Overcoming Trials & Tribulations According to the Quran & Sunnah
A book written by: Ruqaiyah Abdullah

Theme:
Allah SWT will continue to test us until we finally depart from this life by death. We will try to understand the following:

- Different types of tests.
- Why they occur.
- How to cope with them successfully.
- The significance of the tests in relation to this life and the hereafter.

Aim:
To inspire and uplift Muslims and to provide Islamic perspective to non-Muslims on the significance of certain trials and tribulations in life.

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Tests
Allah SWT administers all tests by His Almighty Power and Command, to test our level of faith in Him. He decides and controls their purpose, severity, timing, duration and so on. Some trials may test our obedience and loyalty while others may serve to warn, teach, punish, or remind us to improve certain aspects of our faith or character.

‘On no soul doth God Place a burden greater than it can bear’ [2:286]

Why are we tested?

1. To distinguish between those who worship Allah alone and those who associate partners in worship with Him, by distinguishing between those who sincerely believe in Allah SWT and those who do not.
   ‘Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “We believe and will not be tested.”’ [29:2]

2. To encourage mankind to strive to do good deeds.
   ‘Who has created death and life that He may test who is best in Deed.’ [67:2]

3. To purify the soul and make up for the committed sins.
   ‘Whatever trouble, illness, anxiety, grief, pain and sorrow afflict a Muslim, even if it is the pricking of a thorn – Allah removes some of his sins because of it.’ [Bukhari & Muslim]

4. To distinguish between those who believe in the Hereafter and those who do not.
   ‘We might test him who believes in the Hereafter from him who is in doubt concerning it: and the Lord watches over all things.’ [34:21]

5. For believers to earn the reward of Paradise, if they remain patient and faithful to Allah SWT throughout the time of hardship / difficulty.
‘Did you think that you would enter Paradise without Allah testing those of you who fought hard in His cause and (also) test those who are As-Sabirin (the patient ones).’ [3:142]

**Believers & non-Believers & Tests**

**Believers:**
- “The world is the believer’s prison and the infidel’s paradise” [Muslim]
- “Paradise is surrounded by hardships while Hellfire is surrounded by temptations.” [Muslim]
- A Muslim spends all his life in constant struggle between his own wanton desires and his moral conscience. However Allah SWT is aware of all his efforts and self-sacrifice and will either reward him for it in this life or in the Hereafter or both.
- A true believer is aware of the temptations and distractions in this life, but is also aware of the Laws and limits by Allah SWT, thus he/she tries to obey Allah SWT as much as possible seeking the rewards in this life and the Hereafter.
- The more we strive in Allah’s cause with our lives, wealth, desires and emotions, the better our position will be in Paradise insha’Allah.
- Believers acknowledge and accept that their destiny is in the Hands of Allah SWT, for every blessing they receive they are grateful to Allah SWT and for every tragedy that befalls them they accept and endure it patiently.

**Non-believers:**
- The non-believer strives only to please himself and satisfy his own desires and goals rather than gain the pleasure of his Lord.
- When non-believers and/or weak Muslims are overwhelmed with stress, they often become frustrated and impatient.
- Non-believers may rely upon superstition, spiritualism, or astrology. They may rely on alcohol, drugs or music.

**How Allah SWT tests His Creation?**

One of the ways is by giving or depriving us of things we love most, ex. Provide us with children then take away their lives, deprive us of good health, material wealth and property. We can also be tested in our marriage, family, social or work relationships or by hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, etc.

‘You shall certainly be tried and tested in your wealth and properties and in your personal selves.’ [3:186]
‘And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient ones).’ [2:155]

**Tests as punishments**
- If Allah SWT sends a punishment upon a nation, then it befalls the whole population indiscriminately. Each person will then be resurrected (and judged) according to his own deeds. If Allah SWT takes the lives of the believers and the innocent, it is perhaps as a mercy to remove them from their pain and suffering in this world. If He takes the lives of the disbelievers tyrants and oppressors, it is perhaps to stop the harm and injury they cause to others.
Whatever His reasons, justice will always prevail, whether it is in this life or in the Hereafter.

- Punishments are often perceived negatively, when in fact they should be viewed positively. When Allah SWT serves His punishment in this life, it provides the opportunity for questioning oneself, repentance and correction.
- Punishment in this life is an expiation (compensation) for our sins and lessens the punishment that we would have received for our sins in the Hellfire.

Examples of Different types of tests:

1. Tests involving health.
   “You will have a double reward for being sick, and your sins will be annulled (whipped out) as the leaves of a tree fall down.” [Bukhari]

   “No pain or sorrow or trouble comes upon a believer – not even a thorn picks him – but his sins are pardoned.” [Muwatta Imam Malik]

2. Tests involving the death of loves ones.
   “Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods, lives and the fruits of your toil, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say, when afflicted with calamity: “To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return.” [2:155-156]

   Allah SWT said: “I have no reward other than Paradise for my believing servant who is patient when I take away one of his beloved from among his companions of the world.” [Bukhari]

3. Involving sexual temptations.
   “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them.. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (ordinarily) appear thereof.” [4:28]

4. Involving material wealth.
   “Verily there is a temptation for every people and the seduction for my people is wealth.” [At-Tirmidhi]

   “If the son of Adam had two valleys of gold, he would wish for a third, for nothing can fill the belly of Adam’s son except dust (death), and Allah forgives him who repents.” [Bukhari & Muslim]

5. Involving children.

6. Poverty
   “Shaytan threatens you with poverty and orders you to commit sins; where as Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and Bounty, and Allah is All Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All knower.” [2:268]

   “And He will provide for him from sources he never could imagine. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him.” [65:3]
“And remember when your Lord proclaimed: “If you give thanks, I will give you more, but if you are thankless, verily! My punishment is indeed severe.” [14:7]

Coping during tests & hardships:
1. Strengthening faith through worship
   (Remembrance of Allah SWT, seeking knowledge, finding the right company, reading Quran, etc).
2. Turning to Allah SWT in times of need.
   “If Allah touches you with harm, none can remove it but He, and if He touches you with good, then He is able to do all things.” [6:17]
3. Placing hope and trust in Allah SWT.
   “Only those who remain patient shall receive their rewards in full without reckoning.” [39:10]
5. Looking at people worse off.
   “Look at those who are inferior to you and do not look at those who are superior to you, for this will enable you to appreciate better the favours of Allah. It will keep you away from despising Allah’s favours to you.” [Muslim]

6. Detaching oneself from this world.
   “Be in this world as if you were a stranger.” [Bukhari]

   “Truly, this life of the world is nothing but a (quick passing) enjoyment, and verily, the Hereafter that is the home that will remain forever.” [40:39]