

Abu Sa'īd and Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:



Whatever affliction, trouble, distress, grief, harm, or sorrow hurts a believer, even if it is merely a thorn, ensures that God will wipe away some of his sins for suffering it.⁽¹⁾

From the Qur'an

﴿We shall certainly try you with a certain measure of fear and hunger, and with diminution of wealth, lives, and crops. But give glad tidings to those who remain patient in adversity; (155) who, when a calamity befalls them, say, 'To God we belong, and to Him we shall return'.﴾ (2: 155-156)

The Narrator

Abu Najīḥ al-'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah belonged to the Sulaym tribe and was one of the people of al-Ṣuffah. He later moved to Syria and lived in Homs. He was one of those referred to in the Qur'anic verse that says: 'Nor shall those be blamed who, when they came to request you for transport and you said: 'I have no means of transporting you', turned away with their eyes overflowing with tears, sad that they did not have the means to cover their expenses'. (9: 92) He died in Year 75 AH 695 CE, but some reports suggest that he died earlier, during the conflict with Ibn al-Zubayr.

Summary

Whatever happens to a Muslim is good for him. If he is well and healthy, he will express his thanks to God and he will be rewarded for that. If he is afflicted by something, even a little thorn in his finger, some of his sins will be wiped away.

1 Related by al-Bukhari, 5641; Muslim, 2573.



Message and Meaning



The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains an aspect of God's grace which He bestows on His servants who believe in His oneness. Whatever happens to a believer is good for him, as God's Messenger (peace be upon him) explains: 'Wonderful is a believer's case. Everything that happens to him is good, and this is so for none other than a believer. If he encounters what is pleasant, he is grateful and this is good for him; and if he suffers an adversity, he remains patient and this is good for him'.⁽¹⁾



Explaining this, the Prophet states that whatever affliction occurs to a Muslim, be it pain or physical discomfort, mental agony for what he fears to happen or to miss out on, or for what might have happened in the past, or for any harm or distress or agony, will ultimately be good for him. This applies to every misfortune that afflicts a believer, however little it may be, even like a thorn in his finger. Any such trouble will ensure that some of his sins will be wiped away. The Prophet said: 'Adversity will test a believer man or woman in their souls, offspring, and property. Ultimately, they will meet God having no sin in their record'.⁽²⁾

However, such reward and wiping away of sins are subject to a condition: that the afflicted person should show patience in adversity and accept what God has willed for them. To panic and reject will burden the afflicted person with more error.



1 Related by Muslim, 2999.

2 Related by al-Tirmidhī, 2399.

Implementation



When a Muslim faces some affliction, he should bare it with resignation and acceptance of God's will. This will ensure God's reward for his patience in this adversity. Moreover, some of his sins will be wiped away if he suffers an illness.



The hadith shows that God credits His servants with different types of reward. Therefore, every believer should always be grateful to God, praising Him, and submitting to His will with genuine love and pleasure.



Real affliction is not the encountered adversity; it is being deprived of its reward.



Whatever God has willed of affliction will inevitably take place. Therefore, a Muslim should bear it with patience. He must not be in panic. 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib said to al-Ash'ath ibn Qays: 'If you are patient during adversity, you will endure what God has willed for you and you will be rewarded. If you are impatient and in panic, the same will happen but you will be deprived of reward'.⁽¹⁾

1 Al-Māwardī, *Adab al-Dunyā wal-Dīn*, p. 288.

