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Patience

Patience is the moderate steadfastness against misfortunes. It is also defined as to compel oneself to stand the necessities of the Sharia including the matters to do and the matters not to do. It indicates wisdom, broadmindedness, high morality, and great steadfastness. In more than seventy places in the holy Quran, God refers to and praises patience. He promises the patient of His contentment and liking:

"Allah loves those who have patience (3:146)."

He promises He should always support them:

"Allah is with those who have patience (8:46)."

He promises He should grant them abundance rewarding:

"Allah will recompense the deeds of those who have exercised patience, without keeping an account (39:10)."

He promises He should confer upon them with a variety of kindness:

"We shall test you through fear, hunger, and loss of life, property, and crops. (Muhammad), give glad news to the people who have patience and in difficulty say, "We are the servants of Allah and to Him we shall all return." It is they who will receive blessings and mercy from Allah and who follow the right guidance. (2:155-7)"

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "Paradise is surrounded by misfortunes and patience. He who shows steadfastness against misfortunes of this world will be in Paradise. Hell, likewise, is surrounded by lusts and appetites. He who allows himself to have these lusts and appetites will be in Hell1."

"In his final hours, my father embraced me to the chest and said, 'son, stand the right even if it is bitter, for if you do it you will be granted your rewards without interrogation2."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "The rank of patience for faith is as same as the rank of the head for the body.

When there is no patience, there will be no faith[3].”

“The believer who shows steadfastness against misfortune that befalls him will be given the rewards of one thousand shahids.”

One may ask how people of patience are given the rewards of one thousand shahids who are the heroes of patience in the fields of jihad? To answer this wonderment, we say that people who practice patience deserve the rewards of those shahids although God will grant them more rewards.

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “He who is not saved by steadfastness will surely be killed by impatience[4].”

Categories of Patience

Steadfastness against Misfortunes and Calamities

This category of patience is the greatest because it implies self-dignity, wide-mindedness, unruffledness, and progression. Man is naturally the subject of misfortunes that befall him unwillingly while he has no ability to stop them. The best thing that such a man may practice in such states is to armor himself with steadfastness without which man will surely collapse and become a palatable bite of grieves:

“Give glad news to the people who have patience and in difficulty say, "We are the servants of Allah and to Him we shall all return." It is they who will receive blessings and mercy from Allah and who follow the right guidance. (***2:155-7***)***”***

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “If you practice patience, the destined calamity will befall you while you are rewarded. But if you lose your temper, the destined calamity will befall you while you are sinned[5].”

It is worth mentioning that patience that is described as nice stands for the steadfastness against the inescapable calamities, such as loss of a dear person, usurpation of the wealth, or persecution of the enemy.

Submission to calamities, while the ability to protect oneself against them is available, is a sort of foolhardiness that is denied by Islam. The thing that divests of the virtue of patience is the excessive intolerance, such excessive complaint and grumbling. To give vent to the mental pains by means of moderate weeping and to complain about the sufferance of a disease are among the necessities of the vital emotions. The Prophet (S) said when his son Ibrahim died:

“The eyes shed tears and the heart grieves, but we will say nothing that may displease the Lord.”

Within the folds of history, there are many stories carrying glorious examples from the past generations who practiced patience remarkably:

It is narrated that Khosrow the Persian king, once, was angry with Bozorgmehr; therefore, he detained him in a gloomy house and ordered to enchain him with iron. Several days later, the king sent some people to investigate his state. As they visited him in that gloomy house, they found him tranquil and cheerful. They were astonished; therefore, they wondered: “How can you enjoy such peace of mind while you are in such miserable state?”

He answered: “In fact, I have made, mixed, and used six humors that helped me keep such manner. The first humor is trust in God. The second is to believe that every destined matter will inevitably occur. The third is the fact that steadfastness is the best thing that the inflicted person should opt. The fourth is the fact that what should I do if I do not practice patience, since I will not make impatience prevail on me. The fifth is that there may be some others who suffer harsher calamities. The sixth is that relief may come in any moment[6].”

Imam ar-Rida narrated the following story on the authority of his fathers (a): One day, Prophet Solomon said to his companions: “Although Allah has granted me a kingdom that no one will ever have its like, made the wind, humankind, jinn, birds, and beasts subservient to me, taught me the languages of birds, and granted me a part of everything, I have never passed a whole daytime with pure pleasure. Tomorrow, I want to go to the surface of my palace in order to watch my kingdoms. Thus, do not let anybody visit me so that nothing will ruin my pleasure.”

The next day, he took his stick in the hand, went to the highest point in his palace, and leaned on his stick watching his kingdoms cheerfully. Suddenly, a young handsome man came to him from one of the corners of his palace. “Who permitted you to enter my palace on this day that I have dedicated to my seclusion?” asked the prophet (a). “I entered here by the permission of the lord of this palace,” said the young man. “Well,” said Solomon, “the lord is worthier of this than I am. Who are you?” “I am the angel of death,” answered the young. “What for are you here?” asked Solomon. “I am here for grasping your soul,” answered the angel. “Do it, then,” said the prophet, “This is surely the day of my pleasure. Allah has rejected for me to have pleasure other than meeting Him.” Hence, the angel grasped the soul of the Prophet Solomon while he was leaning on his stick[7]”

Standing the Obedience and Perseverance against the Disobedience to God

Man, naturally, rejects the obligatory regulations that delimit his freedoms, even if such regulations are put for sake of achieving his pleasure. Thus, man does not submit to such regulations except by means of inducement, encouragement, warning, or threat.

Seeing that the practicing of acts of obedience to God and the avoidance of acts of disobedience to him are two difficult deeds, to stand the obedience to God and to persevere against the disobedience to Him are within the most important obligations:

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “Stand the acts of obedience to Allah and practice the perseverance against

the acts of disobedience to Him. This world is only one hour: you cannot find the taste of pleasure or bitterness of all that which passed, and you can never realize that which has not come yet. Hence, show steadfastness in that hour and you will be surely happy[8]."

"On the Day of Resurrection, a group of people will go straightly to knock the door of Paradise. As they are asked about their identities, they will answer they are people of patience. As they are asked about the fields of their patience, they will answer that they stand the acts of obedience to Allah and persevere against the acts of disobedience to Him. Then, Allah will say, 'They have told the very truth. Let them be in Paradise.' This is the indication of Allah's saying:

Allah will recompense the deeds of those who have exercised patience, without keeping an account. (***39: 10***)[9]"

"Patience is of two forms: steadfastness against misfortunes. It is good and fair. What is better and fairer is the ability to avoid what Allah has forbidden[10]."

Patience of the Graces

This category of patience stands for self-control against the inducements of ingratitude. As a matter of fact, steadfastness against tragedies of this life is not preferable to self-control against pleasures, passions, and charms of this world. The neglect of steadfastness against misfortunes results in destroying impatience. Likewise, negligence of self-control in luxury results in ingratitude and exaggeration, which are both detestable:

"The human being still tends to rebel when he becomes wealthy (***96:6-7***)***."***

Patience of graces means to observe the rights of such graces and exploit them in the fields of charity, such as helping the miserable, aiding the persecuted, settling the believers' needs, and avoiding slips of ingratitude and vanity.

Advantages of Patience

Patience is the shelter of the grievous because it supplies with tranquility. It is also security against intolerance and anxiety. Without patience, the afflicted people would fall in and become the prey of mental and physical defects. Patience, too, is the expected hope due to which God has prepared the great rewards.

How to Acquire Patience?

To acquire patience it is recommended:

- To look in the virtues and nice traits of patience.

● To ponder over the disadvantages that impatience leaves on people's lives. Impatience does not settle a need, save from acts of God, or change a reality. It only results in wearisome. In his How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, Dale Carnegie says: "In the last eight years, I have read every book, magazine, and article that dealt with worry. Do you want to know the wisest and most beneficial advice that I extracted through such prolonged survey? It is 'satisfy yourself with the inescapable.'"

● To sympathize with the actuality of this life, which is based upon troubles and concerns. Indeed, this world is not the abode of comfort. It is a transitory place of test for the believers. Like students who exhaust themselves in the tests for sake of obtaining high grades, the believers in this world are examined for recognizing the scope of their faith and conviction:

"Do people think they will not be tested because they say, 'We have faith?' We had certainly tried those who lived before them to make sure who were truthful in their faith and who were liars (29:2-3)."

● To learn lessons from the sufferings of the great persons who exercised patience for sake of God purely, and

● To practice matters of entertainment that help in alleviating the pains and relaxing the nerves, such as traveling, visiting charming views, and reading amusing stories.

1. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
2. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
3. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
4. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
5. Quoted from Nahj ul-Balagha.
6. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 2 page 7.
7. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 1/614 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Ridha).
8. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 63 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
9. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
10. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 65 (as quoted from al- Kafi).

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