

## How Can We Endure Hardships with Ease and Enjoyment?

### The Best Strategy to Endure Hardships Easily

Life does not always go the way we want it to go. Unfortunately, there are times when events and unexpected occurrences disturb our peace. Sometimes, hardship can be overwhelming, leaving us feeling suffocated and crushed by the pressure. Accepting consequences of situations that we have created is easy, but what about difficulties in which we are unintentionally involved? How do we endure hardships that we have not caused? And how long do we live if most of it is spent in pain and hardship?

These doubts have crossed our minds at least once, often without satisfying answers. It is important to know why crises are caused, but what matters most is how we deal with them without losing our balance, happiness, and peace. How can we endure hardships? What rules do those who keep their composure and dignity in difficult situations follow? Can we also learn such a skill?

Suffering and hardship are an inherent part of this world. In other words, God intentionally created this world this way. The reason is that this world is designed to fit the structure of our existence, and the growth of different dimensions of our existence depends on overcoming opposing forces. There is no perfection in this world that can be achieved easily; those who want material perfection, such as wealth, cars, houses, etc., must work hard. Whoever wants vegetative and intellectual perfections and wants to acquire skills in art, sports, or science must overcome the opposing forces that invite him to sit and be idle.

The acquisition of animal perfections, such as high-ranking career position and social status, also requires hard work. Even if we are the laziest person in the world, and our whole life consists of eating and sleeping, we still have to expend enough energy to sustain our lives. So there is no such thing as absolute comfort and ease in this world. If we want to progress, whether material or spiritual, we must endure hardships, and there is no other way. However, since the main dimension of our existence is the supra-rational dimension, our spiritual growth is much more important than our material growth, to the extent that if we successfully pass all the stages of material progress but do not grow in our supra-rational dimension, we are outside the circle of humanity.

The reason behind the existence of hardships is the same. Since God is our Lord and Mentor (*Rabb*), He places obstacles in our path to help us grow and acquire the tools we need for life in the hereafter. The question is: Do we know how to turn these obstacles into opportunities that bring us closer to God? Or are we so weak and immature that we complain and destroy the rewards we have received for enduring hardships, just like children?

We have already discussed why hardships exist and how they help us grow spiritually. In this article, we seek to find an effective and reliable strategy to endure hardships. We want to know how and with what motivation we should endure hardships.

### **Weak Motivations**

Human beings are inherently self-interested and forward-looking. They look for a compelling and satisfying reason before taking any action or accepting any issue. In

fact, for every “why,” he has a “because,” which is his most important reason for doing that thing:

- Why do you work? Because I want to have an income.
- Why are you getting married? Because I want inner peace.
- Why do you exercise? Because I want to become physically stronger.

We can continue asking these ‘why’ questions endlessly, but the real issue lies in the ‘because.’ Our reasons and motivations may falter or go away at some point, leaving us without the drive to continue. This is what causes life to gradually lose its meaning in our eyes, and suddenly we feel a sense of defeat, loss, and humiliation. One of those critical points is when we are under multiple pressures and cannot find a convincing reason to endure hardships and pressures. You may have also heard such statements from different people:

- “God, why me? Why do so many problems have to come my way?”
- “I wasted my youth on someone so ungrateful.”
- “Why must I suffer this incurable disease?”
- “Why is my sustenance so limited, and despite my efforts, I seem to make no progress?” and so on.

The feeling of being a victim and oppressed is common to all the reactions described above. We say these phrases when we believe that God has unjustly taken away a blessing from us and that there is no replacement for the lost blessing, but is that true? Do the blessings we lose have no replacement?

### **Thinking about the Hereafter: The Strongest Motivation to Endure Hardships**

Worldly motivations are never strong enough to persuade us to perform great deeds, make sacrifices, and be patient in the face of adversity. This is because the

world is mortal and perishable, and any motivation defined in this world, no matter how powerful, will inevitably fade. For example, if our motive for serving our spouse is the love that exists between us, we will regret our acts and regard all our efforts as futile the moment we notice the tiniest ingratitude on her behavior. Or if our motivation for working hard is to increase our income and earn promotions, but we do not receive them, we become disappointed and may harm others in order to exercise our rights.

To find meaning in life and endure hardships, we need stronger motivation, one that directs our focus beyond the material world, revealing an eternal realm. We need faith that a higher power recognizes our suffering, our unfulfilled aspirations, and our unseen sacrifices, and that there is a place where all our efforts will be justly rewarded. This powerful motivation is nothing other than **belief in the hereafter, the system of divine justice, and rewards provided for deeds.**

### **We Can Endure Hardships by Relying on Two Key Principles**

There are two fundamental principles in the system of the hereafter that, once understood, help us endure hardships much easier and prevent us from becoming anxious or impatient in the face of difficulties. Those who stand firm against adversity and do not show any weakness deeply believe in these two principles:

**The First Principle:** Every deficiency in this world is viewed as a form of wealth and savings in the system of the hereafter, regardless of whether we were responsible for it or played no part in its creation. This includes not only financial difficulties, sickness, and the like, but also all the hostility, envy, humiliation, resentment, and obstacles directed against us by others. In short, all the difficulties that society

imposes on us for which we had no responsibility are considered a kind of savings and investment for the hereafter, and whoever patiently endures them will certainly receive great rewards in the hereafter.

**The Second Principle:** Every false concept in this world has a genuine equivalent in the hereafter. What does this mean? It means that perfections such as wealth, status, beauty, skin color, place of residence, and so on, which are categorized as inanimate, vegetative, or animal perfections, possess no true honor. Even intellectual perfections such as being a doctor, engineer, scientist, or even a *mujtahid* is not considered as human perfections and do not bring true honor. Consequently, those who seek to boast and gain honor through these false perfections will face true humiliation in the hereafter. Conversely, individuals who are humiliated in this world due to a lack of these qualities will attain true and lasting honor in the hereafter.

A sincere belief in the hereafter and its governing laws helps us endure hardships more easily and even enjoyably. If we cultivate this perspective, we will be neither overjoyed by worldly pleasures nor overwhelmed by sorrow. We should learn to see ourselves as eternal beings and realize that this earthly life, with all its joys and challenges, is only a tiny part of our eternal life.

What other motivations can we draw upon to endure hardships? Please share your thoughts.