

السَّلَامُ عَلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ أَيُّوبَ

PROPHET AYYŪB (JOB^{AS})

(ع) أَيُّوبُ نَبِيُّ اللَّهِ

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Prophet Ayyūb (Job) (as)

"The greatest patience, when it reaches its pinnacle, is like the patience of Ayyūb (as)". Ayyūb has become the paragon of patience in the history and language of Islam.

Prophet Ayyūb (as), known in other scriptures as Job, was one of the prophets sent to the Bani Israel. It is likely that he was a descendant of Prophet Abraham (as). Allah (SWT) endowed him with prophethood and bestowed upon him unlimited kindness. He had a great many flocks of sheep, tracts of cultivated lands, honour and grace.

Prophet Ayyūb (as) was always grateful to his Lord for all His bounties. He was generous and entertained orphans and needy people. He treated his relations and well-wishers with kindness and generosity.

However, his piety and firm faith in Allah (SWT) was stopping Satan from gaining any control over him. Satan told Allah (SWT) that Prophet Ayyūb (as) was like this because he was living very comfortable and happy life, but if he lost all his wealth and comfort, then he would become ungrateful and disbelieve.

To prove Satan wrong, Allah (SWT) gave Prophet Ayyūb (as) a series of difficult tests which gradually led to him losing everything he had; his children, his property, his family, his land and even his health to a point that his people even abandoned him and no one would visit him.

Despite losing everything, Prophet Ayyūb (as) did not change his faith or behaviour towards Allah (SWT) or others. He showed an outstanding amount of patience.

GRATITUDE & PATIENCE - TWO KEY QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL MUSLIM

Objectives >>>

Students should:

Students should:

- Review the story of Prophet Ayyūb (as) and his patience
- Introduce the story of Prophet Ya'qūb and the similarities to the story of Prophet Ayyūb
- Discuss and compare the stories of these two prophets

GRATITUDE

Prophet Ayyūb (as) began his life always showing gratitude for the blessings that Allah (SWT) had provided to him. Allah (SWT) had blessed him with the good of this world to such an extent, that he was amongst the wealthiest people of his time. He was also granted him knowledge and wisdom in addition to all this.

Prophet Ayyūb (as) thus showed a tremendous amount of gratitude to Allah (SWT) for these blessings. He showed this gratitude in all the ways possible (see previous lessons on gratitude). The most important ways in Prophet Ayyūb (as) showed gratitude were:

1. To praise Allah (SWT) by word with a genuine feeling of thankfulness in the heart
2. By being obedient and careful of his responsibilities with those blessings – so he used to use these blessings to help a lot of people, feed the poor and contribute to the development of the community. He never used his blessings for things that would displease Allah (SWT).

Lesson: in times of comfort and prosperity, we should display a sense of gratitude by acknowledging the benefactor (giver) of those blessings, then by mentioning the words ‘Alḥamdulillāh’ – All praise is due to Allah (SWT) [for those blessings] and third to make sure we use those blessings in correct and proper way which will earn us the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعَمِهِ ۖ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

[He was] Grateful for His favours; He chose him and guided him on the right path. (16:121)

PATIENCE

Patience is the first weapon for the believer to use when facing hardship. Patience has been mentioned in the Noble Qur'an more than 90 times. It is also mentioned many times in authentic Ḥadith of the Prophet (saw). All of these verses and Ḥadith talk about the importance of patience in the lives of the believers. All of the messengers of Allah suffered great hardships in their lives, yet all of them practiced patience. Therefore, Allah (SWT) alleviated their hardship and promised them great

rewards in the hereafter. The story of the Prophet Ayyūb (AS) is one such example.

As mentioned in the previous year's lesson on this Prophet, Allah (SWT) had allowed Satan to destroy everything the Prophet Ayyūb (AS) had of the good things of this world, including his health. However, Allah (SWT) did not allow Satan to influence or destroy the heart, mind and soul of Prophet Ayyūb (AS) as these faculties are necessary for the sanity of the human being.

Despite losing every comfort, Prophet Ayyūb (AS) remained intense in his patience and continued to repeat the following words, which Allah (SWT) has mentioned in the holy Quran:

“Allah gives to whom He wills and takes from whom He wills.”

Prophet Ayyūb (as) was never seen to or heard of complaining of his losses. He never questioned Allah (SWT)'s wisdom and did not lose his trust in Him.

He did not begin to doubt himself and ask things like ‘I have been obedient and grateful all my life and have never done anything to disobey Allah (SWT) – so why am I being punished?’

He tolerated the hardships by remaining patient, and understanding that this was a test from Allah (SWT) and sooner or later it would pass and things will get better.

Even after his wife was almost giving up, he reminded her of the blessings they enjoyed for so many years. He told her that we enjoyed the blessing of Allah (SWT) for eighty years and Allah (SWT) has afflicted me with these difficulties for only seven years – and then he would repeat the same words as follows:

“Allah gives to whom He wills and takes from whom He wills.”

Prophet Ayyūb (as) continued to pray to Allah (SWT) and always remained obedient, polite and humble towards Allah (SWT) even in his heart, he had trust in Allah (SWT).

THE PRAYER OF PROPHET AYYŪB (AS)

Throughout this trial, Prophet Ayyūb (as) never complained to Allah (SWT) about his situation nor supplicated to Him in a demanding tone. The Holy Qur'an quotes Prophet Ayyūb (as) plea for relief from Allah

(SWT). Pay attention to the politeness of the supplication despite the desperation. The Prophet is careful not to attribute anything negative to Allah. He is also careful not to actually ask for anything, but to simply state the fact that he is in hardship. He also praises Allah without requesting for his situation to be changed:

“O My Lord, harm has touched me and You are The Most Merciful” (21:83)

PROPHET YA'QŪB –ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE

Prophet Ya'qūb is the father of Prophet Yūsuf (see previous lessons). However, when we look at the lives of previous Prophets, we see in them common features of the quality of their character and the virtues they demonstrated practically, despite being tested with difficulty and afflictions.

Prophet Ya'qūb (as) was tested with the ill-behaviour and jealousy of his sons amongst themselves regarding Prophet Joseph and finally the most painful test of being separated from his beloved son.

Prophet Ya'qūb (as) would cry to Allah (SWT) for several years until his eyes became white. At the same time, he would complain to Allah (SWT) about how his other children had treated Joseph.

It is important to note here, that the complaints of the Prophets were not directed towards questioning the wisdom of Allah (SWT), but instead they used to complain to Allah (SWT) about the people who had treated them wrongly or had been unjust to them. They would seek consolation from Allah (SWT) and not question, blame or doubt Him.

We can see from the stories of both these prophets, and indeed all other prophets, that they showed an enormous amount of patience when tested with difficulties despite their obedience.

They would remain close to Allah (SWT) at all times, and the level of their worship would not decrease even the slightest. They would maintain the same relationship with Allah (SWT) and the same level of worship, but the motivation of it would change depending on the situation. Therefore when in difficulty, they would display patience and when in comfort, they would show gratitude.

It is indeed from the lives of these prophets that we learn that our life really only falls into two categories:

1. Either things are going well for us and we are living comfortably and able to afford all our necessities and even luxuries
2. Things are hard for us and we are living in difficult times or conditions either because of money problems, sicknesses or loss of loved ones etc.

The response we should have in either of these should correspond to the response the Prophets taught us to have through their experiences, so that we come out of the situation strong if it is difficult or that we remain humble when we are comfortable.

We should always focus on the hereafter and ensure that we do not lose anything of the hereafter because that world is a world of permanence and if we lose anything of good in that world, we will suffer and feel regret for eternity.

LESSONS FROM THE STORY

- The first lesson that we learn from this story is that this world is a place for trial and tests and no one, including the Prophets, are spared from it. While the trials for ordinary people are a means of purification for their sins, the trials that Prophets undergo are a means of elevating them spiritually. To live in this world and not expect any difficulty and hardship is like diving into water and expecting to come out dry.
- When we are in a difficult situation, we should act ask Allah for His assistance in a polite and appropriate manner. Look at the delicate and positive manner of the words of the prophets we discussed above. Our prayers should not be aggressive, or ever attribute anything negative to Allah.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1) How should we respond, when we experience comfort and blessings in our life:

- a. By being careless of our blessing and being wasteful
- b. Being thankful and using the blessings to help others

- c. Becoming proud and forgetting our responsibilities
- d. By being greedy and wanting more

2) Prophet Ayyūb and Prophet Ya'qūb both had what in common:

- a. Both were very rich
- b. Both had many children which died
- c. Both were patient when tested with losses and trials
- d. All of the above

3) When we are facing a difficult time in our life, we should react by:

- a. Getting angry and upset that things are not going our way
- b. Tolerate the hardship and find ways to reduce the difficulty and continue seeking Allah (SWT)'s help through prayers
- c. Start demanding things from Allah (SWT) and complaining about the situation showing unhappiness with His decision and response
- d. All of the above.

ⁱ References

Holy Qur'an

www.al-islam.org – stories of the prophets

Prophet Ayyub, Shia Ithna 'Asheri Madressa –
<http://www.madressa.net/index.php/plays/383-prophet-ayyub>