

The Virtues of Sabr in Islam

As-salámu ‘alaikum wa rahmatul láhi wa barakátuh!”

“A-úthu billáhi minash shaytánir rajeem. Bismilláhir rahmánir raheem.

Al hamdu lillahi nahmaduhu wanasta’eenahu, wanastagh-firuhu, wanatoobu ilayhi, wana’oothu Billaahi min shuroori an-fusinaa, wamin sayyi aati a’maalinaa.

May- Yahdillahu fa huwal muhtad, wa may- yudlill falan tajidaa lahu waliyan murshida. Wa ash-hadu an Laa ilaaha ill-Alláh, wahdahoo laa shareeka lah, wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhoo warasooluh”

In the name Of God, Most merciful, Most compassionate.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This week’s khutba is linked to the importance of sabr (patience) and its virtues in our religion Islam.

The Meaning of Sabr

The Arabic word sabr implies many shades of meaning, which is impossible to comprehend in one English word. It implies (1) patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty; (2) patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose; (3) systematic as opposed to spasmodic or chance action; (4) a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat, or suffering, as opposed to murmuring or rebellion. Sabr assumes different dimensions depending upon which aspect of life is the point of reference.

Sabr is control against all that we dislike (tests and tribulations that befall us) and all that we like (temptations, desires).

Sabr is only exercised by humans (not animals or Angels); animals follow all their carnal desires. Angels have no desire. As humans we are not born with sabr. This can be seen by newborn babies and toddlers where you cannot reason with them and what they want, they must get immediately. Therefore sabr is a virtue, a characteristic which we develop and acquire through time and age, and it is also something that we WORK to achieve.

However, the greater the goal or outcome we want to reach the greater the sabr needed or the harder the sabr required. The GREATEST SABR is needed to reach our biggest /ultimate goal which is entrance to Al-Jannah. Which is why the greatest hardships surround it.

4 levels or types of sabr can be enumerated:

1) Patience in the face of a calamity, at the moment of grief

In a letter of condolence dictated for Mu’aadz Ibn Jabal on the death of his son, the Prophet sal-Allaahu alaihi wa sallam said, **“May Allaah increase your reward and bestow you patience, and enable us and you to be thankful to Him. Our lives, our wealth and our families are blissful gifts that are trusts temporarily entrusted. Allaah gave you the opportunity to enjoy (your**

son gifted to you in trust) with happiness and pleasure, and then he took it from you in return for a big reward. May He bestow upon you blessings, mercy and guidance, if you restrain yourself in expectation for His reward. So, be patient and do not let wailing destroy your reward, to be sorry afterwards. Remember wailing neither brings back the dead, nor removes the grief. What had to happen has happened.” (At-Tabaraani)

The greatest examples of sabr are the prophets. For instance, Prophet Eyyub (as) is known as the prophet of sabr (Manifests the name As-Sabur). When inflicted with severe tests and illnesses, Eyyub (as) prays **“Ya Allah! I am inflicted and you are the Most merciful.” He doesn’t ask to be relieved; he just acknowledges Allah’s mercy. Allah refers to Him by stating “We find Him in great sabr.”** He doesn’t complain.

Also, the prophet Yaqub (as) loses his beloved son Yusuf (as) he states **“A beautiful sabr I will try to exert and Allah I will depend upon”** And he repeats the same dua when he loses his son Bunyamin.

Sabr is an issue of attitude. The outcome doesn’t change. Whatever Allah has decreed for us will be. Whether we accept it or reject it, the situation won’t change. However the end result is in our hand in that we can either be rewarded or punished.

2) Sabr in the face of desires / haram

In today’s environment we are all surrounded, even followed by haram. Open the computer and all sorts pop-up. But do we choose to follow our desires or do we choose to turn away? Do we remember that we will be accountable for our actions?

Prophet Yusuf’s (as) example is quite distinctive here. When he was invited by the King’s wife to commit adultery, he resisted and said NO. This sort of sabr incorporates elements of God consciousness as is stressed in the Quran: “For God is with the God-conscious and the pious” (2:194).

3) Sabr in fulfilling the commands of Allah. Patience in our continual worship of Him.

We do everything for the sake of Allah. If it wasn’t for Allah there is nothing waking us up for fajr prayer, or calling us to fast for 30 days. We surrender to his will without question.

As indicated in the story of Ibrahim (as) when he sees a dream of himself slaughtering his son Ismail (as). He tells his son “I dreamt I was killing you.” He doesn’t say “I was commanded” for fear of scaring him. Ismail (as) replies, “Do what you are commanded to do.” He knows that a dream seen by his father, a prophet, is a command from Allah. The third type/level of sabr is to fulfil the commands of Allah and to be steadfast.

4) Sabr in the facing the hardship of delivering the message (Doing Da’wah or Hizmet)

In the third type of sabr, we exert patience for our own benefit. In this fourth one, we exert patience for the benefit of other people. Conveying the message of Allah is hard and will never be easy. But it also holds the greatest rewards of all. Enabling somebody to attain the faith holds the greatest reward beyond comparison. **“One**

person believing in Allah is better than everything the sun dawns and sets upon” – meaning everything / all of creation.

Reward for Sabr

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this part of the khutba, I'd like to mention some hadiths and verses which state the rewards of sabr.

“Whoever practices sabr, Allah (swt) gives him sabr. And no one can be given anything better or more far-reaching (comprehensive) than sabr.” (Aboo S'eed Khudri in Bukhaari and Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, “Allah (swt) says: O son of Adam! If you remained patient restraining yourself and expecting my reward at the initial shock, I will not be happy without rewarding you with Jannah.” (From Abee Umaamah in Ibn Maajah)

The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, **“Wondrous are the believer's affairs. For him there is good in all his affairs, and this is true only for a believer. If he encounters something troubling, he remains steadfast with patience, and that is good for him. If he experiences something pleasing, he thanks Allah, and that is good for him.”** (Reported from Suhaib in the Muslim)

“And practice sabr, certainly Allaah does not let the reward of the Muhsineen be lost.” (Younus 11:115)

The people who practice sabr will be entered into the beautiful, everlasting Jannah and angels of Allah will welcome them with: **“Peace be upon you for the sabr you practised. Excellent indeed is the final home.”** (Ar-Ra'd 13:24)

“And He will reward them for their sabr in the form of Jannah and silk, reclining on raised thrones wherein they will not see sun or cold.” (Ad-Dahr 76:12-13)

“Those who practice sabr will be rewarded their recompense without measure.” (Az-Zumar 39:10)

“We will certainly reward those who practice sabr according to the best of their actions they used to perform.” (An-Nahl 16:96)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As a conclusion for this khutba, once again I'd like to pray for all of us to be included in the group of persons who are being rewarded by the virtue of sabr.

Alhamdu lillahi Rabbil 'Aalameen. Was-salaatu was-salaamu alaa Khayril mursaleen. Muhammadin-nabeey-yil Ummiy-ye, wa-'alaa aalihee, wa sahbihee, aj-ma'een.

Ammaa ba'ad:

Innalláha wa malaaiikata yusallúna alan nabi. Yá ay yuhal latheena ámanu sallú alayhi wasalli mú tas leema. Allahumma salli alá Muhammad, wa ala áli Muhammad, kama salayta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali Ibrahim. Allahumma barik ala Muhammad, wa alaa áli Muhammad, kama barakta ala Ibrahim, wa ala ali ibrahim. Fil ála meen, innaka hameedun majeed.”