

AIDS TO HEALING

Sabr (Patience)

Sickness is a time to practise patience, which often leads to a cure. *Sabr* is Arabic for endurance, forbearance, courage, fortitude, inner strength, calmness, perseverance and ability to support hardship. *Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* likes people who demonstrate *sabr* in every calamity, and who trust in Allah, His Quran and His Messenger Muhammad (PBUH), and who practise piety.

“... and give glad tidings to the patient ones, who, when afflicted with calamity, say, ‘Truly, to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return.’ They’re blessed and will be forgiven, and they’ll receive His Mercy as they’re the guided ones.” (Quran 2: 155-157)

Says Allah (SWT): “Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure!”

A person afflicted with a disease becomes very vulnerable. There’s a tendency to lose faith in times of pain and sorrow. People then turn to anything or anyone who can help to reduce their distress. A Muslim demonstrates strong faith in Allah to cure sickness or disease and to replace sorrow with happiness.

Sabr is a *ni'ma* and sickness is a test from Allah (SWT). He tests only those whom He loves the most. All the prophets, e.g., Ibrahim, Yaqub, Yusuf, Yunus, Musa, Isa (Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Jonah, Moses, Jesus), and Muhammad, peace be upon them all, have gone through severe tests and shown their qualities of *sabr*. (Quran 46:35)

Allah (SWT) tests us in different ways -- through a blessing or a calamity, disease or health, wealth or poverty, beauty or ugliness, and so on -- and we the servants of Allah should show patience to pass these tests. In Hadith Qudsi we read, “Allah’s mercy prevails over His wrath.” (Ref: Muslim, Bukhari, Nasai and Ibn Maja)

Our earthly existence is a transitory phase. However, we achieve eternal bliss in the Hereafter only by following Allah’s commands and practising *sabr* coupled with thanks and gratitude, and by remembering Allah at all times.

You practice *sabr* by:

- Not complaining or cursing your fate
- Engaging in *zikr*
- Asking Allah (SWT) to keep us steadfast in *imaan*
- Gaining *taqwa* by giving charity
- Seeking *astaghfar* (Allah’s forgiveness)
- Helping others who are in more difficulty than ourselves
- Reciting, listening or contemplating on the Quran
- Reading, finding out and trying to follow the examples of *sabr* practiced by the prophets, the Companions of Prophet Muhammad and the favoured servants of Allah, and
- Always being thankful to Allah (SWT) for the good things He has bestowed on you.

One can think of more ways of thanking Allah (SWT) depending on one’s own situation. For example, a person who has broken his leg

and has a cast on it should be thankful that he has another leg to walk with, and the rest of his

body is intact. Even if your disease is life-threatening, and if every caregiver is helpless, be thankful to *Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'la* and say *Alhamdulillah* that you can enjoy the *rizq* (bounty) of breathing, drinking water, thinking, talking, listening, seeing, etc.

You must be happy since your mind is still working right. You are blessed with *imaan* more than anything else! Perhaps you got a last-minute reprieve to ask pardon from your folks or colleagues whom you might have hurt in whatever way.

Abdullah (RA) narrates, “I visited the Prophet (PBUH) during his ailments and he was suffering from a high fever. I said, ‘You have a high fever. Is it because you will have a double reward for it?’ He said, ‘Yes, for no Muslim is afflicted with any harm, but that Allah (SWT) will remove his sins as the leaves of a tree fall down.’” (Bukhari, Vol. 7, hadith # 565, page 383)

Sickness brings one closer to Allah and awakens us from our heedlessness. People who have received the gift of cure from Allah after a prolonged and severe sickness, and those who’ve recovered from near-fatal accidents, have invariably changed their lives for the better. Sometimes Allah gives a physical disease as opposed to mental, to remedy our arrogance and egoism, which are the diseases of the soul.

Sickness is the law enforcer, which drags the person out of *ghaflath* and brings him to reality. Hence, in a way, a true Muslim is not afraid of any calamity which may befall him, but will practice *sabr*, *shukr* and, in turn, gain Allah’s mercy and pleasure.

A patient who is confined to his hospital bed, away from the hustle and bustle of the outside world and the responsibilities of life, can best use his/her time to learn the purpose of life in this world and prepare for the Day of Judgment. He or she must change his or her attitude that the hospital bed is a prison, and instead choose to see it as an open school and masjid, where one can learn and practise *sabr*, *shukr*, *zikr* (remembrance of Allah), *tawakkul*, *taqwa* and *imaan*.

At the time of sickness, one should be highly thankful to Allah (SWT) because everyone who sees or knows that you are sick, asks *du'a* and wishes for an early and complete recovery. Often, the *saleheen* (the pious ones) make *du'a* for the people in distress. This is itself a blessing for the sick.

Finally, the best thing is to show mercy on youngsters, respect to elders, love to all, and forgiveness to all those who have come into your life at one time or another, including your caregivers and hospital staff. In your *du'a*, remember those who might have brought annoyance to you and forgive them.

By this, I do not mean that you are encouraging these parties to go ahead and bother you, but simply that you do not worry about their actions and let Allah take care of these things. By forgiving, you will see that, psychologically, you feel a lot lighter, freer and healthier. This is in addition to the best reward from Allah.

In fact, a sick person has to practice *sabr* to the extent that you say *Shukr Alhamdulillah* (Thanks, praise be to God) no matter what. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says, "Do not curse fever. It expiates sins as furnace removes rust of iron." (Muslim Vol. 4, H 6244)

Our *du'a* therefore is: *Ya Allah*, kindly do not put us under Your test for which we are not fit and we are certainly weak and impatient. If we fail in Your test, we could be sinners. Forgive us. After all we are Your creations and You are our Lord and we do have to return to You. *Amen*.

Other Quranic references concerning *sabr* are 2:45, 152-157, 214, 3:102-104, 200, 8:46, 8:66, 10:62-65, 21:83, 26:78-87, 31:17, 75:14, 39:10 and Sura 93. There is no shortage of *ahadith* on this subject either!

Please

visit <http://www.isna.ca/1/programs-services/services-for-the-sick>.

Read or print these very interesting and informative brochures written for the sick.

Brochures from ISNA:

- Coping with Sickness & Hospital Life
- Handy Information to the Medical Staff & Nursing Homes regarding Muslim Patients & Islam
- Palliative Care
- Personal Kit for Patients Going to Hospital
- RU 4 Surgery?
- Sabr / Patience
- Smile, The Best Medicine
- Welcome New Baby
- Attending the Dying
- *Islamic Perspectives on Prayers & Coping with Sickness*. **Book** by Amjad R.M. Syed is available from ISNA 905-403-8406 x218

With *du'a*

Print – Aug. '13



إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

inna Al-laha ma'a-as-sabirin

lo! Allah is with the steadfast
Quran 2:153

Sabr

Patience

Muslim Patients Visiting Services

Amjad R.M. Syed, Co-ordinator

Islamic Society of North America
ISNA Canada Headquarters
2200 South Sheridan Way
Mississauga ON L5J 2M4

www.isnacanada.com

Tel. 905-403-8406 Ext. 206