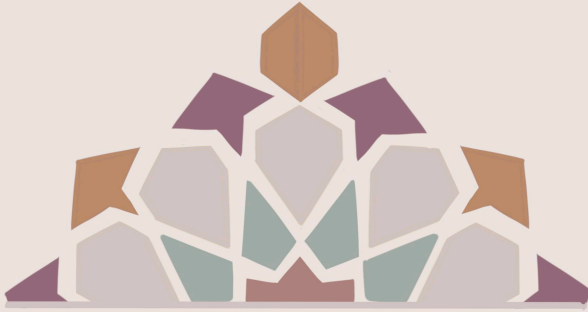


وَسَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ
كَانُوا يَشْكُرُونَ

And soon shall We reward the grateful.

QUR'AN (3:145)



PATIENCE, GRATITUDE
& WELLBEING

(WITH ACTIVITY WORKSHEETS)



Mental Health Series

VOL. II Issue 2

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<https://cambridgemuslimcollege.academia.edu/AmberHaque>

MENTAL HEALTH SERIES



<https://icnarelief.org/mfs/resources/>

Why this booklet?

Modern research shows patience and gratitude are essential for good physical and mental health. Growing psychological research also proves that these time-tested virtues are golden rules for a better life, especially in a time and age when craving to get more is destroying society. These practices are taught in the Qur'an and were practiced by all the prophets. This booklet covers a mix of science and spirituality to bring out the best of patience and gratitude in ourselves.

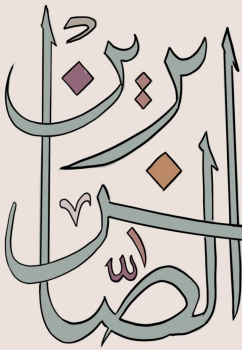
Disclaimer

The views expressed are the author's own and not necessarily the opinion of ICNA Relief.

WHAT IS PATIENCE?

Patience is one's capacity to accept or tolerate difficulties without getting angry or upset. It is the ability to wait or continue doing something despite suffering. In Islam, patience is called Sabr, which means to endure and deal with problems calmly. Patience is one of the most important actions of the heart mentioned in the Quran and the quality of patience can also lead one to gratitude or Shukr.

Not only do the scriptures say it, but scientists also know the value of patience. How long do you think it took the scientists to bring

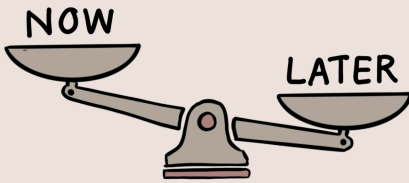


electricity, medicine, aviation, the internet, and other advances to the stage where they are today? Decades, if not centuries, to get us where we are. The key element behind all this progress was PATIENCE.

AND GIVE GLAD TIDINGS TO
THOSE WHO REMAIN PATIENT. (2:155)

Psychology of Patience

Psychologists study patience as a choice between a small reward in the short term and a bigger reward in the long term. It is also studied



as a person's trait which makes us different. Psychological experiments have shown that people with higher patience can be more successful in life.

STANFORD MARSHMALLOW EXPERIMENT

In a famous marshmallow experiment in 1972, a psychologist at Stanford University studied patience in children. The psychologist offered children a choice between one small but immediate marshmallow or two if they waited fifteen minutes. In later studies, psychologists found that children who could wait longer for the reward generally had better life outcomes. Other studies later challenged the predictive power of the marshmallow test, but a person's willpower to hold back is considered a positive personality trait.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON PATIENCE AND WELLBEING

Research shows that good things come to those who wait. Patience has potential benefits for one's physical and mental health as it makes people:

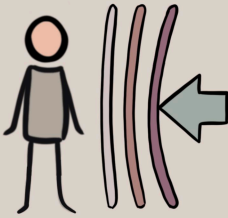
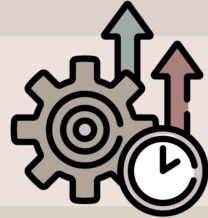


More agreeable and responsible

- Increases empathy, altruism, and discipline.
- People with patience are less prone to negative emotions.
- They learn to “act peacefully” and struggle less with people around them.

Exercise higher self-control, resulting in productivity

- Facilitates persistence.
- More likely to put effort into their goals.
- More pursuit with goals.



Resilient in the face of life's challenges and difficulties

- Patience leads to avoidance of instant gratification.
- The person makes careful deliberation before decision-making.

Decreases negative physical and mental health

- Patience leads to becoming tolerant and cooperative, leading to fewer health issues.
- Positive attitude and calm demeanor results in lower anxiety, depression, or other negative emotions.



Increase their overall wellbeing

- Higher levels of life satisfaction.
- Decreased levels of anxiety and depression.
- Improved relationships, including better friends and neighbors.
- More cooperative, empathic, equitable, and forgiving.
- Generosity, compassion, and forgiveness.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2012.697185>

<https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004158511.i-301.69>

Patience as a virtue: Religious and psychological perspectives. (apa.org)



ICNA
Relief

Patience in Therapy

- Therapy happens in stages and the outcome depends on patience shown in the process
- For change to take place, patience is the key for difficulties we face throughout our lives.
- Therapeutic outcome depends on therapist-client relationship which takes time to build and maintain.
- To achieve success in therapy, patience is the key for both the counselor and the client.

<https://medium.com/superwell/trust-the-process-patience-pays-off-in-therapy-72242fc7a772>

Patience in Organizations

- Recent research of managers from a variety of industries shows that under the influence of patience, their self-reported creativity increased by an average of 16% and productivity by 13%.
- Forbes reports, the five ways leaders practice patience are:



See through the lens of others



Evaluate tension points in unbiased way



Listen/ask questions with a positive attitude



Seek perspective from a trusted source



Don't run away from being responsible

Abraham Lincoln once said,

**GIVE ME SIX HOURS TO CHOP DOWN A TREE
AND I WILL SPEND THE FIRST FOUR
SHARPENING THE AXE**

meaning that preparation with patience is the key to success.



<https://hbr.org/2020/09/becoming-a-more-patient-leader>
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/glennlopis/2013/06/03/5-powerful-ways-leaders-practice-patience/?sh=3ce37d8b421a>
<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JMD-11-2013-0132/full/html>
<https://workplacesight.net/the-importance-of-patience-in-the-workplace/>

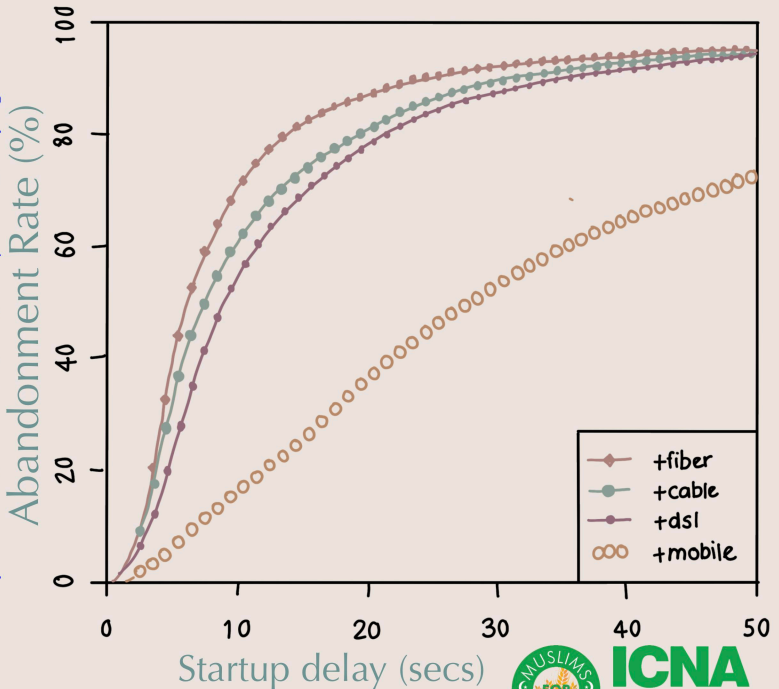
The Irony of Technological Development

Technology is rewiring humans to be less patient! Everything is quicker, easier, and more accessible in today's digital era. When we are hungry, we don't have to cook; we can call, and the food is delivered to us within minutes. We don't have to travel if we want to see someone; we can talk to them on FaceTime. Social media keeps us entertained so we get less bored, but there is a price for all this. We have become less patient in this digital age.



In one study of 23 million video views by seven million people, scientists found that viewers started to abandon videos after a two-second delay, and abandonment increased for every second of more delay. Also, as we experience a faster flow of information online, we become less patient, so as the networks continue faster in speed, we may become more impatient. Even microseconds of delay between action and response can make us intolerant. The danger is that this lack of patience could persist in other walks of life.

<https://www.roughtype.com/?p=2069>
https://web.archive.org/web/20180612142614/https://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/style/2013/02/01/the-growing-culture-of-impatience-where-instant-gratification-makes-crave-more-instant-gratification/q8tWVDN0e1B2mm45fQxtIQP/story.html?_campaign=8315



The Opposite of Patience: Impatience

Research generally identifies three sources of scenarios that test people's patience.



Life's daily hassles and interruptions (e.g., traffic delays/being put on hold)



Interpersonal conflict (with coworkers or managing issues with friends and family)



Life's difficulties (chronic illness, facing bias or racism)

Patience can also be attributed to our personality and how we were raised and taught to practice emotions and manage impulse control. Other factors may include how our day is going, current health conditions, communication style, etc.

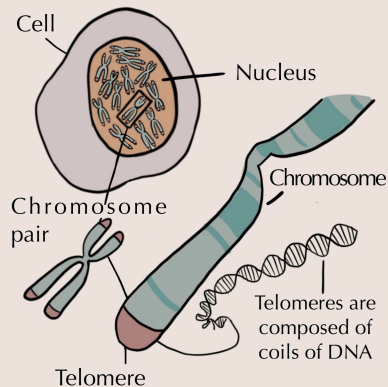
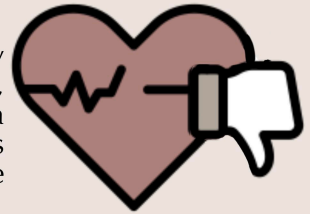
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2012.697185>

<https://www.apa.org/news/podcasts/speaking-of-psychology/waiting-stress>

Risks of Being Impatient

Increased risk of heart and sleep problems

Research suggests that anger and irritability linked to impatience can increase cholesterol, adrenalin, and stress hormones, leading to a higher risk of heart problems. Other findings also suggest impatient people tend to have more physical complaints and inadequate sleep.



Faster aging

A recent study also warned that increased impatience is tied to shorter telomeres, which are part of our DNA. Telomeres are protective caps at the end of chromosomes, and their integrity weakens, which causes cells to age faster and stop dividing. Such research implies impatience could also be rushing the aging process.

<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1514351113>

CHECK YOUR PATIENCE SCORE!

<https://www.psychologies.co.uk/test/test-how-impatient-are-you/?answers=%5b3,3,4%5d>

Note: Online tests are not always accurate. The best way to check one's patience level is to ask friends and family members and use tips in this booklet to improve one's patience.

QURANIC VERSES ON PATIENCE

There are more than seventy verses in the Quran about the virtues of patience. A few are mentioned here.

But this is something that none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are patient — and none is granted it except



the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e., Paradise and of a high moral character) in this world. (Q. 41:35)

QURANIC VERSES ON PATIENCE

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ
وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

And seek help in patience and As-Salah (the prayer) and truly, it is extremely heavy and hard except for the true believers in Allah. (Q. 2:45)

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

And Allah loves As-Sabirun (the patient). (Q. 3:146)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Surely, Allah is with those who are As-Sabirun (the patient). (Q. 8:46)

وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصَّابِرِينَ

But if you endure patiently, verily, it is better for As-Sabirun (the patient). (Q. 16:126)

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ فِإِذِ الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (patience at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly) then verily they, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though they were close friends. (Q. 41:34)

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

So those on the right hand (those who will be given their records in their right hand), are those who recommend one another to patience and mercy. (Q. 56:8).

HADITHS ON THE VIRTUES OF PATIENCE

- As-Sabr (the patience) is illumination. (Muslim 223)
- Whoever is patient, Allah will bestow patience upon him, and no one is ever given anything better and more generous than patience. Al-Bukhari (1496) and Muslim (1053)
- The reward of being patient while the true believer is afflicted with any kind of calamities and trials, “No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins for that.” (Al-Bukhari)
- Holy Prophet (SAW) said: “The believer who mixes with people and bears their annoyance with patience will have a greater reward than the believer who does not mix with people and does not put up with their annoyance.” (Ibn Majah)
- Verily, patience is at the first strike! (Sahih Bukhari)



Patience of the Prophets

Who can be better humans than God’s prophets? Yet, they all went through difficult tests and trials and showed their people how to embrace patience. Let’s see the trials of some prophets, starting with Prophet Adam (AS). The prophets’ life durations are estimated differently by scholars.

Prophet Adam – The First Man and Messenger of Allah

Lived about 930 years

- Forbidding Adam and Hawwa (Eve) to eat from a tree in paradise.
- Satan whispered in their hearts, and the couple could not resist eating from the tree.
- Adam and Eve were sent down to earth.

The earth is described to Adam as a place to reside until they die and then resurrected (Q 7: 24-25). Living on earth is a similar test for all humans until they die and are resurrected to give an account of their lives. The entire life for believers thus becomes a test of patience to live by divine laws if one wants to be rewarded in the next life.

Prophet Nuh (Noah)

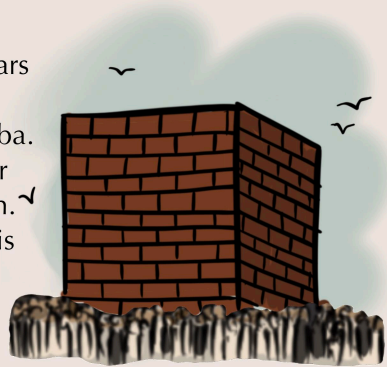
3,000-5,000 BC—lived about 950 years

- Patiently preached monotheism to his people for over nine centuries but except for few, none listened to him.
- Ridiculed by his people for building a ship as asked by Allah.
- Placed all animals in his ark.
- Survived the great flood that engulfed the earth.

Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham)

Born around 1852 BC, lived for 175 years

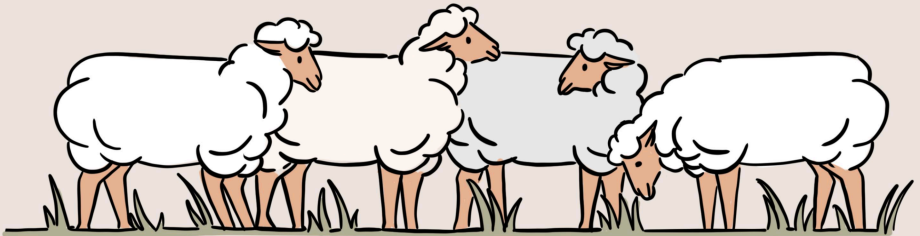
- Thrown in the fire by King Nimrod.
- Left Palestine to rebuild the Holy Kaaba.
- Asked by Allah to leave his wife Hajar and baby Ismail in the desert of Makkah. ✓
- Dreamt that he is asked to sacrifice his son, but when he attempts to do it with a blindfold on his eyes, he finds a sheep in the place of his son Ismail.



Prophet Musa (Moses)

1527-1407 BC

- Trials of Musa's family and children of Israel.
- Trials of distress after killing an Egyptian.
- Trial of confrontations with the Pharaoh.
- Exodus from Egypt and splitting of the sea.
- Mysterious encounters with Khidr.
- Poverty and solitude.
- Being away from his people.
- Shepherd for ten years.



Prophet Dawud (David)

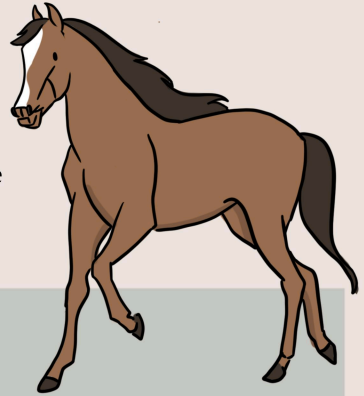
1000 BC

- Dawud had divided his days of the week into four phases, one of which was meditation in a closed room with no access to anyone. He submitted to Allah that not a moment passes without glorifying Him, followed by a verse that his pious behavior was due to Allah's mercy, and he would be put on trial.
- After some time, two angels posed as men entered Dawud's sanctuary. One of them said that while his brother has 99 sheep, he has only one, and his brother is asking for that sheep too. Dawud said that the one sheep should be given to the one with 99 sheep, realizing immediately that the decision he made was made in haste.
- These discussions paused Dawud's praise of Allah, a claim he had made that he constantly glorifies Him. Dawud immediately thought this was a trial and went into prostration, asking Allah for forgiveness.

Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon)

970-931 BC

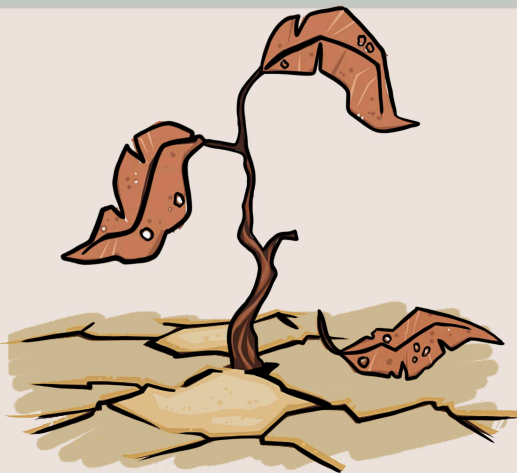
- Tested with his love for the finest horses. (Q 38:31)
- Surely, We put Solomon to the test and cast upon his throne a mere body. (Q 38:34).
- One night Solomon said that each of his wives would conceive a boy who would struggle in God's cause, but he forgot to say, 'God willing,' so only one of them gave birth to a half child (Bukhari, 3424).
- These tests made him humble; he repented and turned to Allah with true devotion.



Prophet Yunus (Jonah) — also known as Dhul-Nun

800-740 BC

- His ship was destroyed in the ocean.
- A whale swallowed him.
- He had fled his people in anger and negligence.
- Inside the whale, he repented and glorified God seeking forgiveness.
- The whale brought him to the naked shore in a state of sickness and a spreading plant grew over him. (Q. 139-148)
- He was again sent on a mission to a hundred thousand people or more.



Prophet Ayyub (Job)

600-545 BC

- His wealth and properties were taken away, a terrible drought destroyed all his crops and livestock, and he lacked possession.
- Next, all his children died. The final trial he faced was the loss of his health, as he had many serious diseases causing him much pain and suffering.
- He never lost patience and knew his Lord would never abandon or test him more than he could bear.

- One day, he prayed to Allah, “Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful.” Allah heard his supplication, and he was cured of all his illnesses.
- Not only was his prosperity restored, but his story of patience is mentioned in the Quran as an example for the believers.



INDEED, ADVERSITY HAS TOUCHED ME, AND YOU ARE THE MOST MERCIFUL OF THE MERCIFUL

Prophet Isa (Jesus)

6 to 4 BC -30 or 33 AD—raised to the heavens!

- Miraculous birth (Q. 19: 22-26)
- Like Adam as the first messenger of Allah, Isa also had no biological father. In the Quran, he is called Ibn Maryam or Son of Maryam.
- Trials by Roman and Jewish authorities for alleged blasphemy.
- Raising back to the Heavens without death. (Q. 4:157-158)
- His second coming to this world both as a sign of the Final Hour (Q. 43-61) and as a savior of Muslims.

Prophet Muhammad

570-632 AD

- Born as an orphan and his mother passed away soon after his blessed birth.
- Experienced great grief in the year called ‘the year of sorrow’ when both his beloved wife Khadija (RA) and Uncle Abu Talib died in the same year.
- These losses were paired with the social and economic boycott of Muslims in Makkah.
- Out of his seven children, six died and only one daughter, Fatima (RA), survived.
- Ongoing mistreatment and attacks from the locals opposing oneness of Allah.



CROSSWORD

The Prophets went through the most difficult trials throughout their lives and taught us valuable lessons of exercising Sabr and Shukr when most necessary. Write the name of the Prophet in the spaces after reading the clue in the box below.

1. Who made a beautiful dua to Allah (SWT) in the stomach of a whale?
2. "Oh descendants of those We carried in the ship with _____, Indeed, he was a grateful servant." (Qur'an 17:3)
3. Who had tawakkul in Allah SWT when thrown into a fire, which led to Allah cooling the fire?
4. Who was born without a father?
5. Who lost health, wealth & children, but remained patient & grateful?
6. Who prayed until his feet got swollen, & still said, "Should I not be a grateful servant of Allah?"
7. Who coined the term "beautiful patience"?
8. "_____ realized that We had been testing him, so he asked his Lord for forgiveness, fell to his knees and turned (to Allah)." (Qur'an 38:24).

The crossword puzzle grid is composed of white squares for letters and black squares for empty space. The grid is 10 squares wide and 10 squares high. The starting points for the clues are as follows:

- 1. (1, 4) - Whale illustration
- 2. (1, 6) - Whale illustration
- 3. (3, 1) - Noah's Ark illustration
- 4. (3, 3) - Noah's Ark illustration
- 5. (3, 5) - Noah's Ark illustration
- 6. (3, 7) - Palm tree illustration
- 7. (6, 5) - Palm tree illustration
- 8. (9, 1) - Palm tree illustration

The Book of Patience and Gratitude

Ibn-Qayyim Al Jawziyya (1292-1350)

Imam Ibn al Qayyim was an Islamic jurist, scholar, and writer. He was also the foremost student of Ibn Taymiyyah and wrote a 500-page book on Patience and Gratitude, describing different shades and classifications of patience. Ibn Taymiyyah, known as the Shaikh ul-Islam, was one of Islam's most powerful theologians and a member of the Hanbali School of thought.

Shades of Patience



Restraining from carnal desires = Chastity



Controlling one's stomach = Self-restraint



Refraining from disclosing what's better not to declare = Keeping secrets



Satisfied with worldly life = Self content



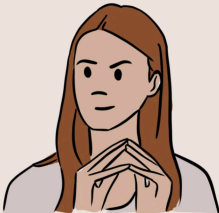
Controlling one's anger = Forbearance



Desisting from haste = Gracefulness



Not fleeing or running away from trouble = Courage



Refraining from taking revenge = Forgiveness



Abstaining from food and drink = fasting



Not being stingy = Generosity

Classifications of Patience

1. Compulsory (Wajib): Abstaining from forbidden and performing the obligatory during calamities when one has no control.
2. Recommended (Mandub): Abstaining from what is disliked, doing what is liked, and not taking revenge from others.
3. Interdict (Mahdhur): Abstaining from eating or drinking to death, eating dead meat, blood, or pork—permissible only when death is certain without them
4. Unacceptable (Makruh): Abstaining from food,

drink, clothes that does not cause one harm to oneself, and abstaining from is harmful, and in doing what is liked like good deeds.

5. Permissible (Mubah): Abstaining from deeds that one can either choose to do or not do.

The scholar encourages his readers to know and practice these types of sabr. Most of the early Muslim scholars wrote about knowing one's "nafs" or the self to improve character and wellbeing.

The Principle of Patience

In his book on patience, Ibn Taymiyyah (Ibn Qayyim's Shaykh) describes three types of patience:

- a. Carrying out acts of obedience to Allah
- b. Patience in refraining from prohibitions in Islam
- c. Patience in what one is afflicted by, without choice

Factors that can improve patience in a Muslim is knowing that:

1. Allah has control over all our actions, and He has given us free will.
2. Realize our sins and know that Allah has allowed them control due to our previous sins. As the Quran says, "A person's misfortunes befall because of what one's hands have earned; yet Allah pardons much," (Qur'an 42:30).
3. The best rewards Allah has promised are for those who forgive others and are patient.
4. Forgiveness causes an open and accepting heart towards other brethren; it cleans oneself from treachery, holding grudges, seeking retaliation, or intending evil.
5. Retaliation for oneself causes humiliation within oneself, and when one forgives, Allah honors that person.
6. Recompense is in accordance with its sameness, and whoever forgives people, Allah forgives them.
7. When one busies oneself with retaliation, time is wasted, the heart is divided, and one loses benefits that are not possible to make up for, but if one forgives, the heart and body are free to achieve the benefits that are more important than retaliation.
8. Taking one's right of retaliation is still revenge for oneself, but the messenger of Allah, the noblest of creations, did not take revenge for himself. Therefore, how can we take revenge for ourselves when we know that there are faults within us?
9. If one is harmed by being obedient to Allah, patience is binding, and the reward is with Allah, as He has purchased from His slaves their selves and their wealth, and



it is up to Him to pay the price and not for the creation. However, if one is harmed because of one's neglect of one's soul and shortcomings, then one should turn inward to practice patience. Whoever is sincere in seeking something and the patience observed in pursuing it is recompensed in proportion to the level of sincerity.

10. Allah is with the patient person, and He will repel from the person any harm and injury which no other can repel—Wasbiru Innallaha Maas Sabirin.



11. Patience is half of faith, and one should not substitute even a portion of one's faith.

12. Patience is a resolution from oneself over oneself and an act of mastery and superiority, but when a person is obedient to one's nafs, he is then subdued by it, which can destroy him until the mercy of Allah rescues that person.

13. When one practices patience and defers the oppressor to Allah, He becomes the protector and guardian, but for those who attempt to gain victory by taking a stand for themselves, Allah entrusts them to their cause, and only the person themselves is their helper.

14. If one remains patient, the oppressor will be rebuked by others who will feel remorse and seek forgiveness. Allah says, "Repel evil by the deed, which is better, and then your enemy will become as though they were your devoted friend," (Qur'an 41:34). Only the patient is granted this.

15. Revenge and reciprocation may cause an increase in opponent's evildoing and empower their schemes, but the patient and forgiver become secure from dangers.

16. One who accustoms oneself to seeking revenge and does not practice patience will eventually fall into wrongdoing because the soul does not restrict itself to the precise level of justice.

17. The oppressions one has suffered will expiate one's sins or raise status, and if revenge is sought, the atonement of past sins and elevation of status in the hereafter will not occur.

18. Patience and forgiveness can cause the enemy's humiliation, fear, and the dread that others will not be silent.

19. By forgiving, the opponent eventually feels that the victim is superior. This is sufficient as a virtue.

20. Patience and forgiveness are good deeds that result in other good deeds that add to better deeds and better recompense. This will also be a factor in one's salvation and eternal bliss, but positivity will cease to exist in seeking retaliation.

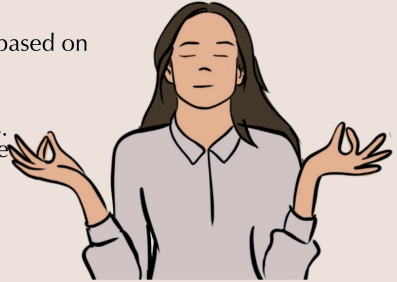
Note: Any scholarly writings or sermons should be understood in the context of the time and circumstances in which the message was given. Such writings can be embraced by Muslims as long as the messages are compatible with the Quran and Sunnah.

https://archive.org/details/TheWayToPatienceAndGratitude_201610/page/n99/mode/2up?view=theater
<https://archive.org/details/theprincipleofpatiencesh.ibntaymiyyah/page/n18/mode/1up?view=theater>

How to Develop Patience

Let's look at some ways of developing patience based on recommendations from The Cleveland Clinic:

- Practice mindfulness.
- Practice accepting your current circumstances.
- Practice tolerance—don't act on every impulse to check your phone.
- Practice listening skills.
- Be playful; sing around the house, laugh.
- When feeling rushed, consciously slow down.
- Resist fixing everything immediately.



Note: Not all of these practices may be compatible with Islamic values, for instance, excessive laughing is discouraged in Islam, because according to one hadith, it "deadens the heart (spiritually)."

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/7-tips-for-better-patience-yes-youll-need-to-practice/>

More tips on developing patience

Know the trigger

Closely look at the situations that make you lose your patience. Next time, when you face the same situation, use calming techniques that work best for you. Ask your family or friends what they think triggers your impatience.

Ask the why question

See what happens around you that is leading you to this situation. Keep asking yourself until you reach the bottom of what causes your impatience.

Get emotions in control

- Focus on breathing: Being aware of our breathing pattern every time we experience impatience is an easy way to practice patience. See: <https://psychcentral.com/health/mindful-breathing>
- Move away from the situation: Stepping back from scenarios that create emotions like anger. Take charge when your emotions are in control.

Reframe the Situation

If unexpected waiting makes you angry, do something that diverts your mind, like instead of fuming, check your emails or listen to a podcast. You could also check your surroundings, like the store next door or notice the people around you. These strategies can calm oneself down.



Work on Positive Growth Mindset

Whether patience is out of control or not, teach yourself to practice gratitude for what you have because the situation could be worse.

Measure your progress

Start with a baseline and keep track of how many times you lost patience in a week and what coping strategies worked best.

<https://www.calmsage.com/how-to-practice-patience-in-your-life/>
<https://psychcentral.com/health/how-to-be-patient>



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Philosophy of Slow Living

This approach encourages people to slow down in everyday life as a fast-paced lifestyle can be counterproductive for physical and psychological wellbeing. This is done in the following ways:

- Waiting for the right time for the right thing.
- Doing less things but with more passion.
- Spending time with oneself to gain peacefulness and solitude
- Spend time in your hobby to feel happy
- Avoid unnecessary activities



These approaches may vary among individuals and can be changed to suit one's preferences

Patience in Islam

Life is full of tests and trials for everyone, and experiencing suffering and hardships tests our spiritual strengths and weaknesses. That all humans will be tested in this world is declared in the Quran:

Verily, We shall put you to test with some fear, hunger, and loss of wealth, lives, and offspring. And (O Muhammad) convey good tidings to those who are patient, who say, when inflicted by hardship, "Verily we are of God and verily to Him shall we return;" upon them is the blessings of Allah and His mercy. (Q 2:155)

Suffering also tests our levels of faith and response that determine the outcomes in this world and the next. Embracing hardships unveils the transformative power of adversity and the trials are an opportunity to get closer to Allah and emerge stronger, wiser, and virtuous.

Calamities and hardships are tests not just for those who directly experience the events but also for others in how they respond to the ones in need. Praying is an essential part of faith, and helping the victims of suffering and disasters is the soul of spirituality.



Extensive scientific research shows that spirituality plays a vital role in mental wellbeing and is a protective factor in psychological adjustments to adverse situations.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02040/full>

Two Types of Sufferings

Musibah (or Bala'): A calamity, disaster, or misfortune that hit us but is beyond our control.

Mushkila: Sufferings and difficulties that often arise from our own actions or wrongdoings.

To face *Musibah* with patience, knowing that they are tests from Allah and there are rewards for facing the difficulties per Islamic teachings, increases our level of spirituality. For *Mushkila*, one needs to do the *Muhasaba* of self-reflection on what one might have done wrong, repent, and a commitment not to repeat the same mistakes.

Purpose of Sufferings and Hardships



1. To distinguish the believers on their commitment to worship Allah in all circumstances. Do the people think they will be left to say, "We believe," and they will not be tried? But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident those who are false.' (Q 29: 2-3)

2. To purify and wash away the sins.

The Prophet (S) said: No calamity befalls a Muslim, but Allah expiates

some of their sins because of it, even if it were the prick of a thorn. [Bukhari, Muslim].

3. To replace it with the worst misfortune. Perhaps you dislike a thing, and Allah makes therein much good. (Q 4:19)

4. To strengthen faith. The Prophet(S) said: "The people who face the most difficult tests are the prophets, then the righteous, then those following them in degrees. A person is tried according to his religion. So, if there is firmness in his religion, the trial is increased, and if there is a weakness, it is lightened. Verily, a trial remains with a servant until he walks the earth having no sin left upon him." [Bukhari]

5. To those He loves! The Prophet (S) said: "Whenever Allah wills good for a person, He tests them with adversity." [Bukhari]. This is because if the servant reacts with patience and gratitude, it brings them closer to God. "Allah loves the Patient." (Q 3: 146)

For more info, see:

<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/35914/the-wisdom-behind-calamities>

<https://islamqa.info/en/answers/21631/benefit-of-calamities>



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"AND ALLAH LOVES
THE PATIENT."

What should we do during hardships?

- Increase your prayers and speak to Allah from your heart.
- Recite Quran Daily: There is proven research on the scientific benefits of recitation, reflection, and guidance from the Quranic.
- Fast twice a week: Besides Sunnah, it has clear physical and psychological benefits. Make persistent dhikr, bringing the heart closer to Allah and drawing His blessings.
- Increase your knowledge of Islam; for instance, read about the stories of the Prophets and their Companions and learn how they conducted their everyday lives.
- Remind yourself and thank Allah for the blessings you have.
- Remain hopeful that the trials will be over.
- Share your wealth with the less fortunate.



Purpose of Sufferings and Hardships

Blessings are also tests of how one shows contentment, gratitude, and the spirit of sharing with others. A Muslim is encouraged to seek forgiveness and protection from Allah every morning and evening.

Ask forgiveness from your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver (Q. 71:10)

One of the shortest prayers is Astaghfirullah Wa Atubu Ilaih:

استغفر الله واتوب اليه

I seek forgiveness from Allah and repent towards Him.

A Muslim is also encouraged to ask Allah for ease in this world and the Hereafter.

اللهم اني اسالك العفو والعافية في الدنيا والاخرة

O Allah, I ask You for forgiveness and wellbeing in this world and in the Hereafter.

In times of extreme hardships, recite:

حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل ونعم النصير

Sufficient is Allah, and He is the best Disposer of Affairs.
He is the Excellent Protector and Excellent Helper.



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Al-Ghazali's Six Stages of Self-Purification

Imam Al-Ghazali's six-stage process of self-purification has clear potential for learning patience.



- *Musharata* (“shart” stipulation): to make a contract or agreement with yourself toward meeting identified goals. For example, make a commitment with yourself that you will work on improving your patience

- *Muraqabah* (“raqab” guard): guard or reflect over your actions. Be watchful of your triggers, precautions, and actions.

- *Muhasabah* (“hisab” account): take an ongoing self-account of your patience. Keep a journal with frequency, intensity and duration of undesired thoughts and behaviors.

- *Muaqabah* (“aqabah” punish): consequence/fine yourself for losing patience. This is a self-contract you can draw for yourself or contact a close friend or family member to help you. For the contract to work, we set consequences for ourselves when we do something wrong or fail to keep the terms we agreed to uphold.

- *Mujadah* (“jhad” strive): strive to overcome the lower nafs through reflections and exercises. Jihad or struggle with the worldly desires is called Jihad al-Akbar or the bigger jihad by overcoming one’s own shortcomings.

- *Muataba* (“atab” repent): regret for breaking your contract, making an error, and vowing not to repeat the same mistake(s) again and then start over until one is able to reach a higher level of self-purification.

If self-help in these areas is difficult, consult an Islamic-based counselor for guidance.

THOUGHT ERRORS

Thought errors, or cognitive distortions, are irrational beliefs that can lead to unhelpful emotions and reactions like anger, impatience, and ungratefulness. Being able to identify them can give you insight about your beliefs and how they may be affecting your decisions and relationships.



Ignoring the good. Bad occurrences catch your attention more than when something good happens.

Remember this Hadith:

Amazing is the affair of the believer. Definitely, all of his life is good and this is not for anybody except the believer. If something of good happens to him, he is grateful and that is good for him. If something harmful befalls him, he is patient and that is good for him. (Saheeh Muslim #2999)



Catastrophizing. Over exaggerating or making a big deal out of small problems.

Remember this Hadith:

Two voices are cursed in this world and in the Hereafter: a flute at a time of celebration, and wailing at a time of calamity. (Musnad al-Bazzār 7513)



Fortune telling. Assuming that you know something really bad is about to happen.

Remember this Ayah:

“Do not despair of the mercy from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” (Qur’an 12:87)



Mind reading. Assuming you know what someone is thinking or feeling.

Remember this Quote:

“Assume the best about your brother until what comes to you from him overcomes you (and you have to change your opinion).” - Umar ibn Al Khattab



Negative Labeling Stereotyping someone/ oneself based on one situation and applying it to every situation.

Remember this Ayah:

“O, you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin.” (Qur’an 49:12)



Having high expectations. Having extremely high standards of others or oneself.

Remember this Ayah:

“And put your trust in Allah, for Allah is enough as a Trustee of Affairs.” (Qur’an 33:3)



Black or white thinking. Assigning people, things, and actions into either “good” or “bad”, no in between.

Remember this Ayah:

“He surely knows best what is hidden in the heart.” (67:13)



Emotional reasoning. Believing that if you feel something negative, it must be true.

Remember this Ayah:

“Indeed, the worst of living creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason.” (Qur’an 8:22)



Using Should. Creating unsaid and unrealistic rules for others and getting upset when they don’t act accordingly.

Remember this Ayah:

“Do not do a favor expecting more in return.” (Qur’an 74:6)

PATIENCE PREP

What comes in between the trigger and our reaction is our *thoughts*. Replacing our unhelpful thoughts with more helpful ones at the right time can change how we react to situations. The Prophet (SAW) said, “Allah has forgiven my followers the evil thoughts that occur in their minds, as long as such thoughts are not put into action or uttered,” (Sahih Bukhari 5269).

Looking at the thought errors on the previous page, use this worksheet to process your thoughts before deciding to take action on a situation that makes you impatient. An example is given.

TRIGGER MY BROTHER SPOKE OVER ME

UNHELPFUL THOUGHT HE IS TRYING TO PROVE THAT MY OPINION IS UNIMPORTANT

What thought error did I have? MIND READING

HELPFUL THOUGHT MAYBE HE DIDN'T HEAR ME SPEAKING.

Can you think of how differently the two thoughts could have made you react?

Your turn! Think of a situation that tests your patience, and then how the two thoughts could make you react. Use this sheet as a template whenever you're looking to work on your patience.

TRIGGER _____

UNHELPFUL THOUGHT _____

What thought error did I have? _____

HELPFUL THOUGHT _____

The Psychology of Gratitude

Gratitude is scarce, especially in modern times when everyone wants more. We tend to focus on what we do not have that others have, and this leads to a lack of gratitude. Gratitude is also a trait and disposition, something that is learned from others. Scientific research shows that gratitude leads to happiness and many more benefits for physical and mental wellbeing. It improves a sense of care and social relationships.

The Arabic word *Shukr* is equivalent of gratitude and is considered a highly esteemed virtue mentioned over 70 times in the Quran. The opposite of *Shukr* is *Kufr*, which means to conceal, deny, or forget (a blessing). For Muslims, gratitude is manifested in three ways: a) by heart or feelings of subordination and submissiveness to God for His favors upon us, b) by tongue or acknowledgments of other's favors upon us, c) by acts of obedience to Allah SWT.

Scientific Benefits of Gratitude

- Increases immune response
- lowers hypertension
- increased feelings of happiness
- lowers rates of depression and anxiety
- promotes happiness
- Grateful people are less inclined to feel resentment and envy.
- Gratitude can be used as an intervention to enhance wellbeing.
- Gratitude is like a muscle. The more you practice it, the stronger it becomes.



The ways gratitude may exert beneficial effects on mental health could be reframing memories of negative events and finding growth in the face of adversity. Research by the United Nations reports that it is difficult for mental health professionals to detect depressive symptoms among Syrian refugees because of their frequent verbal expressions of gratitude to God and vocal thankfulness for what they do have—even in circumstances of extreme hardship, in trying to see negative events as a lesson, viewing adversity as an opportunity to forge a stronger connection with God, and seeing life events as a manifestation of God's will.

<https://www.unhcr.org/55f6b90f9>

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2011.596557>

Gratitude in the Quran

- “O you who believe, eat from the good things We provided for you, and be thankful to God, if you do worship Him alone,” (Q 2:172).
- “Therefore, remember Me and I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and never show Me in gratitude,” (Q 2:152).
- “We will reward the thankful,” (Q 3:145).
- “If you are thankful, I will add more favors unto you but if you show ingratitude then my punishment is terrible indeed,” (Q 14:7).

- “If you count the favors of Allah, you will never be able to number them,” (Q 14:34).
- “When God brought you out of your mother’s womb, you were empty of knowledge. But He gave you eyes and ears and hearts, so that you may give thanks to Him,” (Q 16:78).
- “Indeed, We guided humans to the way, be they grateful or ungrateful,” (Q 76:3).

Hadith on Gratitude

- Whoever does not thank people does not thank Allah (Abu Dawud 4811).
- Ayesha (RA) said that the Prophet (S) used to pray at night until his feet would swell. She asked him, “Why do you do this when God has forgiven all you past and future sins? The Prophet replied, “Should I not be a grateful servant of Allah? (Bukhari).
- The Prophet (S), if he received good news or something pleasing, he would fall down in prostration from gratitude to Allah (Abu Dawud 2774).

GRATITUDE...

ILLUMINATES THE BRAIN'S REWARD PATHWAY

Thinking about the good aspects of life floods the brain with positive chemicals and sparks brain activity critical to sleep, mood regulation and metabolism.



DECREASES ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS

Challenging unhelpful thought patterns helps calm anxiety and boosts mood



BOOSTS PHYSICAL HEALTH

Makes the immune system stronger, reduces high blood pressure and illness symptoms.

STABILIZES HEART RHYTHM

Facilitates higher cognitive functions that also stabilize emotions. Heart patients who practice gratitude have better mood and less tiredness.



STRENGTHENS SOCIAL TIES AND COMPASSION FOR OTHERS

Satisfaction with the self, family, friends and the community is higher, increasing the likelihood of acting pro-socially towards others and creating a ripple effect.



GROWS RESILIENCE

Bouncing back from stressful situations is made easier. Gives protection from internalizing symptoms at times of adversity.

Check Your Level of Gratitude

The Gratitude Questionnaire

This questionnaire measures gratitude's intensity, frequency, span, and density as an emotion. Within these four facets, a person who experiences these in higher numbers elicits more gratitude as an affective state. This type of disposition presents higher levels of self-reported life satisfaction.



The Gratitude Questionnaire - Six Item Form (GQ-6)

This is a six-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess individual differences in the proneness to experience gratitude in daily life.

Instructions: Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree

_____ 1. I have so much in life to be thankful for.

_____ 2. If I had to list everything that I felt grateful for, it would be a very long list.

_____ 3. When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for.

_____ 4. I am grateful to a wide variety of people.

_____ 5. As I get older, I find myself more able to appreciate the people, events, and situations that have been part of my life history.

_____ 6. Long amounts of time can go by before I feel grateful to something or someone.



Scoring Instructions: Add up your scores for items 1, 2, 4, and 5. Reverse your scores for items 3 and 6. That is, if you scored a "7," give yourself a "1," if you scored a "6," give yourself a "2," etc. Add the reversed scores for items 3 and 6 to the total from Step 1. This is your total GQ-6 score. This number should be between 6 and 42.

McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J. (2002). The grateful disposition: A conceptual and empirical topography. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 112-127.

Story of Al Rabi bin Kaytham

A frequently recounted story from Al Ghazali's Ihya 'Ulum al-Din describes the practices of a Shaikh Al-Rabi bin Kaytham, who slept every night in a grave he had dug in his garden to remind himself to be grateful upon waking up each morning and not take his life for granted. The story points to the natural human tendency of ingratitude for general blessings, which Ghazali attributes to extreme ignorance.

Which is better: Patience or Gratitude?

In his book, Ibn Qayyim cites Abul-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi reporting three things:

- Patience is better than gratitude
- Gratitude is better than patience
- Both are equal

—to which Umar ibn ul Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said, if patience and gratitude were to be in the shape of camels, I would not care which of them I mount. (The Way to Patience and Gratitude, Pg. 181—link given above).

Page 181 - <https://thequranblog.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/the-way-to-patience-and-gratitude-ibn-qayyim.pdf>

DUA FOR PATIENCE



“OUR LORD! SHOWER US WITH PERSEVERANCE,
AND LET US DIE WHILE SUBMITTING ‘TO YOU’.”
(QUR’AN 7:126)

GRATITUDE JOURNAL

I GIVE SHUKR FOR

SALAH TRACKER

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FAJR	ZUHR	ASR	MAGHRIB	ISHA

GOOD DEED OF THE DAY

Alhamdulillah for today's happy moments, which were

TODAY'S DUA

InshaAllah,
tomorrow, I look forward to

"If you give thanks, I will give you more."

QUR'AN 14:7

WORD SEARCH

Read the clues in the box and circle the answer in the word search!

1. What is the English translation of Sabr?
2. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "Look at those who have _____ than you, so you don't belittle the favors of Allah."
3. What short Surah mentions time and Sabr?
4. We say, "Indeed, we _____ to Allah, and to Him we will _____," when we are tested.
5. What do we say when we are thankful?
6. Allah (SWT) Says in the Qur'an, "If you are _____, I will give you more."
7. Allah (SWT) Promises us _____ after hardship to help us remain patient.

B R B J L P A T I E N C E T
 E F H G U T U H J F H A I K
 L Y D S A D R A F R D X H J
 O N E W Y K L N G A E U D V
 N H L E S S J K R V G W L G
 G T R S N K Z F S I A D W I
 J H U D L A V U L E X E Y J
 A L H A M D U L I L L A H A
 H R K S T Y I K D S E S W H
 E B Y R E T U R N M Q E O Y
 I U J F D S T C S W U K Z I

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<https://icnarelieff.org/mfs/resources/>

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