

Fast 7: More on the quality of patience

“And do not take a small price for Allah’s covenant. Surely what is with Allah is better for you, if only you knew! What is with you passes away and what is with Allah is enduring. And We shall certainly give to those who are **patient** their reward for the best of what they did.” (16:95–96)

وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا إِنَّمَا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ
﴿٩٥﴾ مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ ۗ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

The impatient, in order to get a quick worldly reward, even if it is small, are ready to violate the promise (covenant) they made with God to be truthful and honest. That gain will be lost in this very world. Those who adhere to the right way, morals and behaviour, and **wait patiently** for success, are rewarded “for the best of what they did”. Allah overlooks their failings and faults, and takes into account their best deeds.

- **Waiting patiently for promise of Allah:** Ten of the twelve sons of the prophet Jacob conspired to abandon his son Joseph in the wilderness because of their jealousy of him, so that he may be lost to the family. They then came home and made a false excuse to Jacob that Joseph was lost without their knowing. Jacob knew from Allah that the family would meet Joseph again. On hearing their excuse, he told them:

“So **patience is best**. And Allah is He Whose help is sought against what you describe.” (12:18)

فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا
تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

- Later, this time through no fault of these ten sons, they were forced to leave their brother Benjamin in another country and he too was now separated from Jacob. On hearing of this second loss, Jacob told them:

“So **patience is best**. Maybe Allah will bring them together to me. Surely He is the Knowing, the Wise.” (12:83)

فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ ۗ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَأْتِيَنِي بِهِمْ
جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٨٣﴾

And he added:

“He said: I complain of my grief and sorrow only to Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know.” (12:86)

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

Jacob's patience in waiting for Allah's promise was fulfilled when they discovered that Joseph, after much suffering since being abandoned, had risen to the high position of Finance Minister of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

- The Holy Prophet Muhammad is told by Allah, again and again, to be patient when facing abuse and opposition:

“And be patient, and your patience is not (possible) but by (the help of) Allah...” (16:127)

وَأَصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

“So have patience (O Prophet), as men of resolution, the messengers, had patience...” (46:35)

فَأَصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرْنَا وَلَوْ الْعَزِيمِينَ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ

“So bear patiently what they say, and celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify (Him) during the hours of the night and parts of the day, that you may be well pleased.” (20:130)

فَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ أَنْتَائِ
الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ ﴿١٣٠﴾

“And bear patiently what they say and turn away from them with a dignified withdrawal.” (73:10)

وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا

جَيِّلاً ﴿١٠﴾

The words “what they say” refer to the abuse and ridicule which the Holy Prophet faced from his opponents. He is told to turn away from abusers in a dignified way.

- Muslims are taught in the Quran to bear patiently the abuse they will face from the opponents of Islam:

“And you will certainly hear from those who have been given the Book before you and from the idolaters much abuse. And if you are patient and keep your duty, surely this is an affair of great resolution.” (3:186)

وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا ۗ وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَاتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

Unfortunately, Muslims have not acted on this teaching in recent years, and in response to abuse many of them have resorted to violence and killing. This has further damaged the image of Islam, more than the abuse to which they were responding.