

**MIRACLE OF HAZRAT YUNUS AND THE  
SPERM WHALE S  
IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE.**

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1. **INTRODUCTION:-**Both the Quran and the Bible describe in some detail the miracle of Hazrat Yunus (Jonah) and the Anber (Sperm) whale and the "BIG FISH". Biblical scholars and Western rationalists as well as some Muslim exegetes of the Quran affected by new fangled rationalistic ideas of the West deny the occurrence of the miracle. But marine scientists, physiologists and experienced whalers have often observed that sperm whales (Anbers) have swallowed whole, without mastication, objects larger than the size of a man and later, when injured or seized with panic and pangs of death, have ejected the whole of such objects or articles thereby establishing scientific feasibility of the miracle. We propose to discuss here the occurrence of the miracle in the light of science.

2. The Quran narrates briefly the miracle of Hazrat Yunus having been swallowed by a huge marine mammal which subsequently ejected him ashore with the result that the Prophet survived the supernatural experience though he was stricken with illness resulting from the extraordinary event.

was a general confusion. Muhammad (Pbuh) called out with a loud and dignified voice:

أنا النبي لا كذب أنا ابن عبد المطلب.

I am the messenger of Allah, I am no imposter, I am the descendant of 'Abd al-Muttalib.

This imparalel example of the Prophet created such sort of moral courage and perseverance that they themselves proved to be glorious of human history. Family of yasir, Khabbab b. Aratt, Bilal, Suhayb are always quoted as a symbol of patience and perseverance. There are numerous examples of other companions of the Prophet who showed resilience and courage against all odds for the cause of *da`wah*.



the Makkans because they were determined to wipe the nascent community out. Madinan experience was the one of survival. It was a matter of life and death for the community. It was this period that he along with his followers had to go to the battle field. During these battles there were occasions when even the bravest warrior would not dare to stand. His companion witnessed his bravery, strength of character, will power and trust in God at the times when death was prevailing every where.

One of such occasion was the battle of Hunayn. For the Muslims it was the biggest armies that had hitherto assembled under the Prophet. So some of them felt greatly elated with their numbers and with their preparation for war. Hawazin were skilled in archery and they had occupied every point of vantage. They had posted the best of their archers on various hills. When suddently the enemy sprang from his ambushade and charged furiously upon them. Staggard by the unexpected onslaught column after column fell back and choked the narrow pass. Aggravated by the obscurity of the hour and the straightness of the rugged road panic ceased the army. They all turned and fled.<sup>86</sup>

Amidst such adverse circumstances with the exception of a few of the Prophet's devoted friends and admirers there

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86- William Meur, Life of Muhammad, 402

sufferings and tortures for all believers but the Prophet was to face the brunt of it.

The Qurashite abset by continuous preaching of the Prophet approached his uncle Abu Talib and pressurised him to stop his nephew from preaching his new faith. Abu Talib seemed to scumb to their pressure and politly advised the Prophet to find a way of reconciliation. Disappointed by the situation and realising the weakening of his uncle's help his faith grew stronger and his trust in God became deeper and firmer. His answer to his uncle is a glorious example of perserverence and rectitutte. He said:

يا عم! والله لو وضعوا الشمس في يميني والقمر في يساري على أن أترك  
هذا الأمر حتى يظهر الله أو أهلك فيه، ما تركته. ٨٥

“O my uncle: by God! if they put the sun in my right hand and moon in my left on condition that I abondon this course, until God has made me victorious, or I perish therein I would not abandon it.”

The Prophet continued his *da'wa* activities at Makka inspite of all odds. He faced all the hardships, sufferings and persecutions and migrated to Madina only when the divine command came to leave for Madina. The Madinan life brought another type of difficulties. It was physical clash with

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85- Surah, I, 59

before you used to be combed with iron combs so that nothing of his flesh or nerves would remain on his bones: yet that would never make him desert his religion. A saw might be put over the parting of his head which would be spilt into two parts, yet all that would never make him abandon his religion. Allah will surely complete this religion (i.e. Islam) so that a traveller from San'a to Hadramaut will not be afraid of anybody except Allah".

The Prophet (Pbuh) has described *Istiqama* as the greatest virtue after the faith. It is evident from his sayings that *Istiqama* has the complementary position to the fiath Itself. Following *hadith* of the Prophet is clear proof of it.

عن سفيان بن عبد الله الثقفي قال: قلت يا رسول الله: قل لي في الإسلام قولاً لا أسأل أحداً بعدك وفي حديث أبي أسامة غيرك قال: قل آمنت بالله ثم استقم. ٨٤

It is narrated on the authority of Sufyan b. Abdullah al-Thaqafi that he said: I asked the Messenger of Allah to tell me about Islam a thing which may dispense with the necessity of my asking anybody after you. In the *hadith* of Abu Usama the (words) are: other than you. He (the Prophet) remarked: say I affirm my faith in Allah and then remain steadfast to it.

The Prophet himself set illuminating examples of perseverance. His biographical and *hadith* sources contain such examples. Although Makkan period was full of

84- Muslim, K. al-Iman, b. Jamr ' Awsaf al-Islam, 1:47

Trimidhi has reported it in the following words

K. al-Zuhd, b. Hifz al-Lisan, 4/607

قال قلت: يا رسول الله! حدثني بأمر اعتصم به

قال: قل: قل: ربي الله ثم استقم.

البأساء والضراء وزلزلوا حتى يقول الرسول والذين معه متى نصر الله ألا  
إن نصر الله قريب. ٨٢

or do you think that you shall enter the paradise without such trials as came to those who passed away before you.? They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: when (will come) the help of God??. “Ah verily, the help of God is always near:

A famous companion of the Prophet Khabbab b. al-Arat says that when he complained to the Prophet about the sufferings and persecutions faced by him in the path of Islam, the Prophet referred to the difficulties of the earlier believers. Bukhari has recorded the whole story in the following words:

يقول: أتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، وهو متوسد وهو في ظل الكعبة وقد لقينا من المشركين شدة. فقلت: ألا تدعوا الله فقد وهو محمر وجهه فقال: لقد كان من قبلكم يمشط بمشاط الحديد مادون عظامه من لحم أو عصب ما يصرفه ذلك عن دينه ويوضع المنشار على مفرق رأسه فيشق باثنين ما يصرفه ذلك عن دينه وليتمنن الله هذا الأمر حتى يسير الراكب من صنعاء إلى الحضر موت ما يخاف إلا الله. ٨٣

Khabbab narrated: I came to the Prophet while he was leaning against his sheet cloak in the shade of Ka'ba. We were suffering greatly from the pagans in those days. I said (to him):. “will you invok Allah (to help us)”? He sat down with a red face and said. “A believer among those who were

82- Al - Qur' An. 2/214

83- Bukhari K. Bad' al-Khalq. b.Ma Laqiya Rasul Allah 4/239

(they suggest), nor grieve: but receive the glad tidings of the garden (of bliss) to which ye were promised. We are your protector in this life and in the hereafter, therein you will have all that your souls desire and therein you will have all that you ask for, a hospitable gift from one oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.

## PRESEVERENCE AN ESSENTIAL MORAL QUALITY

Perseverance is the most important quality for a worker of *da'wa* Ila-Allah. Referring to the history of *da'wa* the Qur'an has mentioned *istiqama*'s special significance. History of *da'wa* is full of examples of patience and perseverance.

There was no period of *da'wa* activity when the *da'is* were not persecuted, difficulties were not faced by them or the opponents have not made life miserable for them and the *da'is* were not compelled to seek refuge in Allah from the oppression of the unjust and brutal opponents of *da'wa*. From amongst many examples we will confine ourselves to a few only. The Qur'an while referring to early *da'is* has recorded sentiments and emotions of some of the workers and gave advice to the followers of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) by saying:

﴿إِذَا مَكَاتِ الْجَنَّةُ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسْتَهْمِ

despair there was a danger that some weaker heart might waver and forsake the Islamic Movement; therefore the Qur'an time and again reminded the Prophet and the believers of patience and perseverance, because this was the source of their strength. Addressing to the Prophet the Qur'an says:

﴿فاستقم كما أمرت ومن تاب معك ولا تطغوا إنه بما تعملون بصير﴾ ٨٠.

Therefore stand firm (in the straight path) as thou art commanded, thou and those who with you turn (unto God) and transgress not from (the path); for He seeth well and all that you do.

The Qur'an has described uprightness and perseverance as a process of psychotherapy for the committed believers in difficult circumstances. According to the Qur'an it not only provides spiritual satisfaction and inner strength but also induces angelic favour and divine grace. The language and expression used by the Qur'an for the description of *al-istiḥṣām* has not been used for any other moral and ethical quality. The Qur'an says:

﴿إن الذين قالوا ربنا الله ثم استقاموا تتنزل عليهم الملائكة ألا تخافوا ولا حزنوا وأبشروا بالجنة التي كنتم توعدون - نحن أولياءكم في الحياة الدنيا وفي الآخرة ولكم فيها ما تشتهي أنفسكم ولكم فيها ما تدعون نزلا من غفور رحيم﴾ ٨١.

In the case of those who say, "Our Lord is God" and further stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time) fear ye not:

80- Al-Qur'an, 11/112

81- Al-Qur'an, 41/30-32

Say: I am but a man like you; It is revealed to me that your God is one God; so stand true to Him and ask for his forgiveness and woe to those who join gods with God.

Opposition to the *da`wa* was increasing everyday and Makkah and its surroundings were becoming a hell for the believers. Even to breath peacefully was forbidden. The person of the Prophet, inspite of his noble tribal position, was not spared from the torture. The condition of a common believer was unimaginable. The more they were persecuted the more they were asked for patience and perseverance. The Qur`an says:

﴿فَلذَلِكَ فَادِعْ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أَمَرْتِ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ﴾ ٧٩.

Now then, for that reason, call (them to the faith) and stand steadfast as thou are commanded, nor follow thou their vain desires.

The commandmant of perseverance is not confined to the Prophet; his followers and believers are included as well. One can perceive the wisdom of this order by looking at the situation of that time. As mentioned earlier the whole atmosphere was highly charged against the small minority of believers. Every kind of torture and pressure was used against them to retrieve them back to polythesim. The inhumance behaviour of Makkan was on the increase so were the sufferings of the believers. Under this hopeleseness and

## ISTIQAMA

*Istiqaṁa* ( استقامت ) is from *qawama* ( قوم ) which means to be upright, straight and even. The Arabs say that: ( قام الشيء واستقام: اعتدل واستوى ٧٦ ) i.e a thing is balance, straight and even. Abu Zayd says that *istiqaṁah* is evenness, uprightness and straightness ( الاستقامة اعتدال الشيء واستواءه ٧٧ ) With reference to human attitude it means to stand firm for a right cause even if there are difficulties, dangers and oppositions. To remain firm on ones stand is called perseverance.

## PERSEVERANCE AND THE PROPHET (Pbuh)

The Prophet had a difficult mission. He was being opposed by every one. Ridicule, humiliation abuse and persecution was the order of the day. The Prophet and his followers were always threatened by dire consequences. It was this situation when Allah commanded the Prophet to be steadfast:

﴿قل إنما أنا بشر مثلكم يوحى إلي أنما إلهكم إله واحد فاستقيموا إليه واستغفروه وويل للمشركين﴾ ٧٨.

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76- Lisan. 12/498

77- Ibid. 12/498

78- Al-Qur'an 41/6

أردت ما انطلقت وأنا مهموم على وجهي فلم استفق إلا وأنا بقرن الثعالب فرفعت رأسي فإذا أنا بسحابة قد أظلني فنظرت فإذا فيها جبريل فناداني فقال: إن الله قد سمع قول قومك لك وما ردوا عليك وقد بعث اليك ملك الجبال لتأمره بما شئت فيهم. فناداني ملك الجبال فسلم على ثم قال: يا محمد فقال ذلك فيما شئت إن شئت أن أطبق عليهم الأخشبين فقال النبي بل أرجو أن يخرج الله من أصلابهم من يعبد الله وحده لا يشرك به شيئاً. ٧٥

It is reported by 'Urwa that 'A'isha told him that she once asked the Prophet, "Have you encountered a day harder than the day of the battle of Uhud". The Prophet replied, "your tribe has troubled me a lot and the worst trouble was the trouble on the day of 'Aqba when I presented myself to Ibn Abd Yalayl bin 'Abd Kulal and he did not respond to my demand. So I departed overwhelmed with excessive sorrow and proceeded on and could not relax till I found myself at Qarn al-Tha'alib where I lifted my head towards the sky to see a cloud shading me unexpectedly. I looked up and saw Gabriel in it. He called me saying, "Allah has heard your people's saying to you, and what they have replied back to you, Allah has sent the Angel of Mountains to you so that you may order him to do whatever you wish to these people." Angel of the Mountains called and greeted me, and then said, "O Muhammad! order what you wish. If you like, I will let al-Akshabayn (i.e. two mountains) fall on them." The Prophet said, "No but I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah alone, and will worship none besides Him."

It is evident from the above Prophetic statement that it is the quality of patience which helps a *da'i* to stand firm in all difficult situations and is a key to success.

75- Bukhari K. Bad'al-Khalq, b. Dhikr al-Malaika, 4/83;  
Muslim K. al-maghazi, b. Ma Laqiya al-Nabi min Adha  
al-Mushrikin, wa'al-Munafiqin, 5/181

هي أوسع لي. أعوذ بنور وجهك الذي أشرفت له الظلمات وصلح عليه أمر  
الدنيا والآخرة من أن تنزل بي غضبك أو يحل علي سخطك لك العقبى حتى  
ترضى، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بك. ٧٤

O Lord: To thee alone I make complaint of my helplessness, the paucity of my resources and my insignificance before mankind. Thou art of the most merciful of the mercifuls. Thou art the Lord of the helpless and the weak, O Lord of Mine! Into whose hands wouldst Thou abandon me: into the hands of an unsympathetic foe who would sullenly frown at me, or to the enemy who has been given control over my affairs? But if Thy wrath does not fall upon me, there is nothing for me to worry about but Thy grace is more than enough for me. I seek protection in the light of thy Countenance, which illuminates the heaven and dispels every darkness and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Thy wrath, or that, Thou shouldst be wrathful to me. And there is no power nor resource but Thine alone.

Reaction of a common person to such a terrible experience would be one of anger and vengeance, but the Prophet had shown an example of a *da'i* who was model for patience and compassion 'A'isha has narrated Prophetic reaction which indicates his greatness and mercy. Bukhari, Muslim and Nasa'i have recorded the Prophetic statement in the following words:

عن عروة أن عائشة حدثته أنها قالت للنبي هل أتى عليك يوم كان أشد من يوم أحد؟ قال: لقد لقيت من قومك ما لقيت وكان أشد ما لقيت منهم يوم العقبة إذ عرضت نفسي على ابن عبيد باليل بن عبد كلال فلم يجني إلى ما

The leadership was in the hands of three sons of 'Abd Yalayl, Mas'ud and Habib. He approached them but to his disappointment all of them turned a deaf ear to his message. Instead they stirred up the slaves and vandals to tease, abuse and chase him out of the town. The people hooted him through the streets, pelted him with stones and at last obliged him to flee from the city pursued by a relentless rebble. Blood flowed down upon his legs; and Zayd endeavouring to shield him was wounded in the head. According to Ibn Sa'd they did not desist until they chased him to the foot of surrounding hills. There wearied and exhausted he took refuge in one of the numerous orchards and rested against a wall of vineyard which belonged to 'Utba and Shayba, sons of Rabi'a, the wealthy citizens of Makka. They watched with pain the conditon of the Prophet and moved by compassion, sent to him one of their christian servant with a tray of grapes. The Prophet accepted the fruit with pious invocations; "In the name of the Lord."

At that time it seemed to him that as if the whole world had turned against him. He turned to his Lord and betook himself to prayer in the following touching words. He was weary and wounded but confident of the help of his Lord. The text of this touching prayer has been recorded by al-Tabari, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Hisham, and others.

اللهم إليك أشكوا ضعف قوتي وقلة حيلتي وهو اني على الناس، يا أرحم  
الراحمين أنت رب المستضعفين، وأنت ربي إلى من تكلني إلى بعيد يتجهمني؟  
أم إلى عدو ملكته أمري أن يكن بك على غضب فلا أبالي ولكن عافيتك

Family of yaser.<sup>70</sup> Suhayb b. Sanan<sup>71</sup> and Khabbab b. al-Arat<sup>72</sup> were the people to suffer the most. They were the weaker members of the society and their sufferings and persecutions could be understood but it is strange to note that even the members of honourable families were not spared. Their own Kith and kin were keen to persecute them. 'Uthman' b. 'Affan, Zubayr b. al- 'Awwam, 'Umer b. al Khattab, Khalid b. Sa'id and others were among those who suffered at the hands of their own relatives for the mistake of conversion to Islam.<sup>73</sup>

### The Greatest example of Prophetic Patience

The greatest example of the Prophet's patience can be seen during his journey to Ta'if. He went there with the companion of his, Zayd b. Haritha, his freed slave, and approached the family of 'Umyr who was reckoned among the nobility of the town.

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70- Ibn Sa'd. 1/249. The Prophet said to the family: oh family of yasir! be patient, (al-Isti'ab. 1/178.)

71- When suhayb migrated to Madina he was forced to leave all his belongings at Makka. Reaching Madina he was greeted by the Prophet by these words: Suhayb has benefited from this dealing. (Ibn Sa'd. 3/161)

72- Khubab was the slave of Unum-e-'Ammar and was severely punished by her after his conversion to Islam (Al-Isaba. 2/195.)

73- Ibn Hisham has given all the details (Sirah. 1/339-343)

Jahal b. Hisham, 'Utba b. Rabi'a, Shaiba b. Rabi'a, Umayyah b. Khalaf or Ubayy b. Khalaf." (Shu'bah, is not sure of the last name).

I saw these people killed on the day of Badr and thrown in the well except Umayya or Obayy, whose body parts were mutilated but he was not thrown in the well.

'A'isha reports that the Prophet (Pbuh) said that he used to live between the two nastiest neighbours - Abu Lahb and 'Uqba b. Abi Mu'ayat. Both of them used to throw dirt and filth at his door.<sup>67</sup>

The main cause for Hamza's embracing Islam was the torturous attitude of Abu Jahl toward the Prophet. It is narrated on the authority of Tariq b. 'Abdullah al-Muharibi that he once saw the Prophet preaching, 'There is no god save Allah". A man followed him and ruthlessly flung stones at him. The Prophet was profusely bleeding and wicked fellow cried: O men! be on your guard he is a liar.<sup>68</sup>

The Prophet was facing all these insults and persecutions with patience and steadfastness. His companions and followers meted out with same kind of treatment. Bilal, the salve of Umayyah b. Khalaf, was severely beaten by his master when the latter came to know his conversion to Islam.<sup>69</sup>

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67- Aurqani, sharh Mawahib, 1/251

68- Kanz al-'Ummal, 6/302

69- Sirah, 1/240

'Urwa b. Zubayr says that he asked Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'As to tell him about the gravest sufferings of the Prophet at the hands of polytheists. He said that once the Prophet was praying in the *Hijr* of the Kaba, suddenly 'Uqba b. Abi Mu'ayt came and put his garment around the Prophet's neck and throttled him violently. Abu Bakr came and caught him by his shoulder and pushed him away from the Prophet and said, "Do you want to kill a man just because he says, "My Lord is Allah".

The second incidence has also been recorded by Bukhari in the following words:

عن عبد الله، قال بينا النبي ساجد وحوله ناس من قريش جاء عقبة بن أبي معيط بسلي جزور فقفده على ظهر النبي فلم يرفع رأسه فجاءت فاطمة عليها السلام فأخذته من ظهره ودعت على من صنع فقال النبي: اللهم عليك الملأ من قريش أباجهل بن هشام وعقبة بن ربيعة وشيبة بن ربيعة وأمية بن خلف أو أبي بن خلف شاك فرأيتهم قتلوا يوم بدر فألقوا في بئر غير أمية أو أبي تقطعت أو صاله فلم يلق في البئر. ٦٦

On the authority of 'Abdullah it is narrated that while the Prophet was prostrating, surrounded by some of Quraysh, 'Uqba b. abi Mu'ayt brought the intestine (i.e. abdominal contents) of a camel and put them over the back of the Prophet. The Prophet did not raise his head, (till) Fatima came and took it off his back and cursed the one who had done the harm. The Prophet said, "O Allah : Destroy the chiefs of Quraysh, Abu

66-Bukhari, K. Bad'al Khalq, bab ma laqiya. 4/239

Al-Tabari in his book has recorded this incident from Abu Salmah. al- Rahman and al-Nasair and Ibn Abi Hatim have narrated it with slight variation from amr b. al- 'As instead of his son.

قال: -قل: ربي الله ثم استقم.

The Prophet of Islam was commanded to adopt patient attitude as earlier Prophets had adopted it. It says:

فأصبر كما صبر أولوا العزم من الرسل ولا تستعجل لهم. ٦٤

Therefore patiently persevere, as did all the Messengers of inflexible purpose: and be in no haste.

Patience has a special place in the ethico-moral aspects of the Prophetic personality. The social conditions in which he started his *da'wa* and the difficulties and the challenges he faced have no parallel. It was the quality of patience that enabled him to face the opposition of the Qurayshites and the hardships created by them. *Hadith* and biographical sources are full of the detailed accounts but we confine ourself to a few examples.

The polytheists of Makka were exercising all sorts of pressures to stop the Prophet (Pbuh) from *da'wah* work. Physical torture and persecution were the obvious choice. Weaker followers were the easy targets but the Prophet was no exception. Bukhari has recorded an incident which shows the gravity of the situation. He has recorded it at various places and narrated it from Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'As and 'Amr b. al-'As. Following is the full account of the incident:

عن عروة بن الزبير قال: سألت ابن عمرو بن العاص قلت أخبرني بأشد شيء صنعه المشركون بالنبي؟ قال بينا النبي يصلي في حجر الكعبة إذا أقبل عقبة بن أبي معيط فوضع ثوبه في عنقه فخنقه خنقا شديدا فأقبل أبو بكر حتى أخذ بمنكبيه ورفعته عن النبي قال: اتقتلون رجلا أن يقول ربي الله.

64- Ibid 46/35

65- Bukhari, K. Bad'al-Khalq, b. Ma Laqiya al Nabi wa A shabuhu min al-Mushriken. 6/34, Ibid, K.al-Manaqib, b. Manaqib Abi Bakr, 4/19

If we give man a taste of Mercy from ourself and then withdraw it from him, behold: he is in despair and blasphamy. But if we give him a taste of our favour after adversity has touched him, he is sure to say, "all evils have departed from me; behold! he falls into exultation and pride. Not so do those who show patience and constancy and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness and great reward.

The Qur'an while describing the characteristics of the Prophets mention with special importance the quality of patience in them.<sup>61</sup>

A student of the Qur'an will notice that the Prophet of Islam has been commanded by Allah (SWT) to be patient in all circumstances. For instance it says:

فاصبر على ما يقولون وسبح بحمد ربك قبل طلوع الشمس وقبل  
غروبها. ٦٢

Therefore be patient with what they say, and celebrate constantly the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting.

At another place the Qur'an says:

فاصبر لحكم ربك فإنك بأعيننا وسبح بحمد ربك حين تقوم. ٦٣

Now await in patience the command of your Lord for verily you are in our eyes and celebrate.

61- See: Al-Qur'an, 3/146, 32/24, 12/18, 38/44, 37/103

62- Al-Qur'an, 20/130

63- Ibid, 52/48

He indeed would well-nigh have misled us from our gods, had it not been that we were constant to them.

At another place it is said:

وانطلق الملائمة ان امشوا واصبروا على آهتكم ان هذا لشيء يراد ٥٩

And the leaders among them go away impatiently saying walk ye away and remain constant to your gods for this is truly a thing designed (against you).

Although this word has been used in the Qur'an in these meanings, however, a slight difference in the shades of meaning can be observed. For instance it is used for waiting for an appropriate time, not to be impatient to face the difficulties bravely, to ignore and to be steadfast and to do the needful inspite of all difficulties and obstacles.

If we look at all these meanings it becomes evident that the spirit of the term is to control and resist. There are moments in the lives of the individuals and nations when they are faced with failures or enjoy a success. These are the moments of their test, either they show control over their senses and strength of their character or they loose patience and destroy everything. The Qur'an has beautifully analysed the psychological condition of humans under such circumstances. The Qur'an says:

ولئن أذقنا الإنسان رحمة ثم نزعنا منه أنه ليوس كفور. ولن أذقناه نعماء بعد  
ضراء مسته ليقولن ذهب السيئات عني انه لفرح فخور إلا الذين صبروا

وعملوا الصالحات. ٦٠

59- Ibid. 38/6

60- Al-Qur'an, 11/9-11

## PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

Patience and perserverance are the essential qualities of a *da`i*. No *da`i* can withstand the difficulties and sufferings in the way of *da`wah* unles he possesses these qualities. The Qur'an has used *sabr* ( صبر ) and *istiqamah* ( استقامة ) to indicate these qualities.

### SABR ( صبر )

Originally *sabr* meas to refrain, abstain and desist. The Arabs say ( ريسال الله )<sup>55</sup> which means he refrained from something. Al-Jawhari is reported to have said: patience is to control oneself at the time of anguish and anxiety.<sup>56</sup> According to Ibn Manzur patience is antonym to anguish.<sup>57</sup> On the basis of linguistic meaning one can say that a person who has controlled himself in difficult circumstances, refrained from being impatient and kept himself steadfast in dangerous situation would be called a patient person.

The Qur'an has used this word in this sense. For instance describing the attitude of unbelievers and their continuous refusal to the call of the Prophet Qur'an says:

ان كاد ليضلنا عن آهتنا لولا أن صبرنا عليها ٥٨

55- Lisan. 4/438

56- bid, 4/438

57- Ibid.

58- Al-Qur'an, 25/40

﴿واصبر نفسك مع الذين يدعون ربهم بالغداة والعشي يريدون وجهه﴾.

٥٣

And keep thy soul content with those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face.

The Prophet has encouraged believers to engage themselves in *du`a* because they would be able to get the bounty of Allah (SWT) He is reported to have said:

سلوا الله من فضله فإن الله يحب أن يسئل وأفضل العباداة انتظار

الفرج. ٥٤

Ask Allah (SWT) for His favour and grace. Surely Allah loves to be asked. And the best worship and prayers is to wait for pleasure and comfort.

Worship and prayer brings a *da`i* so close to Allah that he forgets his difficulties and is completely absorbed in the love of Allah. Every step he takes and every word he utters become source of pleasure and joy. Because of the love of Allah and his devotion to him he faces all difficulties with smile, courage and resolve

53- Ibid, 18/28

54- Tirmidhi, K. al-Du`a, bab Intizar al-Faraj, 5/565

also an acceptance of the power of an absolute authority, and unlimited mercy and forgiveness of Allah (SWT). *Du`a* links a person with Allah and soften his heart for doing good to others.

A *da`i* through *du`a* attains closeness of Allah and sophistication of hearts and mind. *Du`a* is to seek continuous guidance and help from divine source in all situations and circumstances. The Prophet in various utterances explained the usefulness of *du`a* He said *du`a* is the essence of worship (الدعاء مع العبادة) Elaborating it further he said:

إن الدعاء هو العبادة ثم قرأ: وقال ربكم ادعوني استجب لكم.. ٥١

Surely *du`a* is worship and then recited the Quranic vers: And your Lord says: "call on Me I will answer your prayers.

Since a *da`i* is always working for Allah therefore, he can face a terrible situation in which one is confused and does not know the way out. It is *du`a* which helps and guides him through that situation. Qur'an has given the characteristic of those who are closer to Allah (SWT). They are the people who remain in touch with their Lord through *du`a*. Qur'an says:

﴿تتجافى جنوبهم عن المضاجع يدعون ربهم خوفاً وطمعا﴾ ٥٢

Their limbs do forsake their beds of sleep, the while they call on their Lord, in fear and hope.

51- Tirmidhi, K. al-Du`a, bab ma Ja`a fi Fadl al-Du`a, 5/456

52- Al-Qur'an, 32/16