

Patience and Perseverance

Patience and perseverance, tolerance and forbearance are common traits of the world's most successful people. Patience is a very high quality of man.

Sometimes one errs in differentiating between patience on one hand and laziness, inaction, tolerating oppression and relying on luck on the other. Whereas patience and forbearance guarantees victory and success while laziness and inaction causes misfortune and results in failure.

Now we shall explain the difference between these two opposing qualities illustrating them through different examples:

A gardener desires that there be so many flowers in his garden that it always remains fragrant and the different colors of the flowers please the eyes and the atmosphere of the garden remains good.

If the gardener wants it to be so he must work hard. He should endure the sun and heat and cold and rain. He must become habituated to the pricking of thorns also and he ought to visit his garden often.

Hardships that one must endure to attain the goal are termed as patience.

If a trader wishes to earn profits and increase his wealth he must undertake arduous land, sea and air journeys. If a student desires good marks, a diplomat intends to woo the people they must work hard with utmost steadfastness and determination.

Regarding this Hafiz Shirazi says:

*Patience and success are friends of each other,
Success comes as a result of patience.*

One may wonder why as the causes of success 'steadfastness and firm resolve' is not discussed along with 'work and effort'. It is so because there is a difference between the two. There are some people who do make efforts in the beginning, yet they break down when confronted with difficulties. Looking from this angle, steadfastness and endurance should be regarded as the supports of work and effort. They must be considered as the motive forces assuring that the work continue unceasingly.

Every triumph is not of the same kind. Sometimes it arrives early and sometimes it takes a long time. One must not expect that everything would be done in the same manner and that everything will end in success.

Works differ from one another. There are some easy jobs, which must be undertaken in difficult circumstances. Moreover the capacities and capabilities of people also are different. It is possible but the degrees of their intelligence may not be the same.

If a man is able to learn a vocation and becomes habituated to endure difficulties of the field within a year it does not necessarily mean that another person would also require the same time to master the same line of work.

It is said that George Stephenson, the mathematician who also came to be known as the father of the steam engine was very slow in learning and in making educational progress. Yet he manufactured the world's first railway engine. He produced the world's first passenger train in 1825.

Scholars say: High intelligence is of two types: one is late-coming intellect and another, which come soon.

The lives of great men show this disparity. Hence we can say that success is also of two types: one comes sooner and the other, late.

So if success does not arrive early one must not give up efforts. One must not imagine that victory is impossible and very difficult. A great Muslim scholar Abu Ja'fara is famous for his firm determination and steadfastness. He has said, "I have learnt firm determination from an insect called 'Bijju'. Once I was sitting near a clean and shining pillar in the Jame Masjid when I observed that the tiny insect was attempting to climb the upright stone pillar to reach a lamp that was on the top. I kept sitting whole night and observing until dawn that how relentlessly that insect was struggling to climb up the slippery column. I counted 700 attempts when he was falling down from the middle of the path because the pillar was very smooth and glassy. His legs could not hold on. I was extremely astonished to see the extraordinary determination of that little worm. As it was time for Morning Prayer I got up from my place, made ablution and engaged myself in worship. After concluding my Namaz I looked back toward the pillar to find to my absolute astonishment that, as a result of its perseverance and untiring effort the insect had achieved its aim and was sitting close to the burning light!"

In the words of a melodious poet: Firm determination and perseverance is a nail. Man must take a lesson from it. The more you hit on it, the more firmly it sticks into its place.

The Role of steadfastness in learning art

'Demotson' is a great American orator who had to face failure a number of times while learning the art of public speaking and consequently had to stop speaking for some time. But he was not one who would give up so easily and in order to perfect his art he began to practice in his cellar. Sometimes he shaved half his face to look satirical so that he may be compelled to remain indoors and continue his practice. At last he succeeded.

The story of a famous seventh century Muslim scholar, 'Sakkaki', is also very interesting. He began to

study at the age of thirty. Though his teachers were not at all hopeful of his success he continued his study with a wonderful zeal and enthusiasm. With a view to ascertain the extent of his intelligence a teacher once posed a problem of Shafei jurisprudence before him. The teacher said, "The Shaykh says that the skin of a dog becomes clean and pure by pounding." Sakkaki was supposed to learn this by heart. So he repeated it many times and became ready to recite it when called for. Next day the teacher asked him to recite the sentence in front of all the other students. He stood up at once to say, "The dog said, the teacher's skin becomes clean and pure by pounding." Hearing this, everyone, including the teacher burst into laughter. Yet the aged pupil's determination was so sound that despite this experience he did not give up his study, but followed the same course for another ten years. Of course, due to advancing age, his grasping power was becoming weak day by day. Once he had gone to the forest to memorize his lessons where he noticed that drops of rainwater constantly fell on a rock and made marks on that hard stone. He thought over it and told himself, "My heart is not harder than this rock. If drops of knowledge fall on it constantly like these raindrops they too would certainly leave imprints on it, at least to some extent." He returned home and began to study with added zeal. At last, as a result of his untiring and continuous efforts and nonstop endeavor he became a distinguished personality of the literary circles of the Arab world. He authored a book, which was, for many years, a textbook in the course of Arabic education.

A Spring and a Mountain

A spring or a rivulet always flows from the mountain downwards. On its path it has to face many obstructions. Sometimes its water does not move further for several hours. Hurdles try hard to restrict its flow but it does not relent in its effort to push forward and weaken the hurdles every moment. Finally it succeeds in carving out its course by any means and in any way.

Another example is worth attention. The late Malik-us-Shoraa "Bahaar" has put this truth in verse thus:

A rivulet sprang from a mountain.

A rock came in its way.

It asked mildly to the rock: O kind one, please give me way.

But since the rock had a rigid heart, it slapped it and told it harshly to go away from there.

I am not to move from here even if there is a flood.

Who are you to make me move? Why should I care for you?

The spring did not get disappointed with this harsh lofty claim.

It kept on putting pressure and tried hard to find a way.

By making constant effort you can attain anything you like.

Those who engage in public welfare require more patience, perseverance, endurance and steadfastness. Unless they have these virtues they cannot move a step further.

An English philosopher was of the view that anybody can do anything. In the light of this principle he went out riding with a companion. On their way they came across a low wall. The expert rider spurred

his horse and crossed it. The philosopher attempted to do so but could not succeed and he fell off his mount. But he got up and tried again, but again he failed. Then at last he succeeded in crossing the wall.

‘Odobon’ was a famous American zoologist who had drawn some pictures and after that he went on a journey putting away the papers safely in a box. But during his absence a rat chewed away those pictures and on returning home when he opened the box he saw that all his hard work was destroyed and he became very sad. Yet he remained determined and drew all the pictures afresh.

Carlyle had written a volume on the history of France. A friend of his borrowed the first volume though it was the only copy with him. This book was destroyed in fire due to the carelessness of the friend’s servant. With profound patience and perseverance Carlyle rewrote that volume.

Harvey had discovered blood circulation but he continued experimenting for eight years. Only then did he become sure of this. Then he put forth his view with simple arguments but met with strong opposition from all sides. A group called him mad and a lunatic. His friends began to avoid his company but he continued to defend his stand strongly. Today his view is accepted by all and is considered a fact of science.

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