

Fast 6: The quality of patience

- As fasting is meant to develop in us the quality of patience, here we take a look at what the Quran says about patience. The Arabic word for 'patience' is *sabr* (صبر).
- Patience is exercised in two different types of situation:

1. Waiting for the results of your efforts to bear fruit. The Quran says:

“And **be patient**, for surely Allah does not waste the reward of the doers of good.” (11:115)

وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

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2. Accepting and bearing a loss of some kind which is permanent. The Quran says:

“And We shall certainly try you with something of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits. And give good news to **the patient**, Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: Surely we are Allah's, and to Him we shall return.” (2:155–156)

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

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- The Quran has made exercise of patience as one of its fundamentals teachings. In one place, along with listing the basic beliefs and practices required of a Muslim, that is: “righteous is the one who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets”, and “and keeps up prayer and gives the due charity”, it mentions also that Muslims are:

“the **patient** in distress and affliction” (2:177).

وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ

- The Quran asks us to show resolute patience in serving, or worshipping, Allah:

“Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, so serve Him and be **patient** in His service. Do you know anyone equal to Him?” (19:65)

رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ

سَمِيًّا

This teaches that in the worship of, and obedience to, Allah, we must be constant, steadfast and unwavering. What we can achieve through serving Allah cannot be seen in a short time.

- Patience is twinned with prayer as a means of seeking the assistance of Allah. The Quran says:

“And seek assistance through **patience and prayer**, and this is hard except for the humble ones...” (2:45)

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

“O you who believe, seek assistance through **patience and prayer**; surely Allah is with the patient.” (2:153)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

- The Quran contains prayers in which people asked Allah to grant them patience. When King Saul led out the army of the Israelites, in which David was a soldier, against the army of the formidable warrior called Goliath, they prayed thus:

“And when they went out against Goliath and his forces, they said: Our Lord, pour out **patience** on us and make our steps firm and help us against the disbelieving people.” (2:250)

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

The enchanters or magicians of the Pharaoh rejected his religion and accepted Moses when they saw that Moses was true. Pharaoh threatened them with punishment, and they prayed:

“Our Lord, pour out on us **patience** and cause us to die in submission (i.e., as worshippers of the One God!)” (7:126)

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

- If you keep on working with **patience** against opposition, you will not suffer harm:

“If good befalls you, it grieves them, and if an evil afflicts you, they rejoice at it. And if you are **patient** and keep your duty, their struggle will not injure you in any way.” (3:120)

إِنْ تَمَسَّكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُومُهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾