

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Hardships and its Benefits

By Qazi Fazlullah

Praise be to Allah, Blessing and peace may be upon his beloved Mohammad (SAS), his family, companions and followers.

One of the attributes of Allah is “Al-Hakeem” i.e. the all Wise. Wisdom is to know and find out the ultimate wisdom in a thing or action and one who knows that is a wise person. Whenever he does something, he knows the result before its happening so he is a clever and smart person as well. He can take precautions as well to avoid any adverse situation. Regarding Allah being All-Wise doesn't mean he knows the results only but it means that as a creator and doer, whatever he created or whatever he does, it has wisdom though most of the time we do not know that wisdom is a thing or action. It is said the action of a wise one will never be without wisdom and whenever the wisdom is known then each and everything is considered useful and beneficial.

Same is the case of events which is considered a hardship, calamity, or misfortune, it harms us and we get disappointed but it has its own wisdom therein. Here we have discussed this subject in the light of Shariah, if understood it will make our life easy insha Allah. May Allah protect us from calamities and if it happened, then may He give us the courage and power to bury it and to show patience and stability.

Aamin

Allah is “Wajibul-Wujud” which means He is because of Himself, eternal, having no need to anyone or anything nor any change can come to him, While the whole

world is His creature, created by Him, so the whole world needs Him every time. The world and the things therein are getting changed, accepting it, but even requires it as it is “Mumkinul-Wujud”

Amongst his creature there are human beings. He gave them the intellect to utilize this world, but as these humans are from amongst the “Mumkinul-Wujud” so they have changes in their lives, sometimes good and sometimes otherwise. When they are in a good condition, very few of them are grateful to Allah, but mostly they are proud, boasting and thinking of themselves very high and when they are touched by evils, hardships, calamities, then they are disappointed and crying, yes some of them show patience and stability.

This human by nature is looking for good and running away of the bads, but some of them are trying to have all the goods in this world and do not think of the hereafter. While he has to be a balanced one looking for good here and also in the hereafter.

Imam Waliullah Dehlawi said, “The good in this world is called “intifaq” (having convenience) and the good in the hereafter is called “iqtirab” Going or coming near (to Allah).

Now one who in his view is thinking for the good in the hereafter is getting

humiliated in the life of this world, not having his needs and necessities fulfilled, so he either begs or borrows or falling prey to starvation, which is a type of slavery and that is against the concept of “tawheed” as it means the lordships of Allah alone and one who is devoted to the good of this world only to have luxuries and do not think of the hereafter, gets lost in this world and is called animal in the terms of Quran

The Prophet used to make a “Dua” after prayer, “O Allah, I seek refuge of being an oppressor or oppressed.” As an oppressor is a loser in the hereafter and the oppressed one here gets humiliated.

So world and worldly life is a combination of opposites so here there will be good days and there will be bad days as well, because this world is a “Mumkinal-Wujud” but we can say with one difficulty there are two comforts, one before that difficulty otherwise he would not have felt any difficulty if there would not have been a comfort before and another comfort will come after this difficulty as situations do not stand still forever because this world is “Mumkinul-Wujud.”

"So verily, with the hardship there is relief, verily, with the hardship there is relief" (94:5-6)

Allah has used the word "Usr" twice in proper form of a noun while "Yusr" he used twice in common form of a noun "Usr" means hardship and "Yusr" means relief or

comfort and in Arabic grammar it is said that repetition of a proper noun means the same one noun while repetition in common form differs the second one from the first one, but because of his over sensitivity in hardship he starts complaining very soon even though he had comforts before also.

"Verily Man was created very impatient, irritable (discontent, crying a lot) when an evil (hardship) touches him and hindrance maker when a good touches him." (70:19-21)

At the time of hardship if someone will look at the goods he received from Allah, he will never cry, he will feel ashamed of cries. Then one has to look at the source of hardship and comfort and that is Allah and if he loves Allah then the hardship he receives there from he will never feel bad with, but he will try to strengthen his connection and relation with Allah furthermore. His relation of love, obedience, and submission, but it needs constant practice.

"And if they would have done what they are admonished with, it would have been better for them and would have strengthened (their faith in Allah)." (4:66)

This strength makes him understand that everything is in the hands of Allah so one has to surrender to. Hardships and calamities are events and events have to happen as this world is "Mumkinul-Wujud" and event itself is not a calamity, but the

actual calamity is the feeling of the event and that's why one event is a hardship for one person but not for the other as the first one got affected with but the later did not.

Events are the part of natural system like coming of day and night so no one can control it. The only thing in human approach is not to get so much grieved by the event, in other words we can say that the natural system we can not change it so we may try to change ourselves and our feelings.

People in this world are of two types:

(i) Enslaved by their intellect and they try to uproot or to stop calamities with their own planning and sources and this is an unsuccessful exercise.

(ii) Those who try to establish their connection with the original source of each and everything means Allah. These types of people enjoy the hardships as well. The slave of intellect will never be in ease and comfort and the slave of Allah will never be in hardship. The slave of intellect is very proud and arrogant as he believes in his own tactics, while the slave of Allah is always very humble, down to earth, even when his life is at stake, still he puts his trust in Allah as the believer from the people of Firawn said, "and soon you (Firawn and his people) will recall what I am telling you and I leave (hand over) my affair to Allah. Verily Allah is the All-Seeing of his slaves" (44:44).

The slaves of their intellect believe in the means that this is comfort or hardship

and this is a horrible mistake because they try to collect and accumulate as much means of comfort as they can and by this they have made their life miserable.

"Say, Shall we tell (show) you the biggest loser in respect of deeds? Those whose efforts are lost in (Making the life of this world and they think that they are doing good. They are those who deny the rules of their Lord and the Meeting with Him, so their deeds are in vain and on the day of resurrection We shall not give them any weight" (18:103-105).

For being in comfort one has to be in constant touch with Allah.

"Say, Verily Allah sends astray whom He wills and guides unto Himself who turn to him in repentance. Those who believed and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. Those who believe and practice good deeds, good is for them and a best place of return."

Why do hardships and calamities come and befall?

Simple is that this is the established natural system of Allah and it will happen.

"No calamity befall, but with the leave of Allah and whosoever believes in Allah (that it is from Allah and decreed by Him) He guides his heart and Allah is the all

Knower of everything" (64:11).

And when the heart is guided, then there is no disturbance, no confusion, no hesitation and no compromise. To be in love with someone is the function of heart so no one can address the heart of that person. Doesn't matter if he's wrong he will be in this regard, same is the case of the fault of a true believer as faith is also the function of the heart so a true believer will sacrifice everything even his life for his faith.

Also our own deeds bring us certain after effects. Those effects are either its physical results or its spiritual after shocks. Allah said, "And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have done, while he pardons so much" (42:30). Then these misfortunes are the "Taqdeer" (pre-ordained decree) of Allah.

"No Calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the book (of decrees) before we bring it into existence. Verily that is easy for Allah in order that you may not be sad over matters that you fail to get, nor rejoice because of that which has been given to you, and Allah likes not prideful boasters."(57:22).

In this world misfortunes befall Muslims and non-Muslims, good and bad people as well and no one can say that it befell a non-Muslim or a bad person as a punishment. But we have to look at that time and also after the situation is changed

that how was the reaction of a person when he was facing the calamity and how he is after that? In this regard we should look into certain "Aayat" of the Holy Quran that what Allah says, as a Creator he knows the qualities and the shortcomings of humans.

1. "Verily Man is created impatient; irritable (discontent, crying) when an evil (misfortune) touches him and hindrance maker (in the path of Allah) when a good touches him" (70:19-21).

2. "And when a harm touches man he invokes Us, lying down on his side or sitting or standing (means every time and in each form he is) but when we have removed his harm from him, he passes on his way as if he had never invoked Us for a harm that touched him. The same way it is made fair seeming to transgressors" (10:12).

3. "And when we let mankind taste of Mercy after that some adversity afflicted them. Behold! They take to plotting against our "Aayat" say, Allah is more swift in planning! Certainly our Messengers record all that which you plot. It is He who enables you to travel through land and sea, till when you are in the ships and they sail with them with a favorable wind and they are glad therein, then there comes a stormy wind and the waves come to them from all sides and they think that they are encircled therein, they invoke Allah making their fait pure for Him alone, saying if you deliver us from this, we shall truly be the grateful. But when he delivered them, Behold! They

rebel in the earth wrongfully O Mankind! Your rebellion is only against your own selves a brief enjoyment of this worldly life, then unto Us is your return and we shall inform you that which you used to do." (10:22-24)

4. "And if we give man a taste of Mercy from Us and then withdrawal it from him, verily he is despairing ungrateful. But if we let him taste good after evil has touched him he is sure to say ills have departed from me surely he is exultant and boastful" (11:9, 10)

5. "And whatever of blessings you have, it is from Allah, then when harm touches you, unto Him you cry aloud for help. Then when he has removed the harm from you, Behold! Some of you associate others in worship with their Lord. So they deny that which we have bestowed on them! Then enjoy, but soon you will come to know" (16:53-55)

6. "And when harm touches you upon the sea, (Then) Those whom you call upon besides him vanish from you except Him, but when he brings you safely to land, you turn away and man is ever ungrateful" (11:67)

7. "And when harm touches men, they cry sincerely only to their Lord, turning to him in repentance, but when he gives them a taste of His mercy, Behold! A party of them associate partners in worship with their Lord. So as to be ungrateful for that

which We have given them so enjoy soon you will come to know." (30:33, 34)

8. "And when some hurt touches man, he cries to his Lord turning to Him in repentance, but when He bestows a favor upon him from Himself, he forgets that for which he cried before, and he sets up rivals to Allah, in order to mislead others from his path. Say, Take pleasure in your disbelief for a while. Surely you are of the dwellers of the fire. (39:8)

In certain other "Aayat" Allah says that whenever he is in comfort he boasts, rejoices and transgresses but when his situation is otherwise then he gets into disparity.

1. "And when We bestow our grace on man he turns away and goes far away on his side and when an evil touches him, he is in a big despair" (17:83)

2. "And when We cause mankind to taste of Mercy, they rejoice therein but when some evil afflicts them because of what their own hands have sent forth, Lo! They are in despair" (30:36)

At the same time he thinks that to be in good condition is my due right and that's why he cries, complains, and becomes ungrateful as Allah says,

1. "Man does not get tired of asking good, but if an evil touches him then he gives up all hope and lost in despair. And truly if We give him a taste of Mercy from Us after some adversity has touched him he is sure to say, This is for me (due to my merit), think not that the hour (day of judgment) will be established. But if I am brought back to my Lord surely there will be for me the best with Him. Then We verily will show to the disbelievers what they have done and We shall make them taste a severe torments. And when We show favor to man he withdraws and turns away but when evil touches him then he has recourse to long supplications" (41:49-51)

Then Allah also complains that in hardship one has to correct himself while in good condition he has to be grateful to Allah, yes in adversity he turns to Allah but soon he goes back.

2. "Say (O Mohammad!) Tell me if Allah's torment comes upon you, or the hour comes upon you, would you then call upon anyone other than Allah, if you are truthful. Nay! To Him alone you call and if He will, He would remove that (distress) for which you call upon him, and you forget at that time whatever partners you joined with Him. Verily We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you and we seized them with extreme poverty and loss in health with calamities so that they might believe with humility. (But) when our torment reached them, why then did they not believe with humility? But their hearts become hardened and satan made fair-seeming to them that which they used to

do. so when they forgot with which they had been reminded (warned) We opened to them the gates of every (good) thing until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which they were given all of a sudden we caught (seized) them and Lo! They were plunge into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows. So the roots of the people who did wrong were cut off. And all praises be to Allah the Lord of the worlds" (6:40-45)

3. "And We sent no prophet onto any town, but we seized its people with suffering from extreme poverty and loss of health and calamities, so that they might humiliate themselves (to Allah). Then we changed the evil for the good, until they increased in number and in wealth and said "our fathers were touched with evil and with good (and not we, which means that is history) so we seized them of a sudden, while they were not conceiving (that)" (7:94-95)

4. "And if We had mercy on them and removed the distress which was on them, for sure they would have obstinately persisted in their transgression wondering blindly. And indeed we seized them with punishment, but they humbled not themselves to their Lord nor did they submit to. Until when We opened for them the gate of severe punishment, then Lo! They plunged into destruction with deep sorrows and disparity" (23:75-77)

Now we will look into all these hardships and calamities if it befell a disbeliever and after that he accepted Islam, then these hardships are the Mercy of Allah for him

as it brings him to the right track and if not but still he is a disbeliever, then that is a punishment for him and a lesson for others Allah said, "And verily We will make them taste of the small torment Not the big one maybe they will return (To Allah)" (22:21).

Same is the case of the calamity of a rebellious Muslim, if he got changed to good after that then that was a correction for him, and if not then that is a punishment for him and a lesson for others.

"And it may be that you dislike a thing and that will be good for you, and it may be that you will like a thing but that will be bad for you; Allah knows and you do not know" (2:216).

"It may be that you dislike a thing and Allah will bring through it a great deal of good" (4:19).

And if that Muslim is a righteous man but still he faces calamities, so that is for his upgrading in ranks, if he showed patience and stability.

Imam Muslim narrated a Hadith that amazing is the situation of a believer as whole condition of him is of good and this is but for a believer only that if he gets good he pays thanks and if he gets into calamity then he shows patience. He related another Hadith as well that a strong believer is good and liked to Allah than a weak believer

and in each one there is goodness, be eager of what is beneficial to you and ask for Allah's help and be not a weak (coward or fool or turn not your face but go ahead and do that) and if something (otherwise) happened to you, then say: (This is) what Allah willed and decreed and don't say if I would have done this, it would have been like this and this as the word "if" opens a gate for satan."

Imam Tirmizi related a Hadith regarding "zuh'd" (ascetic concept) that it doesn't mean to make lawful things unlawful for yourself or to spend and waste the wealth but not to believe in what you have more than what Allah has and when you are in difficulty than you are more happy than if it was not there.

Tirmizi narrated from ibni Abbas that "One day I was behind the Prophet, he said to me, "Young man, I shall teach you some words. Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you, Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him in front of you, if you ask, ask of Allah, know that if the people will get together to benefit you with anything, they would benefit you with a thing which Allah has already prescribed for you and if they get together to harm you. They would harm you only with a thing which Allah has already prescribed for you. The pens have been lifted up and the pages have dried."

So man is bound to plan but he will receive what Allah has already decreed. Planning means to use available means for your good, so one may not say, "I will receive whatever Allah has decided and decreed." yes, but you must plan and believe

in "Taqdeer". The Prophet said, "Never wish to face the enemy and ask security from Allah but when you face them then show stability."

So in hardships one receives, there are a lot of benefits which is the wisdom therein. Some of these benefits are as under;

(i) To know your Lord in the proper way, because on plans but he couldn't get what he planned for. It means that the decree of Allah was otherwise and his decree is the prevailing and overtaking one. This belief in the Lordship of Allah is meant as Allah took our covenant in the same word "Rabb"

"And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam from their loins their seed and made them testify as to themselves, "Am I not your "Rabb" (Lord)?" They said, "Yes, we testify" Lest you should say on the day of resurrection, "verily we have been unaware of this.""

(ii) Admission of slavery to Allah, that things are not in our control but in the control of Allah as he is the Master and we are his slaves subjugated to him and that the worldly system is not auto dynamic but Allah is behind its smooth running. "And We are not unaware (disconnected) of our creature" (23:17) at the time when hardship is received he has to say "Truly we belong to Allah and truly we will return to him" (1:156) this is an admission of one's slavery to Allah.

Then this "Kalimah" is a gift from Allah for this ummah as that is in Hadith because Prophet Yaqub said when he lost two sons, "And he said Alas my grief for Yusuf" (12:156)

3. It strengthens one's belief that no one can remove this hardship but Allah alone "And if Allah touches you with hurt there is none who can remove it but He" (10:107)

4. Incline to Allah, As in the time of hardships the idolaters even incline and return to Allah as we have recited "Aayat before and one who inclines to Allah he guides him later on.

5. Crying to Allah and invoking him. For sure when someone is in difficulty he will cry to Allah asking for help and removal of that difficulty, it will take him near to Allah. He will either remove his hardship or will erase his sins based on his dua or raise him in ranks as for a hardship there is a level already been decreed by Allah so it will proceed to that and then on a prescribed time Allah will remove it, it doesn't mean that "dua" is not accepted. It is, but in one way or the other.

Imam Tirmizi related a Hadith that "Invoke Allah while you have a strong faith in acceptance." So nobody can show hurry in "dua". Imam Muslim narrated a Hadith that he will say "Oh I prayed, I prayed but I don't think it is accepted so he gets tired and

leaves "dua."

Hardship is a good training for clemency and forbearing. These qualities specially forbearing are the attribute of Allah, of the Messengers of Allah and of Prophet Ibrahim. By having this quality one becomes courageous and brave also. The Prophet praised the chief of Abdul Qais even before his acceptance for Islam that you have clemency and forbearing power what Allah likes.

7. Patience- The two basic qualities of the believers are:

(i). Gratefulness and

(ii) Patience as humans have two conditions good or bad so patience comes when someone faces hardships and the patient people will have countless reward.

"Verily patient people shall receive their reward without reckoning" (39:10)

Then patience means to keep yourself and that has three fields:

(i) To keep it practicing good.

(ii) To keep it prevented from evils

(iii) To Keep it not to complain when there is hardship.

Allah said regarding patient people "They are those on whom are the blessings from their Lord and Mercy (of him) and they are the guided people." (2:157)

8. To be happy with hardships because one can not get into those high ranks by worship as he gets into with hardships so he has to be happy with. Prophet Ayyub Allah said "Truly we found him patient what an excellent slave! Verily he was ever off-returning in repentance" (38:44)

The Prophet praised the nearest slaves of Allah that, "They become happy with adversity as you become happy with prosperity." (Ahmad & Tirmizi)

They look at the return of these adversities when someone shows patience.

9. To pay thanks on hardships also as Ali said, "O son of Adam! Be not very happy with richness, give not hope in poverty, be not grieved in adversities, rejoice not prosperity as gold is to be tested with fire and a righteous person is to be tested with adversities. You can not achieve what you want but to leave your vain desires and you can not get into your hopes but with patience so strive hard to keep up with what you are bound to"

It means that patience is also one of the binding things in "Shari'ah"

Abu Umamah narrated from the Prophet that "Allah puts one of you to test with hardships and he knows him like one of you tests his gold with fire. So from them there is one who comes out like a shining gold he is the one Allah protected him from

torments, from them there is one who comes out like gold lower (in grade) than the 1st one so this one could be doubted and from them there therein one comes out like a black gold, so he has been put in "fitnah" (punishment)" (Hakim).

This first one is that one who is grateful in hardships even. The 2nd one is not grateful but at least he does not complain and cry and the 3rd one is one who cries and complains.

Umar said, "We were tested with hardships so we controlled ourselves and we are tested with prosperities so we couldn't control."

Ali said," whosoever his world is enlarged for him and he didn't know that he has been plotted by so he is a deceived one by his intellect.

10. Hardships erase sins as Allah said. "Indeed good deeds take away sins" (11:114)

The Prophet said, "No pain or fatigue touches a believer even a worry he worries from and a thrown he got pierced with, but his sins get erased with."

11. Facing a difficulty brings mercy and kindness to those who face difficulties. As when one faces a hardship himself it softens his heart for others facing the same like.

Imam Malik related a Hadith that Prophet Isa said, "People are either in sound conditions or afflicted so be kind to the afflicted one and be grateful to Allah on

soundness."

Also the Prophet said, " Kind people, Allah have his Mercy on them, Be kind to those on earth the one on the sky will have his Mercy on you."

One of the wisdom in fasting is to feel and find out the pain of those who are suffering of hunger. Also the Prophet said "whoever condoled a bereaved or afflicted one, he will have the same like reward."

12. Through hardship when someone faces it he finds out the value of the favor he is missing now. The Prophet said, "Think of give things before five others as an opportunity (for gratefulness and obedience) your life before your death, your health before your sickness, your youth before your old age, your wealth before your poverty, and your time before it is occupied." This is because things are known by its opposites.

13. Reward in the hereafter is another benefit of hardship, but the question is that reward is for deeds and actions while hardships is not an action but we say that reward is for the patience one shows when he faces hardship. Now there is another question that hardship is the result of one's own wrong doings so how he would be rewarded for it, as Allah said, "And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have done" (42:30)

But we say that in the same verse Allah said, "And he pardons (does not put you to account here) much." So hardship is not a punishment, nor Allah gives punishment for each and every sin and if that is the after effect of a sin, still that is the order of Allah and Allah has ordered us to be patient in the same like situation, so for sure he will give reward on that obedience. For death there is an appointed time and everyone has to die, but to condole the bereaved family is "Sunnah" and that is worship. The bereaved one would be rewarded for patience and the one who condoles would be rewarded for his condolence.

14. For hardship there are certain hidden benefits, not mentioned in "Aathar" and "Ahadith". Look at Ibrahim when a cruel king in Egypt tried to attack his wife "Sarah" what a big test was that Ibrahim showed stability and Allah protected "Sarah" what a big test was that? And Allah gave them "Hajar" who delivered "Isma'il" later on. For Allah brought forth the water of "Zamzam" and from him Allah brought forth the seal of the Prophets, Mohammad (saws).

15. Hardships control pride and rejoicing otherwise wealth and power pushes one to think of himself very high even sometimes he challenges Allah.

King "Numruz" opposed Prophet Ibrahim and even started debating the very entity of Allah, his existence, oneness, Lordship, and Power and the reason was "As Allah had given him the kingship" (2:258)

"Firawn" (pharaoh) arrogantly refused Prophet "Musa" (Moses) and Prophet Musa

mentioned, "Our Lord, verily you have given "Firawn" (pharaoh) and his chiefs splendor and wealth in the life of this world, that they may lead people astray" (10:88). It means that this wealth has pushed them to take people away of your right path. Allah said, "Nay! Human transgresses as he saw himself self-sufficient" (96:6, 7)

14. To be happy with hardships or at least not making complaints which pleases Allah, as He is the doer of everything and he would never be asked why he has done so, nor anybody can go out of his kingdom so he has to surrender. The difference between patience and being happy with the hardship, that in both cases he does not complain but in patience he wishes relief while in case of being happy with calamity he does not wish relief, but he is happy with what Allah is happy with as he with this also says, "Alhamdulillah".

17. Forgiveness is another quality of human and Muslim and it could be conceived if someone has harmed him as to control the anger is meant in Islam. Allah said when He mentioned the pious people, "Who repress anger and who pardon people and Allah loves the good-doers" (3:134)

More hardships came on the Prophets, as in a Hadith the Prophet of Allah said, "The Prophets felt the worst hardships, then the friends of Allah." This is the "Sunnah" of Allah causing hardships to his friends and also the Prophet said, "Paradise is surrounded with hardships."

Now to get into disparity is against Iman and true faith, and a strong man will never give up his hope as that is not the end of the world. May Allah give us strength and make us people of strong will. Ameen.