

Fast 9: The Prophet's steadfastness and patience in difficulties

- In all the verses below, the Holy Prophet Muhammad is addressed. The word “you” is in the singular, and the command “be patient” and other commands are also in the singular:

“These are announcements relating to the unseen which We reveal to you; you did not know them — (neither) you nor your people — before this. So be patient. Surely the (good) end is for the dutiful.” — 11:49

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ
تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا فَاصْبِرْ
إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

Just before this verse the story of the prophet Noah has been related, starting at v. 25 and ending at v. 48. But the “announcements relating to the unseen” here in v. 49 does not mean the history of Noah. It means the fate of the opponents of the Holy Prophet, which is indicated in the story of Noah. The Holy Prophet is told by God: *Be patient*. This is to inform him that patient waiting was needed for him before he would see that the fate of his opponents would be like the fate of Noah’s opponents.

Not only in the case of Noah, but more generally the histories of the previous prophets were revealed to the Holy Prophet for the following reason: “And all We relate to you from the account of the messengers is to strengthen your heart with it” (11:120). So he would know that patience will lead to success, as it did with previous prophets.

- The verse below is a very early revelation, occurring in the second passage that the Holy Prophet received in his revelation after being appointed as Prophet and Messenger:

“and for the sake of your Lord, be patient.”
— 74:7

وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾

- In revelations of a later period at Makkah, he was told the same thing:

“So be patient with a goodly patience.” —
70:5

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٥﴾

“So be patient; surely the promise of Allah is true; and let not those worry you who have no certainty.” — 30:60

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفُّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

By the time the second verse quoted above was revealed, in the middle of his time as Prophet at Makkah before his emigration, he was facing severe opposition. In adverse circumstances, when complete lack of success would have been so demoralising, the

Holy Prophet was reminded to be patient, that is, to wait patiently for success, and to be steadfast in sticking to his mission.

If you are doing the right thing, you will succeed in the end. Unfortunately, today's Muslims think they can triumph in the world by abandoning all self-control and taking emotional measures forbidden by Islam. They do not realise that they have to take the long, hard and slow road of self-reform and steadfast propagation of Islam.

- The Quran further says that all messengers of God had to be determined to show patience, and so should the Holy Prophet.

“And messengers indeed were rejected before you, but they were patient when rejected and persecuted, until Our help came to them. And there is none to change the words of Allah. And there has already come to you some information about the messengers.” — 6:34

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبْتَ رَسُولٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا
وَأُوذُوا حَتَّىٰ أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَ
لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِن نَّبَايَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

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

فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعُرْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ

It is a very powerful statement, “there is none to change the words of Allah”, saying that the promises made by God cannot be defeated by anyone else. That was why “information about the messengers”, the earlier prophets, had been revealed to the Holy Prophet, to assure him that God's help would come, but he would have to bear rejection and persecution patiently before that help came. The messengers were people who were resolute (*ulul-‘azm*) in adhering to patience.

- The Holy Prophet Muhammad faced a great deal of verbal abuse from his enemies. God gave him the following teaching about how to handle this abuse:

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

وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيلًا ﴿١٠﴾

He is instructed here to bear patiently any abuse, ridicule or mockery from his opponents, and then to withdraw from their company in a dignified, well-mannered way, not in a way descending to their level of misbehaviour, rudeness and abuse.

- Not only the Holy Prophet, but Muslims generally are given the same teaching:

“You will **certainly be tried** in your property and your persons. And you will

تُجَابَلُونَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَلَتَسْمَعَنَّ مِنَ

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

الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا أَذَىٰ كَثِيرًا ۚ وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ
مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

Again here, to be patient and keep your duty is called one of the matters (*umūr*) in which one should show firm resolve and determination (*‘azm*). Hence the matter is one of those which are known as *‘azm-ul-umūr*.