

# How to Behave When Struck by Illness (part 1 of 2): Bearing Afflictions with Patience

**Description:** No illness or injury touches a human being without God's permission.

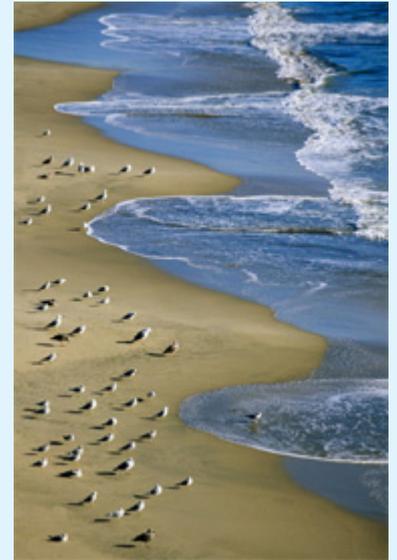
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Before talking about how a believer behaves when ill or injured it is important to understand just what Islam teaches us about the life of this world. Our existence here on earth is but a transient stop, on the way to our real life in the Hereafter.

Paradise or Hell will be our permanent abode. This world is a place of trial and testing. God created it for us, for our enjoyment, but it is a place of more than just worldly pleasures. It is here that we fulfil our true purpose; we live our lives based on the worship of God. We laugh, we play, we cry and we feel heartache and sorrow, but every condition and every emotion is from God. We react with patience and thankfulness and hope for eternal reward. We fear eternal punishment and know with certainty that God is the source of all mercy and all forgiveness.



**"And this life of the world is only amusement and play! Verily, the home of the Hereafter, that is the life indeed (i.e. the eternal life that will never end), if they but knew." (Quran 29:64)**

God did not create us and then abandon us to the pleasures and trials of life; rather He sent Messengers and Prophets to teach us and Books of revelation to guide us. He also provided us with countless blessings. Each blessing makes life wonderful and at times bearable. If we stop for a moment and contemplate our existence, the blessings of God become evident. Observe the rain falling outside, feel the tingle of the sunshine on your bare skin, touch your breast and feel the strong rhythmic beating of your heart. These are blessings from God and we should be thankful for them, along with our homes, our children, and our health. God however tells us, that we will be tested, He says,

**"And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to the patient ones." (Quran 2:155)**

God has advised us to bear our trials and tribulations patiently. However, this is difficult without understanding that everything that happens in this world happens by the permission of God. No leaf falls from a tree without God's permission. No business crumbles, no car crashes, and no marriage ends without God's permission. No illness or injury touches a human being without God's permission. He has power over all things.

God does what He does for reasons that are at times beyond our comprehension and for reasons that may or may not be apparent. However, God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy wants only what is best for us. Ultimately, what is best for us is eternal life in a place of eternal bliss, Paradise.

**"Their Lord gives them glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, and that He is pleased (with them), and of Gardens (Paradise) for them wherein are everlasting delight." (Quran 9:21)**

In the face of every trial, a believer must be certain that God does not decree for him anything but good. The good may be among the pleasures of this world or it may be in the hereafter. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said, **"How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is also good for him."**<sup>[1]</sup> God tests us with the trials and tribulations of life, and if we bear patiently we will attain great reward. Through changing circumstances and trying times God tests our level of faith, ascertains our ability to be patient and wipes away some of our sins. God is all loving and all wise and knows us better than we know ourselves. We will not attain Paradise without His mercy and His mercy is manifest in the tests and trials of this life.

The life of this world is mere deception. The most beneficial thing to us are the good deeds that we were able to perform. Families are a trial, for God says that they can lead us astray, but equally they can lead us to Paradise. Wealth is a trial; coveting it can make us greedy and miserly, but distributing it and using it to benefit those in need can bring us closer to God. Health is also a trial. Good health can make us feel invincible and not in need of God, but bad health has a way of humbling us and forcing us to depend on God. How a believer reacts to the circumstances of life is very important.

What happens if the pleasures of this life suddenly become torments? How should one behave when struck by illness or injury? Of course, we accept our fate and try to bear the pain, sadness, or suffering patiently because we know with certainty that from this God will bring about much good. Prophet Muhammad said, **"No misfortune or disease befalls a Muslim, no worry or grief or harm or distress - not even a thorn that pricks him - but God will expiate for some of his sins because of that."**<sup>[2]</sup> However, we are imperfect human beings. We can read these words, we can even understand the sentiment, but behaving with acceptance is sometimes very difficult. It is much easier to bemoan and cry about our situation, but our Most Merciful God has given us clear guidelines and promised us two things, if we worship Him and follow His guidance we will be rewarded with Paradise and that after hardship comes ease.

**"So verily, with the hardship, there is relief." (Quran 94:5)**

A believer is obligated to look after his body and mind, therefore trying to maintain good health is essential. However, when struck by illness or injury, it is vital to follow God's guidance. A believer must seek medical aid and do everything he can to bring about a cure or recovery, but at the same time he must seek help through prayer,

remembrance of God and acts of worship. Islam is a holistic way of life, both physical and spiritual health go hand in hand. In part two we will examine in more detail the steps to take when struck by illness or injury.

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Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*

[2] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

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