in a sinful act. Here the natural lust for the love of wealth, an extremely violent deviated instinctive force, takes control of the person to commit that crime. Here patience means offering resistance against these motives, and to ignore the potential gains at the cost of a crime or sin. This may be regarded as another example of practicing this branch of patience.

The sexual urges are extremely powerful and intense, which may be compared to a swamp, which swallows the elephants together with the elephant drivers. It is exactly for the reason that this super magical characteristic had been exploited as an easy and suitable means for humiliating and degrading the towering great human souls, by the enemies of human progress and exaltedness throughout the history. Patience in these situations means resisting the powerful sexual urges, by not indulging in a lower shameful sexual act.

Fear or danger are common characteristics which are common among ordinary people. It could be a product of many instincts or may consist of a single instinct. But in many situations it plays a key role in bringing all kinds of humiliation, insults, imprisonment, crimes and catastrophes. In many instances the weak individuals under the influence of fear or danger submitted themselves to perform the most lowly shameful tasks as well as committed horrible crimes, and ultimately lost their lives, wealth, position, honour, prestige, and children. In one instance they fell down from the highest peaks of human exaltedness and lowered themselves to become simply a tool without any determination in the hands of enemies. Endurance against these forces of violence and Corruption could be regarded as another scene for the display of this branch of patience.

Review of some Narrations

Here it would be worthwhile to ponder over some of the narrations regarding this branch of patience, which have been narrated by the infallible Imams, and are full of important revealing lessons. Asbagh bin Nabatah who is a companion of Imam Ali (a.s.) quotes from him as follows:

"There are two types of patience, one of them is patience during tragedies or catastrophes, which is very good and charming, but there is another type of patience, which is far better and more charming than the above, i.e. patience against acts forbidden by Allah."³

Narration No. 2

Here Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (a.s.) quotes the Prophet's (S), prediction of the state of affairs of his Ummah as follows:

"The people will face a period in which power and authority will come only through bloodshed and brute oppression. Wealth will be amassed by usurping the rights of others and by stinginess. Love will be realised only by giving up faith and pursuing carnal desires. Whoever should find that period should have patience in poverty because it will be better than faith, patience against grudge because it will be better than love, and patience against humility because it is better than honour. Allah will grant the reward of fifty truthful persons who believed in the Prophet".⁴

This prediction was witnessed by the Muslims of that time, during the shameful life of Mu'awiya and his son Yazid and their successor caliphs, wealth and other financial comforts could only be achieved by

means of usurpation of the rights of the deprived, transgression of weaker classes, exploitation of masses, stinginess and restrictions in financial dues, and indifference to the genuine demands of deprived masses.

Or in other words the Prophet predicted that the natural development of the Islamic Ummah would not be such that each individual will be possessing plenty of wealth and material comforts without inflicting the least injury to the rest of the community (i.e. the rest of the community would still have the fair opportunities to earn wealth and other material comforts). Rather gaining wealth and other material comforts, by a certain special class could only be made possible by transgressing and exploiting the rights of the rest of the community. This prediction was also witnessed as the Islamic Ummah transformed into various social classes.

Popularity or fame could only be accomplished by discarding the spirit of faith from one's life and existence, and by completely submitting to the carnal desires of the self. In other words the love of masses or corrupt leaders could be achieved only by practising flattery, lies, hypocrisy, cheating, surrendering to desires and passions, deceiving and making people feel proud, covering up blunders, misportraying the realities and disregarding the famous notion of "Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar" i.e. encouraging good and discouraging forbidden acts, etc.

The above prediction by the Prophet (S) is full of wisdom, foretelling the would-be state of affairs of the Islamic community in the near future, in which, the level of thinking and insight of the people will be lowered, Islamic values will decline, the Islamic judicial system will be degraded, and the general affairs of the Muslims will become chaotic.

It is of course obvious, that these happenings in the life of the Islamic community, which was founded on the pillars of real Islamic values, or in other words the train of that community which started its journey on the rails of Islamic thoughts and ideology, was not possible, without the active involvement and subversive acts of some powerful, hidden, and mischievous hands, operating to execute a calculated plan to destroy the Islamic community from within.

The above prophecy by the Prophet (S) clearly throws light about the usurpation of political power, which may be regarded as the most inhuman act in the history of Islam. Yes! The Prophet warned about these would-be occurrences. Alas! They happened too soon. When people appeared before the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a.s.), they witnessed in his sayings and deeds, nothing but seriousness and decisiveness, for correcting the deviated state of affairs of the Islamic community by pulling all the violators and sinners before the court of law. And to obtain Allah's justice for their violations and transgressions, to restore the lost genuine rights of the rightful owners. His brother Aqeel when approached him to seek a financial favour, had to face a red hot iron bar and was turned down with a sad reply. Aqeel or any other person, when he approached Mu'awiya, was welcomed with smiling face and open arms and rewarded with plenty of ready money.

It was therefore natural that persons whose conscience was not influenced by the logic of Islamic thoughts were more inclined towards Mu'awiya than Imam Ali (a.s.). Therefore, this consideration that Muawiya lacked fame and popularity during his reign is not correct. Notwithstanding the fact that people of Medina and Kufa, who were under the direct influence of the towering personality of Imam Ali (a.s.) and were familiar with the basics of Islamic ideology, the rest of the people of the Islamic lands, throughout Muawiyah's reign, because of the suffocation of free thinking and enquiry, the Propaganda practised by the Omayyad bands, special characteristics of the people for loving to be mercenaries of the regime, considered him a competent, respectable, and charismatic personality. They bestowed upon him the honourable title of "Khal-al-Muslimeen"⁵ i.e. the maternal uncle of the believers.

Of course, this fame and popularity was achieved by means of special tactical conduct of Muawiya with the influential tribal chiefs who had considerable domination over the masses, and some manipulated them to lower their heads before Muawiya. For these services they were showered with unlimited affection, were blessed with plenty of wealth and power, and their hands were allowed to let open to commit all kinds of horrible crimes and tortures against the poor deprived masses who possessed no other shelter.

These chiefs, in order to be benevolent towards their "Lord of Affluence" (Vali Nemat), and in order to maintain the status quo, and to exploit the situation to their best advantage opened their tongues in praising him, and all of his faults and defects, or the type of faults he admired, were presented to the masses as his exalted qualities and arts.

This was the picture of the would-be state of affairs of the Islamic community as foreseen by the prophetic eyes of the Prophet (S). Now in confronting with such a state of affairs and facing an incompetent and sinister regime, what are the obligations of the people? The answer to this question was provided by the narration in previous pages.

Anyone who happens to face that period as predicted by the Prophet,(S) either in the near or distant future, must remain steadfast while facing poverty and indigence and should offer resistance against the instinctual motives for hoarding wealth and possessing other material benefits. While he had the option to act like his contemporaries, who by utilising the usual means, were busy in accumulation of wealth and other material gains, and passed through this difficulties naively, as though nothing unusual had happened. He too, by accepting the filth, by indulging in crimes, submitting to insults and captivation, giving up his dignity, honour, and exaltedness, and turning his back against all the values and ideals, could have achieved the comfortable and luxurious life and therefore would have fulfilled his carnal desires.

He should close his eyes over the wealth, power and riches in his reach, at the cost of bringing poverty and destitution for thousands of people, as well as over the hot and delicious food for him, at the cost of hunger for unlimited number of destitute masses.

He should endure patiently for remaining lonely, unknown and blamed against the instinctive motives of desiring status, fame and popularity. While having the option of receiving the favour of ignorant masses or leaders with vested interests, by opening his tongue for flattery, praise, lies, deceit and shutting up his lips for supporting the truth, closing his eyes for encouragement of good and forbiddance of evil, and conscientiously electing to do otherwise.

Realising the divine obligations entrusted to him, and his personal duties, with full awareness he accepts demotion of his status, becomes hated in the eyes of tyrants, and lets his prestige and honour be usurped and trampled by the oppressors.

He should be patient and satisfied for possessing only lower social status and should tolerate deprivation from higher prestigious positions offering better material gains and power. He should not opt for accepting titles and important positions of power at the cost of committing inhuman shameful crimes. Allah Almighty's reward for someone who practices the above advises in his deeds, would be equivalent to the reward earned by fifty righteous believers during the period of the Prophet (S).

And therefore this heavenly saying which emanates from a celestial heart and whose value is tantamount to a divine revelation, while offering the most important and in-depth training, regarding social issues, also reflects the meanings and value of this branch of patience (against sin).

Patience Against Unpleasant Events (Tragedies)

The human life is always accompanied by events and unpleasant calamities, and there is no escape from such happenings. The human structure has been created in such a way, that it has to deal with these imposed situations, i.e. always encountering unpleasant events and calamities during the entire span of our lives. The following famous sentence of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) describes the above theme as follows:

"The world is like a house which has been encircled with temptations and calamities."

Sickness, physical handicaps, financial losses, death of loved ones and deprivations are some of the few examples of the inevitable happenings from which there is no escape. Even the most prosperous class of people are not immune against these types of occurrences. When such calamities befall, naturally, without any choice or intention of our own, in our lives, usually there are two types of reactions shown by the people, as follows:

1. Some people, on account of the calamity give up their resistance completely and therefore become spiritually handicapped.
2. The other group of people, bear with patience considering it a natural thing of this worldly life, and come out of it intact and with dignity.

According to the famous Persian poet Roudaki⁶ the merit, greatness, and leadership of a man is tested during his encounter with calamity. Grief, crying, and lamentation which are the ways of weak, timid-hearted and impatient individuals, in itself is a strong natural passion. Which imposes a violent emotional force upon the human structure, whereby all the body parts are employed to perform a particular function. The eyes shed tears, the tongue complains, the throat groans, and the hands, feet, and head, are all involved in performing special actions and movements.

Patience, against calamities means not to surrender to these violent emotional outbursts. A patient human being, while facing such tragedies does not give up his morale and maintains his composure and control. These tragedies do not make him depressed and discouraged, and do not stop him from making efforts and endeavours for accomplishing the main goals in the real life. Therefore this type of patience (against calamities) is also important, and has been termed as fair and charming in the narration quoted earlier.

Now, let us consider the case of a wayfarer who starts his journey in a certain direction so that he could reach the final desired Destination if upon encountering each unpleasant accident, and after receiving a small injury, he gives up his morale and loses his composure, then it is obvious that such a person will never complete this journey and will never reach the final Destination. Resistance, offered against these motives of Depression while facing these tragedies is a key factor, which not only secures the high morale, but moreover, this endurance in itself, is an exercise, which is beneficial for building up the determination and strong iron-will among human beings, which are the pre-requisites for continuation of the difficult journey.

Therefore patience against natural tragedies which befall human beings, without any option or choice, consists of the following two important advantages:

Firstly, it secures and maintains the high morale, which is responsible for all constructive involvement, and further acts as an obstacle to prevent it from getting lost or being destroyed completely.

Secondly, it builds up the human determination or will power, which is an important means for all positive actions, and further it provides the required endurance to face the optional tragedies.

The special encouragement and excitement shown by the religious guardians about this type of patience, clearly demonstrates its constructive and miraculous role. In the following two narrations the deep philosophy of this branch of patience could be clearly demonstrated.

First Narration

"Whoever has not equipped himself with the weapon of patience, during hardships and calamities of the time, will be subjected to a state of weakness and helplessness".⁷

Second Narration

"For a believer, if a position and rank, has been taken into consideration by Allah, which could never be accomplished by deeds alone, he is inflicted with physical sickness, or loss of wealth, or tragedies to his loved ones, and in case, he remains patient, he is awarded by Allah (the assigned position and rank)"⁸

In the above narration the constructive and exalted role of patience has been demonstrated explicitly.

Othman bin Maz'oon, who was an experienced Muslim and had migrated to Ethiopia and Madina, during the early period of Islam, lost his young son at Madina. This tragedy was so devastate that he decided to spend all his remaining life inside his house in prayers, and suddenly stopped all his social involvement completely. His depression after the death of his young son was so intense, that he wished never to face the pleasures of life again.

The Prophet (S) after hearing about his state of affairs, paid him a courtesy visit and advised him to change his decision. The Prophet (S) said that Islam does not allow monastic life (renunciation of world), sitting in an isolated corner, engrossed prayers. The renunciation of the world by Islamic Ummah means, participation in Jihad for the sake of Allah.

Therefore, patience against unforeseen tragedies, for which we have no choice, means to be able to tolerate the injury caused by the calamity without giving up the morale, and to be able to continue the routine normal involvement of the real life, and eventually forgetting the tragedy with the passage of time.

Patience Against Optional Tragedies

This branch of patience surpasses in excellence other situations because in this case a conscientious, and aware human being arises to accomplish a certain goal, and offers resistance against all the hardships and unpleasant events which are inflicted upon him during this course. But in spite of facing all these severe calamities does not get demoralised, depressed, and continues his movement towards the cherished goal.

If we perform an in-depth analysis for research purposes, regarding the state of affairs of human societies in history, looking for lofty human ideals, and specially the goals aspired by divine Prophets, which were always in conflict with the classes representing the tyrants and profiteers, and therefore were always opposed by them; it would become crystal clear that there had always been permanent war and Confrontation between the proclaimers of these higher goals and the powerful classes of tyrants and oppressors.

There are plenty of verses in the Holy Qur'an which throw considerable light regarding the historical Confrontation between the Prophets of Allah and the representative of false deities (Taghout). Since this Confrontation between truth and falsehood is inevitable, therefore it is necessary for the followers of the

path of truth, proclaimers of justice and righteousness, and the truth seekers and researchers following the path of divine Prophets, to know and predict in advance that the path of truth is accompanied by all kinds of hardships and calamities.

The Holy Qur'an, in order to make the believers ready for confronting the problems, announces in advance clearly the potential dangers on the path of truth, and brings the historical realities to their attention as follows:

"Assuredly you will be tried in your property and in your persons and you will hear much wrong from those who were given the scripture before you and from the idolaters. But if you are patient and guard yourselves (against evil), then it is a matter of (great) resolve. " (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 186)

In reality, those who wanted to live like a believer or slave of Allah, and also wanted to be responsible towards the divine obligations and other commitments assigned to them, realised that they will be opposed and subjected to different kind of hardships by their opponents, and they soon witnessed the truth of this Qur'anic prediction with their own eyes in their own period.

Of course, the one who enjoys an important position and rank and whose faith and actions are more determined in the path of Allah would be more effective. And therefore in the same proportion will be subjected to severe hardships and tragedies by the opponents, whose tolerant is indeed difficult. There is a famous narration quoted from Imam Jaffer Sadiq (a.s.) as follows:

"Among all the people, the prophets were inflicted with the harshest calamities, and after them, those who were closer to the prophets were subjected to similar kinds of hardships and calamities".[9](#)

Of course, these calamities are not like the type of unforeseen natural tragedies, as described earlier, for which a human being has absolutely no control or choice, rather in this case everyone has the option to choose. In case he desires and prefers the comfortable and easy life of this world, and to remain immune against these types of calamities, he may elect to do so. What makes these events inevitable is the movement towards the cherished goal.

Every easy going person who prefers the comfortable environment of his home and never takes the trouble to venture outside the four walls of his house, would never face the inconveniences and problems encountered in a journey. But at the same time, he will never benefit from the experiences which are possible only by going through an adventurous journey. He would remain safe throughout his life from such events as, slipping from the mountain peak, facing a beast in the jungle, and being robbed by bandits, which are likely events of an adventurous journey.

Like every naive and irresponsible human being who has not recognized the aims of life, and has not taken any steps towards that goal, and prefers an uneventful life without headaches, would be better advised to follow the decree of the following verse of Sa'di, the famous Iranian poet as follows:

"Although inside the sea there are plenty of material gains. But if you prefer safety, you better stay on the shore!"

According to this logic¹⁰, one could easily choose the option to remain immune from all the troubles, headaches, and injuries etc., which are a pre-requisite for joining the path of the prophets.

Therefore, the calamities on the path of the prophets are optional tragedies, in the sense that they are inflicted upon those, who are taking commands from the following saying of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) as follows:

"By taking giant steps on the divine path, they throw themselves into the whirlpool of tragedies."

Therefore, they succeeded in announcing the positive and definite reply to the divine invitation to support the truth. Hence, patience against optional tragedies is the important type of patience, relative to other categories. This branch of patience reflects the highest degree of human exaltedness in facing the optional tragedies.

This type of patience means accepting tragedies in spite of the fact that all instinctual motives, are forcing him to turn his back in the middle of the path and stop offering resistance anymore; yet he continues offering resistance, and never feels sorry or ashamed to be inflicted with severe blows on the righteous path.

Khabbab bin al-Arth, is ranked among the top Muslims, who accepted the invitation of the holy Prophet (S) to Islam, and offered a lot of sacrifices. Because of his conversion to Islam, he lost a significant portion of his property and possessions. One day, he complained to the Prophet (S) about his severe financial loss. He himself narrates as follows: "The Prophet (S) had spread his robe on the ground, and was reclining with his back against the Holy Ka'bah. When he listened to my complaint, he changed his relaxed sitting position, and his composure changed, and said:

"Your predecessors ¹¹, sometimes were slaughtered by the iron saw, cutting their skin, veins, and flesh all the way down till the bones. But they remained committed to their faith, and never complained, even when in some cases, their bodies were cut off into two equal pieces. Allah will carry this movement (Islam) till its perfection. The distance a rider travels between Sana (Capital of Yemen) and Hadhramut, (Region in the southern part of Yemen) roads and highways will be so safe, under the Islamic state and Islamic system that nobody will be afraid of anything but Allah, and the flock of sheep will not be scared of anyone but wolf."

Therefore, the Prophet (S) by delivering these fiery speeches instilled his followers with the spirit of resistance and iron will, and encouraged them to be Patient, while facing the calamities which were inflicted upon them for the sake of their belief in Allah. It is quite possible that some one by practising patience for discharging Islamic obligations (i.e. patience in obedience), or by offering resistance against instinctual passions (i.e. patience against sin), may be genuinely included in the list of believers and may

start walking on the path whose other end leads to Allah.

But once confronted with accidents and tragedies, which are essential and inevitable part of this journey, he may not withstand, and in the middle of the path, face moral break down, weakness of faith, hopelessness, and other such reasons and on account of impatience, may decide to return without completing the journey, disregarding the dischargement of duties, which were assigned to him. Therefore the completion of journey on this path with certainty, and without any doubt for not breaking in the middle, is made possible only by practicing this type of patience (i.e. patience against optional tragedies).

Ways for Encouraging this Branch of Patience

In view of its importance and fundamental role, many verses of the Holy Qur'an focus on this particular branch of patience, so that Muslims could feel the charm of this special struggle in their heart and spirit. One of the ways for being patient against optional tragedies is to ponder on tragedies which are beyond our control. In order that the confrontation with death may not be difficult for the wayfarers on the path of Allah, the Holy Qur'an reminds us that: Death is destined for all human beings. Those who do not die on the battlefield will eventually die on their beds in their homes. Life and death all belong to Allah, and the deeds which are accounted for his path carry the best of compensation and bonus from Allah the almighty.

"Muhammad is not but a Messenger, (other) Messenger have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dies or is slain, you will turn back on your heels? He who turned back does not hurt Allah the least, and Allah will reward the thankful" (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 144)

"Oh you who believe! be not as those who disbelieved and said of their brethren who went abroad in the land or were fighting in the field: Had they been (here) with us they would not have died or been killed; that Allah may make it anguish in their hearts. Allah gives life and causes death, and Allah beholds of what you do." (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 156)

"Those who, sat at their home said to their brethren (who were fighting for the cause of Allah): If they had been guided by us they would not have been slain: say (unto them, O Muhammad): Then avert death from yourself if you are truthful." (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 168)

The other method consists of reminding the progress accomplished by accepting these calamities on the desired path, and the severe blows dealt to the obstacles on the path by these means.

"Faint not nor grieve, for you will overcome them if you are indeed believers." (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 139)

"If you have received a blow, the disbelieving people have received a blow the like thereof. These are (only) the vicissitudes which we cause to follow one another for mankind, to the end that

Allah may know those who believe and may choose witnesses from among you, and Allah loves not the wrong-doers. " (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 140)

The Holy Qur'an emphasises upon its followers not to worry or be slow because victory eventually belongs to believers. If believers have received blows, similar blows were also dealt to the enemy.

The third method consists of narratives of the predecessors and their role against optional tragedies. The Holy Qur'an, puts the patience and steadfastness of the supporters of prophets and pioneers of Islam in the following language:

"And how many a prophet had fought with whom were a number of devoted men and they lost not heart at what befell them in the way of Allah, nor did they weaken, nor did they demean themselves (before their enemies); Allah loves the steadfast." (The Holy Qur'an, 3: 146)

There are many such verses in the Holy Qur'an describing similar situations, and encouraging believers to tread the path of Prophets. Of course, patience against such optional tragedies, while it is quite difficult and requires strong determination and faith, but at the same time, in itself plays a miraculous role in producing firm resolve and righteous faith; and more important than that is responsible for creation of the ideal society of Islam.

It is for this reason that many verses of the Holy Qur'an as well as of narrations of the infallible Imams, emphasise in different styles the importance of this branch of patience, and have issued the necessary guidelines and instructions about its practice. Since this discussion which is mostly based upon narratives, therefore let us quote one more narration about patience against all kinds of tragedies as follows:

"Abi Basir quotes from Imam Ja'fer Sadiq (a.s.): "A free person is free in all situations, if a terrible tragedy befalls him he is patient, and tragedies and inflictions cannot break him. He might be arrested, chained and tyrannised but converts hardships into comfort like Prophet Joseph the righteous, whose freedom was the least affected by oppression, tyranny and imprisonment."[12](#)

[1.](#) Hurr on the morning of Ashura, came over to Imam Husayn's (a.s.) camp and preferred to die as a martyr. (Ed.)

[2.](#) This has been explained by the lady Fatima daughter of Imam Husayn (a.s.) in her sermon at Kufa.

[3.](#) al-Kafi vol. 2

[4.](#) al-Kafi vol. 2

[5.](#) Since Mua'wiyah's sister Umm-e-Habibah was the Prophet's wife, and like his other spouses was called Mother of Believers. With this misconstrued logic Mua'wiyah's father Abu-Sufyan, a hard-core heathen would be called as "Grandfather of Believers" and his wife Hind, the eater of the liver of the Prophet's uncle Martyr Hamza would be called "Grandmother of Believers"!

[6.](#) Ja'far bin Muhammad 'Roudaki" regarded as the father of Persian poetry, flourished in the Samanid Court at Bukhara in the 9th-10th century AD. (Ed.)

[7.](#) al-Kafi vol. 2, p. 93

[8.](#) Safinatul Bihar vol. 2, p. 5

[9.](#) (Safinatul Bihar)

[10.](#) Like the French poet Gautier who once during wartime stated: "I prefer lying down to sitting, I prefer sitting to standing, and I prefer remaining home to going out. I will know nothing of the war they say has engulfed the whole world, unless a bullet shatters the window of my house" (Tr.)

[11.](#) The Prophet was referring to believers in the mission of earlier Prophets, who in those distant times were subjected to all sorts of inhuman atrocities by the idolaters. The main theme of the messages of all divine Prophets was Monotheism (belief in the One and Only Allah) and Islam, which means submission to Allah's will. (Ed.)

[12.](#) al-Kafi vol. 2 p. 89

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