STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 12

AN EXCELLENT SERVANT

The Story of Prophet Ayyub According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

AK (KELANTAN)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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The Story of Prophet Ayyub According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥٓ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ ٱلضُّرُّ وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ*

"And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful."."

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:83

HJ CHE ALIM HJ CHE HARON

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, the Most Merciful of the merciful, who answers the call of His patient servant, removes his adversity, and restores his family and as many more as a mercy and a reminder. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who taught that all the affairs of a believer are good, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah grant healing to everyone who is ill, patience to everyone who is tested, and make every pain of ours an expiation of sins and a raising of rank. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being. It shows **scenery**: **a calm, rocky valley** after rain, in the morning. From a crack in the rocky ground, **clear water springs up** and flows into a small pool. Around it, **grass and small flowers are beginning to grow** on ground that was dry before, and beside it lies **a bunch of straw**, simply tied.

The water springing from the ground is taken from Allah's command to Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"Strike [the ground] with your foot"***, and ***"this is a [spring for] a cool bath and drink"*** (38:42). **The bunch of straw** recalls ***"take in your hand a bunch [of grass]"*** (38:44).

Dry ground turning green symbolises healing and bounty after a long trial: ***"So We responded to him and removed what afflicted him of adversity"*** (21:84). **The dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = archaeological note; blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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AN EXCELLENT SERVANT

In Malay we often say "patient like Prophet Ayyub" (*sabar seperti Nabi Ayyub*), and many other languages have a similar saying. It shows how the story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ has become a symbol of patience in the hearts of Muslims. Yet the verses of the Qur'an about Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ are actually very few — only a handful of verses in Surah Al-Anbiya' and Surah Sad. Those few verses are rich with lessons.

At the same time, the story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is among those most embellished with unauthentic tales — including repulsive descriptions of his illness and specific figures for the length of his trial. This eBook holds only to what is mentioned in the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

SURAH AL-AN'AM 6:84

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۚ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۚ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ ۖ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِۦ
دَاوُۥدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ

٨٤

And We gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - all [of them] We guided. And Noah, We guided before; and among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the doers of good.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/6:84

Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is mentioned together with the prophets among the descendants of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"among his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron"***, and in the list of prophets who received revelation (4:163). Allah closes this verse with: ***"Thus do We reward the doers of good"***.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International, which renders the name Ayyub as Job. The grade of every Hadith is stated in the Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

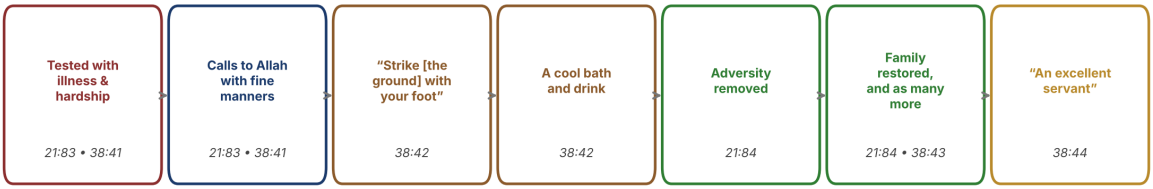


Figure 1: The flow of the story of Prophet Ayyub in the Qur'an — from the trial to the praise "an excellent servant".

Figure 1 shows that the whole story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in the Qur'an turns on one axis: **trial, prayer, and Allah's answer**. The Qur'an does not detail the cause of the trial, the type of illness or its length; it focuses on the attitude of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and the mercy of Allah.

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A PROPHET WHO WAS TESTED

Before entering the story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, we need to understand the Qur'an's principle about trials.

A trial is not a sign of Allah's anger, but His way (*sunnah*) with every believer.

SURAH AL-'ANKABUT 29:2–3

أَحَسِبَ ٱلنَّاسُ أَن يُتْرَكُوٓاْ أَن يَقُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried.

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ صَدَقُواْ وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٣﴾

But We have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/29:2-3

First: Faith must be tested. ***"Do the people think that they will be left to say, "We believe" and they will not be tried"***? Trials make evident who is truthful and who is lying (29:3).

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:155–157

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَنفُسِ وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

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.

ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَصَٰبَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوٓاْ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَٰتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:155-157

Second: The forms of trial. ***"We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits"***. Commentators mention that Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was tested with nearly all of these: loss of wealth, loss of family, and illness in his own body. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:83

Third: The attitude of the patient. ***"Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return"*** — and their reward: ***"Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy"***.

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:214

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُواْ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْاْ مِن قَبْلِكُم ۖ مَّسَّتْهُمُ ٱلْبَأْسَآءُ وَٱلضَّرَّآءُ وَزُلْزِلُواْ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ ٱلرَّسُولُ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ مَعَهُۥ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ ٱللَّهِ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّ نَصْرَ ٱللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allah?" Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:214

Fourth: The prophets are tested most severely. This verse mentions that earlier nations ***"were touched by poverty and hardship"***, until the messenger and the believers asked: ***"When is the help***

of Allah?", and the answer came: ***"Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near"***. The story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is a living example of this verse.

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A PRAYER FULL OF GOOD MANNERS

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:83–84

۞ وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥٓ أَنِّى مَسَّنِىَ ٱلضُّرُّ وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

And [mention] Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and you are the Most Merciful of the merciful."

فَٱسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُۥ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِۦ مِن ضُرٍّ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ أَهْلَهُۥ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَٰبِدِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

So We responded to him and removed what afflicted him of adversity. And We gave him [back] his family and the like thereof with them as mercy from Us and a reminder for the worshippers [of Allah].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:83-84

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 21:83 — COMPLAINING WITHOUT DEMANDING

First: Describing his own condition. ***"Indeed, adversity has touched me" — annī massaniyaḍ-ḍurr***. The word ***massa*** means "to touch". Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not say "I have been crushed" or "I have been destroyed", but "I have been touched" by adversity — as though so heavy a trial were only a touch compared with the mercy of Allah.

Second: Praising Allah with a fitting attribute. ***"you are the Most Merciful of the merciful" — wa anta arḥamur-rāḥimīn***. He did not say "heal me". He only mentioned his condition and the attribute of his Lord, and left the rest to Allah. This is the most refined manner of prayer. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:83

Third: A swift and complete answer. ***"So We responded to him and removed what afflicted him of adversity"***. A prayer that did not openly ask was answered with more than was asked.

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Prophet	Situation	Words of the prayer (Sahih International)	Verse
Ayyub	Illness and hardship	*"Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful"*	**21:83**
Yunus	Inside the fish	*"There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers"*	**21:87**
Ya'qub	Losing a son	*"I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah"*	**12:86**
Musa	A fugitive without provision	*"My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need"*	**28:24**
Zakariya	Old, without an heir	*"My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while You are the best of inheritors"*	**21:89**

Figure 2: The prayers of the prophets in times of hardship in the Qur'an. All of them mention their own condition and an attribute of Allah with fine manners.

Figure 2 shows that the same manners are found in the prayers of other prophets. Yunus عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ admitted his fault; Ya'qub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ complained only to Allah (Series 11); Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ stated his need. They all teach us to pray with humility, admitting our weakness and praising Allah.

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"SATAN HAS TOUCHED ME"

SURAH SAD 38:41

وَٱذۡكُرۡ عَبۡدَنَآ أَيُّوبَ إِذۡ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥٓ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ بِنُصۡبٖ وَعَذَابٍ ﴿٤١﴾

And remember Our servant Job, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship and torment."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:41

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 38:41

In Surah Sad, the prayer of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is mentioned with different words: ***"Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship and torment"***. Scholars explain that Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ attributed the hardship to Satan as **good manners towards Allah** — attributing what is bad to Satan, and what is good to Allah. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:41

The same manners are found in the words of Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: ***"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me"*** (26:80) — he attributed illness to himself and healing to Allah. Likewise Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ attributed the division of his family to Satan (12:100; Series 11).

The Qur'an also calls Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in this verse ***"Our servant"*** — ***'abdanā***. The title "servant of Allah" is the most honourable of titles, given to the prophets at their greatest moments.

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STRIKE THE GROUND WITH YOUR FOOT

SURAH SAD 38:42

ٱرۡكُضۡ بِرِجۡلِكَۖ هَٰذَا مُغۡتَسَلُۢ بَارِدٞ وَشَرَابٞ ٤٢

[So he was told], "Strike [the ground] with your foot; this is a [spring for] a cool bath and drink."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:42

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 38:42 — A REMEDY THAT CAME WITH EFFORT

Allah's answer to the prayer of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came in the form of a command: ***"Strike [the ground] with your foot"*** — ***urkuḍ birijlik***. Allah was able to heal him without any action, yet He commanded Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to do something, even if only to strike the ground with his foot.

The lesson is the same as in the story of Hajar (Series 7) and Maryam: Allah sends down His help together with human effort, however small that effort is. A sick person is still commanded to seek a remedy, while being certain that healing comes from Allah.

Then water sprang forth: ***"this is a [spring for] a cool bath and drink"***. Ibn Kathir reports the view of the commentators that the water used for bathing healed his outward illness, and the water he drank healed his inward illness. The Qur'an does not detail the number of springs or their location. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:42

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A FAMILY RESTORED, AND AS MANY MORE

SURAH SAD 38:43

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ أَهْلَهُۥ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿٤٣﴾

And We granted him his family and a like [number] with them as mercy from Us and a reminder for those of understanding.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:43

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 21:84 AND 38:43

First: More than what was lost. ***"We granted him his family and a like [number] with them"***. Commentators differ on whether the family members who had died were brought back to life, or whether Allah granted him new offspring twice as many. The Qur'an does not detail it; what is certain is that the gift exceeded what had been lost. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 21:84

Second: Mercy and a reminder. This gift is described ***"as mercy from Us and a reminder for the worshippers [of Allah]"*** (21:84), and ***"a reminder for those of understanding"*** (38:43). This story is not mere history; it is a reminder for worshippers and people of understanding that patience is never wasted.

Third: Patience does not mean hopelessness. These verses give hope to everyone who has lost something: Allah is able to replace it with something better, in this world or in the Hereafter. ***"Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account"*** (39:10).

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A BUNCH OF GRASS AND AN OATH FULFILLED

SURAH SAD 38:44

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْثًا فَاضْرِب بِّهِۦ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ ۗ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَٰهُ صَابِرًا ۚ نِّعْمَ ٱلْعَبْدُ إِنَّهُۥٓ أَوَّابٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

[We said], "And take in your hand a bunch [of grass] and strike with it and do not break your oath." Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/38:44

COMMENTARY ON VERSE 38:44

First: An oath sworn during the trial. This verse says: ***"take in your hand a bunch [of grass] and strike with it and do not break your oath"***. Commentators explain that during his illness, Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ had sworn to strike his wife a hundred times because of something that had happened. The details of what his wife did come from tafsir reports that are not authentic as marfu' narrations, so this eBook does not go into them. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 38:44

Second: A merciful way out. After he was healed, Allah gave him a way out: take a bunch of grass — ***ḍighth***, a handful of many stalks — and strike once with it, and his oath would be fulfilled without hurting his wife. Ibn Kathir explains that this was Allah's mercy to the wife of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who had faithfully cared for him throughout the trial. In the law of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Allah has prescribed ***kaffārah*** (expiation) for an oath that is not fulfilled (5:89).

Third: A great praise. The verse closes with three praises: ***"Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah]"***. ***Ṣābir*** (patient), ***ni'mal-'abd*** (an excellent servant), and ***awwāb*** (one who constantly returns to Allah). This is the title of this eBook.

Notice that the same praise — ***ni'mal-'abdu innahū awwāb*** — is also given to Sulaiman عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (38:30), a prophet tested with a kingdom and wealth. Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was tested with hardship and was patient; Sulaiman عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was tested with blessings and was grateful. Both became "an excellent servant".

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THE GOLDEN LOCUSTS

The only authentic Hadith that tells of a specific event concerning Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is found in Sahih al-Bukhari. It took place after Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ had been healed and granted ease once again.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3391

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْجُعْفِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنْ هَمَّامٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « بَيْنَمَا أَيُّوبُ يَغْتَسِلُ عُرْيَانًا خَرَّ عَلَيْهِ رِجْلُ جَرَادٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ، فَجَعَلَ يَحْثِي فِي ثَوْبِهِ، فَنَادَى رَبُّهُ يَا أَيُّوبُ، أَلَمْ أَكُنْ أَغْنَيْتُكَ عَمَّا تَرَى قَالَ بَلَى يَا رَبِّ، وَلَكِنْ لاَ غِنَى لِي عَنْ بَرَكَتِكَ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"While Ayyub was bathing (alone) unclothed, a swarm of locusts of gold fell upon him. Ayyub began gathering them into his garment. His Lord called him: O Ayyub, have I not made you free of need of what you see? He said: Yes indeed, O my Lord. But I can never be free of need of Your blessing."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Ju'fi, from 'Abd ar-Razzaq ibn Hammam, from Ma'mar ibn Rashid, from Hammam ibn Munabbih, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter on the saying of Allah {Wa Ayyuba idh nada rabbahu…} (21:83), Hadith No. 3391. Also narrated by al-Bukhari in Nos. 279 and 7493.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3391

COMMENTARY — NEVER FREE OF NEED OF ALLAH'S BLESSING

First: A trial after ease. Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who had once been tested with loss, was now tested with bounty. He gathered the golden locusts, and Allah asked: ***"Have I not made you free of need?"***

Second: The answer of a grateful servant. ***"Yes indeed, O my Lord. But I can never be free of need of Your blessing."*** Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ gathered that gold not out of greed, but because it came from Allah as a blessing. Ibn Hajar explains that this Hadith shows it is permissible to love lawful wealth when it is taken with the intention of gratitude.

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Third: Patience and gratitude in one soul. When tested with hardship, Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was patient; when tested with ease, he was grateful and felt his need of Allah. This is the perfect picture of a believer, as in the Hadith of Sahih Muslim 2999 (Chapter 8).

Imam al-Bukhari also narrated this Hadith in the Book of Ghusl (No. 279) as evidence that it is permissible to bathe unclothed when alone, although covering oneself remains better.

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ILLNESS IN THE ISLAMIC VIEW

The story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ opens the door to understanding how Islam views illness. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught several principles that change how a believer faces pain.

ILLNESS AS AN EXPIATION OF SINS

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5641

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ بْنُ عَمْرٍو، حَدَّثَنَا زُهَيْرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ حَلْحَلَةَ، عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الخُدْرِيِّ، وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا يُصِيبُ الْمُسْلِمَ مِنْ نَصَبٍ وَلاَ وَصَبٍ وَلاَ هَمٍّ وَلاَ حُزْنٍ وَلاَ أَذًى وَلاَ غَمٍّ حَتَّى الشَّوْكَةِ يُشَاكُهَا، إِلاَّ كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ خَطَايَاهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"No fatigue, illness, worry, sorrow, harm or distress befalls a Muslim — even a thorn that pricks him — except that Allah expiates some of his sins by it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad, from 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Amr, from Zuhair ibn Muhammad, from Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn Halhalah, from 'Ata' ibn Yasar, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Sick, chapter on the expiation of sins through illness, Hadith No. 5641. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2573).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5641

This Hadith gives meaning to every pain — even a pricking thorn. No suffering of a Muslim is wasted. Pain faced with patience becomes an expiation of sins and a raising of rank.

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CHOOSING PATIENCE

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 5652

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ عِمْرَانَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَطَاءُ بْنُ أَبِي رَبَاحٍ، قَالَ قَالَ لِي ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ أَلاَ أُرِيكَ امْرَأَةً مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ قُلْتُ بَلَى. قَالَ هَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةُ السَّوْدَاءُ أَتَتِ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَتْ إِنِّي أُصْرَعُ، وَإِنِّي أَتَكَشَّفُ فَادْعُ اللَّهَ لِي. قَالَ « إِنْ شِئْتِ صَبَرْتِ وَلَكِ الْجَنَّةُ وَإِنْ شِئْتِ دَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ أَنْ يُعَافِيَكِ ». فَقَالَتْ أَصْبِرُ. فَقَالَتْ إِنِّي أَتَكَشَّفُ فَادْعُ اللَّهَ أَنْ لاَ أَتَكَشَّفَ، فَدَعَا لَهَا. حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَخْلَدٌ، عَنِ ابْنِ جُرَيْجٍ، أَخْبَرَنِي عَطَاءٌ، أَنَّهُ رَأَى أُمَّ زُفَرَ تِلْكَ، امْرَأَةً طَوِيلَةً سَوْدَاءَ عَلَى سِتْرِ الْكَعْبَةِ.

TRANSLATION:

'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah said: Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said to me: "Shall I show you a woman from the people of Paradise?" I said: "Yes." He said: "This black woman came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: I suffer from epileptic fits, and my body becomes uncovered (during them). So supplicate to Allah for me." He said: **"If you wish, be patient and you will have Paradise; and if you wish, I will supplicate to Allah to cure you."** She said: "I will be patient." Then she said: "But my body becomes uncovered, so supplicate to Allah that it does not become uncovered." So he supplicated for her.

(In another chain) 'Ata' mentioned that he saw that woman, Umm Zufar, a tall black woman, (holding on) to the covering of the Ka'bah.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musaddad ibn Musarhad, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from 'Imran Abu Bakr, from 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabah, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما. A second chain: Muhammad, from Makhlad, from Ibn Juraij, from 'Ata'.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Sick, chapter on the virtue of one who suffers epileptic fits, Hadith No. 5652. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2576).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:5652

This woman chose patience and Paradise, just as Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was patient for years. Yet notice that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also offered to pray for her cure, and the woman still asked him to pray that her body would not become uncovered. **Islam does not forbid seeking treatment and praying for healing**; Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ himself prayed, and was commanded to strike the ground with his foot to obtain a remedy.

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ALL THE AFFAIRS OF A BELIEVER ARE GOOD

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2999

حَدَّثَنَا هَدَّابُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ الأَزْدِيُّ، وَشَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لِشَيْبَانَ - حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى، عَنْ صُهَيْبٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « عَجَبًا لأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ ذَاكَ لأَحَدٍ إِلاَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءُ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءُ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Suhaib رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"How wonderful is the affair of the believer! All of his affairs are good for him, and this is for no one except the believer. If something pleasing befalls him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. And if hardship befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Haddab ibn Khalid and Shaiban ibn Farrukh, from Sulaiman ibn al-Mughirah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Laila, from Suhaib ar-Rumi رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism and Softening of Hearts, chapter "The affair of the believer is all good", Hadith No. 2999.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2999

This Hadith sums up the whole story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. In hardship, he was patient (21:83; 38:44); in ease, he was grateful (Sahih al-Bukhari 3391). Both states became good for him.

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SURAH ASH-SHARH 94:5–6

فَإِنَّ مَعَ ٱلۡعُسۡرِ يُسۡرًا ۝٥

For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

إِنَّ مَعَ ٱلۡعُسۡرِ يُسۡرًا ۝٦

Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/94:5-6

And Allah promises: ***"For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease"*** — repeated twice for emphasis. The healing of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is proof of this promise.

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is among the stories most embellished in books of stories, sermons and tales. Some of it comes from the Book of Job in the Bible, and some from weak reports. Guided by the Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we do not make them part of the story we believe in.

POPULAR STORIES AND WHAT REVELATION SAYS

POPULAR STORY	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH SAY
Iblis made a wager with God about Ayyub's faithfulness, and God allowed Iblis to test him (Book of Job 1–2).	MUST BE REJECTED. Allah is All-Knowing and makes no wager with anyone. The Qur'an only says that Ayyub was tested and touched by Satan (38:41).
Ayyub's body was full of worms and he was thrown onto a rubbish heap because of his repulsive illness.	The Qur'an only mentions "adversity" and "hardship" (21:83; 38:41). Many scholars reject this description, since prophets are not afflicted with illnesses that drive people away from their call.
Ayyub was tested for 18 years (or 3 or 7 years).	The length of the trial is not mentioned in the Qur'an, Sahih al-Bukhari or Sahih Muslim. The report of 18 years is found outside these two books, and scholars differ on its authenticity.
Ayyub's wife was named Rahmah, and she sold her hair to buy food.	This name and event are not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith.
The cause of Ayyub's oath was that his wife was deceived by Satan in the form of a physician.	The Qur'an only mentions the oath and its way out (38:44). The cause is not mentioned in any authentic text.
Ayyub was a descendant of al-'Is (Esau), from the land of Rome.	The Qur'an only says that he was among the descendants of Ibrahim (6:84). The detailed lineage comes from the People of the Book.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: THE TOMBS OF PROPHET AYYUB — TRADITION, NOT EVIDENCE

Several places in the world are traditionally known as **the tomb of Prophet Ayyub**, among them in Salalah (Oman), Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. These places have been visited and honoured by local communities for centuries.

However, **none of them is confirmed by the Qur'an, authentic Hadith or published archaeological research**. The very number of tombs in countries so far apart shows that they are local traditions. The Qur'an also does not mention the place or time of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Therefore, no archaeological finding is included in this eBook.

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The story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ does not need the evidence of stone and soil. It is a story about a patient heart — and its truth rests on revelation: ***"a reminder for those of understanding"*** (38:43).

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PATIENT LIKE PROPHET AYYUB

A prophet lost his wealth, his family and his health. He did not object and did not despair. He only said: ***"Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful."*** Then Allah removed his adversity, restored his family and as many more, and praised him with the greatest of titles: ***"an excellent servant"***.

A BRIEF COMPARISON

THE SITUATION	THE ATTITUDE OF PROPHET AYYUB
Struck by illness and loss	Complains to Allah with fine manners, without demanding (21:83)
Feeling the touch of Satan	Attributes what is bad to Satan, not to Allah (38:41)
Commanded to make an effort	Strikes the ground with his foot and finds a remedy (38:42)
Bound by an oath	Fulfils the oath by the way Allah provided (38:44)
Granted ease once more	Grateful, and never free of need of Allah's blessing (Sahih al-Bukhari 3391)

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: Trials are Allah's way with the believers. (29:2–3; 2:155).

Second: Pray with good manners — mention your condition and an attribute of Allah. (21:83).

Third: Attribute good to Allah, and evil to Satan or to yourself. (38:41; 26:80).

Fourth: Healing comes together with effort. "Strike [the ground] with your foot" (38:42).

Fifth: Allah replaces what is lost with something better. (21:84; 38:43).

Sixth: Every pain of a Muslim expiates sins. (Sahih al-Bukhari 5641).

Seventh: Patience in hardship, gratitude in ease — both are good. (Sahih Muslim 2999).

Eighth: Always return to Allah. ***Innahū awwāb*** (38:44).

CONCLUSION

Almost everyone will be tested with illness, either in themselves or in someone they love. The story of Ayyub عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ does not promise that every illness will be cured in this world, but it promises that no patience is wasted, and that Allah is ***arḥamur-rāḥimīn*** — the Most Merciful of the merciful. It is the same name of Allah that Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ mentioned when forgiving his brothers (12:92; Series 11).

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May Allah heal everyone who is ill, strengthen everyone who is tested, and make us among those who are patient in hardship and grateful in ease. ***Annī massaniyaḍ-ḍurru wa anta arḥamur-rāḥimīn.*** Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** continues with the story of the next prophet, with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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ADDITIONAL HADITH CITED IN THE TEXT

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Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (neither affirm nor deny the People of the Book). https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4485

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

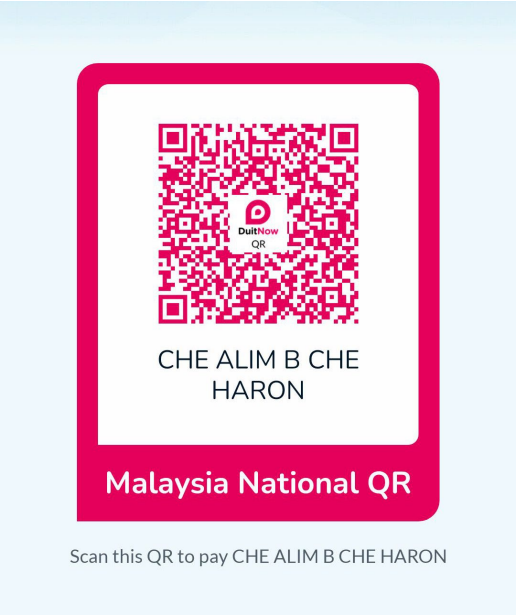
CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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