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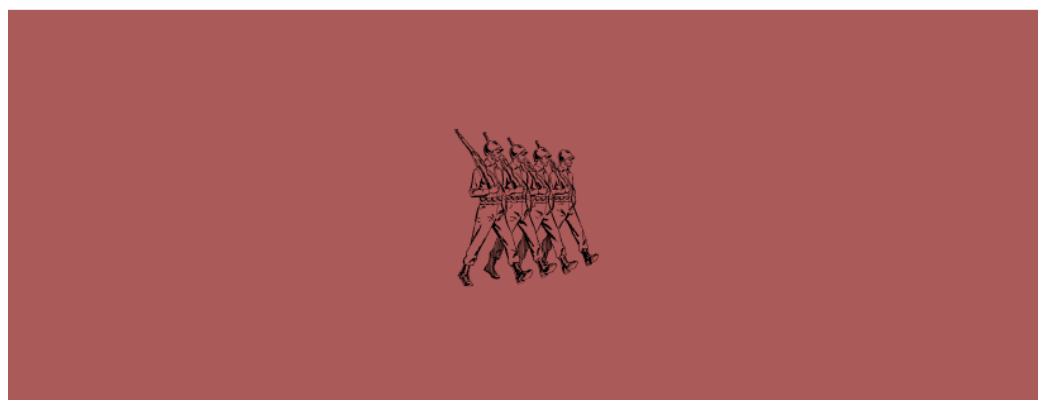
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[Emotional Fitness \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/emotional-fitness/\)](https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/emotional-fitness/)

THE WAR AGAINST COVID-19: LESSONS AND RESPONSE

🕒 6 months ago [lihana \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/author/lihana/\)](https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/author/lihana/)



By: Dr Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman

Allah created humankind and armed it with knowledge before sending it to the battlefield, namely the Earth. It is with this weapon that they fight and defeat their enemies, both the visible and the invisible. The invisible enemies comprise Iblis and the diseases that attack the human body and the heart. Covid-19 is the invisible common enemy that the world is currently in a state of war with.

Contrary to the war with the visible enemy, this war requires no human soldiers, bullets and cease-fire agreement. The intent of the enemy is not regime change nor acquisition of spoils of war but merciless destruction of human life.

Covid-19 is one of the trials of life. Allah says:

“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, “We believe”, and that they will not be tested?” (Qur’an, 29:2).

“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient,” (Qur’an, 2:155).

It is learned from the above verses that trials are a natural part of life and that they should be countered with *sabr*.

Menu

[Contact Us \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/contact-us/\)](#)

[About Us \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/about-us/\)](#)

Categories

[Cognitive fitness \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/cognitive-fitness/\)](#)

[Emotional Fitness \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/emotional-fitness/\)](#)

[ERTL \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/ertl/\)](#)

[General \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/general/\)](#)

[Parenting \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/parenting/\)](#)

[Physical fitness \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/physical-fitness/\)](#)

[Self Care \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/self-care/\)](#)

[Social Fitness \(https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/category/social-fitness/\)](#)

[Social media fitness](#)

Sabr is the greatest lesson we learn from the stories or lives of the Messengers of Allah (peace and blessings be upon them). For example, Prophet Ayyub (peace and blessings be upon him) was blessed with good health, plenty of children and wealth in the form of wide estates. However, he suddenly lost them all as a test from Allah. Nonetheless, he practised *sabr* and consequently, these afflictions were lifted from him. Allah praises him in the following verse:

“Commemorate Our Servant Job. Behold he cried to his Lord: “The Evil One has afflicted me with distress and suffering!” (The command was given:) “Strike with thy foot: here is (water) wherein to wash, cool and refreshing, and (water) to drink.” And We gave him (back) his people, and doubled their number, as a Grace from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who have Understanding.” (Qur’an, 38:41-43).

There are so many lessons we can learn from the suffering of Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him) and his observance of *sabr*. Suffice to mention here are the following:

There is light at the end of the tunnel

We should never lose hope. Allah is near to whoever supplicates Him. After many years of suffering Prophet Ayyub (peace be upon him) could see light at the end of the tunnel. Allah says: “In the end We deliver Our apostles and those who believe: Thus is it fitting on Our part that We should deliver those who believe!” (Qur’an, 10:103); “So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief. Verily, with every difficulty there is relief.” (Qur’an, 94:5-6).

Attitude of gratitude

Prophet Ayyub never forgot Allah’s favours upon him. He habituated himself to express thankfulness in all situations, pleasing or displeasing. Allah says: “If ye would count up the favours of Allah, never would ye be able to number them: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Qur’an, 16:18); “And remember! your Lord caused to be declared (publicly): “If ye are grateful, I will add more (favours) unto you; But if ye show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed.”” (Qur’an, 14:7).

Determination to succeed

Trials leave hearts broken. However, they also grant us an opportunity to turn inward, seeking comfort and help from Allah, the Most Merciful. We need to always remember that the hardships we face along the path to Allah have also been faced by others who have trodden the same path before us. We should not allow trials to prevent us from seeing the goodness behind the suffering and discomfort. An intelligent and skilful person endeavours to turn challenges into opportunities and losses into profits; whereas, the unskilled person aggravates his own predicament, often making two disasters out of one.

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Spiritual Fitness
(<https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/cat:>

Work From Home
(<https://flagship.iium.edu.my/eps/cat:>

“Life is a book with many chapters. Some tell of tragedy, others of triumph. Some are dull and ordinary, others intense and exciting. The key to success in life is to never stop on a difficult page, to never quit on a tough chapter. Champions have the courage to keep turning the pages because they know that a better chapter always lies ahead.” – Author unknown

“Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” – Confucius

In conclusion, Allah exhorts us to exercise *sabr* amidst trials. It is self-discipline to keep one’s emotions in check. We should not abuse trials as they provide us with an opportunity to thank Allah for the blessings we still have, to be more humble, to repent and to hope for Allah’s mercy. We should perceive trials as an alarm that wakes us up from *ghaflah* (heedlessness) to seek Allah; to rectify our relationship with Him; to get closer to Him.

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