*Ayyub’s Blessings & Afflictions*

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Ayyub was one of the Prophets of Bani Isra’il. Ayyub was the grandson of Ishaq and Ibrahim was his great-grandfather.

**وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ**

Because of their widespread corruption, Bani Isra’il were sent one prophet after another. Every prophet had a message for the people; Yunus’ message was: never give up calling people to Allah. Sulaiman’s message was: Allah is able to subject the universe to man and man should employ it to worship Allah. The universe praised Allah with Dawud, and that was his message. And Ayyub’s message was the faith of patience.

Ayyub is a prophet who was sent to people in Belad el-Sham (the Levant), the vast majority were believers and loved him already. Allah bestowed wondrous blessings upon him; no one before was granted such blessings, and he remained like that for fifty years. No one is tried as greatly as an honourable man who has lost all his fortunes.

Today’s story is addressed to two kinds of people: those who have misfortune, such as an ailing family member, those who became bankrupt, those who lost a son and the like; and others who live a blessed life without even realizing that they do, or that they might lose it one day.

Think about the blessings Ayyub had: money, countless barley and wheat fields, hundreds of slaves, a good and beautiful wife, physical strength, fourteen sons and daughters, he had faith and assurance, an unlimited number of friends, cattle, horses, and livestock. All that lasted for fifty years.

Allah, be He exalted, wanted to examine him, so He deprived him of his money, his lands became barren, the fourteen sons and daughters all died, the cattle were lost, and he had to sell the slaves just to pay for his expenses. Allah then put him to another test with a physical disease. He became crippled and unable to move. His friends thought his illness was contagious and shunned him as a result; he was left with his faithful wife and only two of his resolved friends.

**فَأَمَّا الإنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ (١٥)وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ (١٦)كَلا بَل لا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ (١٧)وَلا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ (١٨)وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلا لَمًّا (١٩)وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (٢٠)كَلا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الأرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا (٢١)وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا (٢٢)وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الإنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (٢٣)**

“As for man, when his Lord tries him by giving him honour and bounties, then he says (in exultation), ‘My Lord has honoured me’. But when He tries him by straitening his means of life, he says, ‘My Lord has humiliated me!’ Nay! But you treat not the orphans with kindness and generosity! And urge not one another on the feeding of the poor! And you devour the inheritance—all with greed. And you love wealth with a great love. Nay! When the earth is ground to powder, and your Lord comes with the angels in rows; and Hell will be brought near that Day. On that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance (then) avail him?” (Al-Fajr: 15-23).

Happiness and affliction are both tests from Allah, the Great and Almighty. Never rely on this worldly life, or feel secure against the Plan of Allah. Allah wants to let you know that this world’s treasures are worth nothing; so never let them take over your heart. Instead, work for it because you are a Muslim.

His wife fed him and cared for him; she spent money on him until it had run out, so she started working for other people for money. The ordeal lasted for 18 years.

Allah created the universe in six days only to show us that everything works out gradually if there is patience. This shows us that perfection is the outcome of patience, prayer to Allah, night prayers, and obedience to Allah’s commands, such as the Hijab etc. It also shows us that imperfection comes out of impatience, such as adultery, and stealing, etc.

Patience is the core of Islam. The evidence is that the story of Prophet Ayyub is about patience, not prophecy. The only attribute that has been mentioned ninety times in Holly Qur’an is patience, and after it there is always a mention of optimistic news such as,

**وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ**

“…give glad tidings to the ones who patiently persevere…” (Al-Baqarah: 155)

I met a young man once who was complaining about his extreme hatred towards his wife and his intention to divorce her. All the same, the young man was still afraid to mistreat her. I recited the verse I just mentioned and asked him to think about it. So, the young man left and I met him a month later and asked him about the matter. He said, “I put two things in front of me: I either put up with this situation and go to Paradise without reckoning, or I rely on the worldly life and divorce her—so, I chose the first one. I swear to Allah, I can’t live without her now.” This is the result of his patience. Allah granted him blessings in his present life and put the love of his wife into his heart.

**وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ**

“And seek help in patience and prayer and truly it is extremely heavy and hard except for the humble spirited.” (Al-Baqarah: 45)

**فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ**

“So be patient. Surely, the (good) end is for those conscious of Allah” (Hud: 49).

The Prophet says, "You should know that victory comes with patience.”

Allah also addresses the Prophet by saying:

**فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ**

“So wait with patience for the Decision of your Lord, and be not like the Companion of the Fish” (Al-Qalam: 48)

**وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَى آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا**

“And indeed We made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found on his part no firm will-power” (Ta-Ha: 115)

**يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ**

“O, you who believe! Endure and be more patient (than your enemy), help others to be patient, and guard your territory by stationing army units permanently at the places from where the enemy can attack you.” (Al-Imran: 200).

The Prophet said, “No one would be given better and weightier blessing than patience.”

After 18 years, the wife of prophet Ayyub started to become tired. She asked him once, “Are you a messenger and prophet?” “Yes,” he said. “Why don’t you ask Allah for relief?” she asked. “How long have we been in this ordeal?” he asked her. “Eighteen years” she said. “How long did we remain with blessings before that?” “Fifty years,” she answered. “Allah granted us 50 years of blessing, then why can’t we stand this ordeal for 50 years? I swear to Allah, I won’t ask Allah until I have as much time of suffering as I had of blessing.” The only words he said in praying to Allah were “Thanks be to Allah.”

That reminds us of Prophet Muhammad the day his son Ibrahim died. He made this supplication to Allah saying, “Here I am, at Your command, the good is all in Your hands, and the evil is not due to You. Here I am at your command.”

The wife of our prophet Ayyub got angry and said, “I beg you to pray, for how long will we stay in this suffering?” He answered, “Woe unto you! Do you enrage Allah, be He exalted? I swear to Allah, if He cured me, I’ll beat you one hundred times.”

People then started refusing his wife as a servant, thinking she might carry her husband’s disease to them.

Prophet Muhammad mentions all this. He said, “Prophet Ayyub endured trial for eighteen years. Relatives and acquaintances shunned him except two of his kinsmen. One day one of them said to the other ‘I swear to Allah that Ayyub has committed a great and unforgivable sin.’ ‘Never!’ the other answered. ‘Can’t you see the affliction he is in? Allah did not have mercy on him for eighteen years,’ said the first one. The two went to Ayyub and the second man said, ‘Do you know what this man was saying? He said you have committed a great sin, so Allah will not forgive you.’ Ayyub said, ‘I know nothing of what you both are saying, but I know that whenever I passed by two quarrelling people I came back home praying for Allah to conciliate between them, and gave charity for them so Allah would not be disobeyed.’

His wife brought plenty of food home one day. He said, “From where have you brought this food?” She didn’t answer; it turned out that she cut a braid from her hair and sold it to get food for them. He was deeply touched by that and found himself compelled to pray for Allah. He said

**وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ**

“And (remember) Ayyûb, when he cried to his Lord, "Verily, distress has seized me, and You are the Most Merciful of all those who show mercy." (Al-Anbiyah: 83)

He never ascribed distress to Allah.

**وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ**

“And remember Our slave Ayyûb, when he invoked his Lord (saying): "Verily Satan has touched me with distress and torment!” (Saad: 41).

**ارْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ**

So We answered his call.” Allah said to him, "Strike the ground with your foot: This is (a spring of) water to wash in, cool and a (refreshing) drink." (Saad: 42)

Here we can touch upon the sense that when you are about to do something you have to implement the means. Allah caused a spring of water to flow from beneath his feet; a spring to cure all external diseases and a drink for the internal ones. That is a proof that Allah can cure us with only a mouthful of water.

Prophet Muhammad said, “Whenever Ayyub went outdoors to answer the call of nature he leaned on his wife, and then hid from her. She led him back usually holding his hand. One time he was late.” The Prophet continues, “He returned to his wife much better than he was [in shining white robes and perfect, young-looking body] so she said ‘Allah bless you! Have you seen the afflicted prophet who was here before? I swear I’ve never met anyone who looked like him as much as you do, before he was afflicted’. ‘Can’t you recognize me?’ he asked. ‘No,’ she said. ‘It’s me, Ayyub,’ he answered.”

**وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا**

“And that it is He (Allah) Who makes (whom He wills) laugh, and makes (whom He wills) weep. And that it is He (Allah) Who causes death and gives life”. (An-Najm: 43, 44).

The blessings were all given back to him—his health, his strength—they were even much better than before. Prophet Muhammad told us that Allah sent two clouds over his lands; a cloud passed on the wheat field and rained gold until the field was filled, while the other passed over the barley field and rained on it until it became full. So Allah enriched him again.

**فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرَى لِلْعَابِدِينَ**

“and We restored his family to him (that he had lost) and the like thereof along with them as a mercy from Ourselves and a Reminder for all those who worship Us” (Al-Anbiyah: 84)

His wife was given her youth back again and bore him 26 sons and daughters, as if Allah was saying, “You were not tested, everything has been given back to you and more”.

Strangely enough, The Prophet says, “While Ayyub was bathing naked, Allah sent a group of locusts that started falling on him, and they turned out to be golden locusts. He stuffed his garment’s pockets with them so Allah, be He exalted, said ‘Oh Ayyub, haven’t I given you enough?’ He said ‘Sure you did Allah, but I can never dispense with your blessing’.”

**إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ**

“We found him patient. How excellent a slave! Verily he was ever oft returning in repentance