



In Hardship and in Ease: How to Rely on God

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Introduction

...But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah Knows, while you know not.¹

This life is a test, both in good times and bad. As I write this, each and every one of us is enduring some kind of hardship. In recent years, parts of our *ummah* have suffered devastating natural disasters and have been ravaged by war. We've collectively endured a global pandemic caused by COVID-19 that, in one fell swoop, took lives and depleted resources. It crippled global markets, causing financial distress, and brought many activities we take for granted to a grinding halt, with the forced closure of businesses, schools, places of worship and leisure. As we face difficult circumstances with uncertainty, fear, and the anticipation of loss, it is our relationship with Allah that must remain constant. With every hardship, Allah has promised ease. As the saying goes, the light at the end of the tunnel is not an illusion—the tunnel is!

Our faith teaches us that this too will pass, but as we go through the test (*fitna*) we must seek ways to purify ourselves and to nourish our souls. In every moment, the believer sees an opportunity to reap blessings and rewards. We remain optimistic in Allah, the All-Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*) and the Eternal Refuge (*al-Ṣamad*), who never lets us down and brings us out of darkness into light, time and time again. Allah does not send us trials without also giving us the means to seek relief and to make our success easy. The real test of hardship goes beyond worldly concern and discomfort and extends to how we choose to respond to it. So, how do we overcome what seems beyond our comprehension and control? How do we overcome anxiety, fear of the unknown, and feeling isolated, while finding purpose and solace?

The Straight Path we seek demands faith, gratitude, and patience on our part. We need to place our *trust* in Allah. Such reliance on Allah, *tawakkul*, is among the greatest acts of worship along this Path and one required of us, "...and upon Allah rely, if you should be believers."² *Tawakkul* is a means to Allah's pleasure and

¹ Qur'an 2:216.

² Qur'an 5:23.

reward³ and is among the greatest blessings we have that enable us to nurture and maintain our faith. It inspires hope, contentment with divine decree, and confidence during *all* times and situations, particularly during moments of fear and uncertainty. Allah promises to “provide for the believer from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah, then He is sufficient for him.”⁴ Muslim scholar Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350) said, “*Tawakkul* [reliance on Allah] is half of the religion. As for the other half, it is *inābah* [to return to Allah in all affairs and repentance].”⁵

***Tawakkul*: An action of the heart**

Tawakkul lives in the heart of the believer. It is at the very core of our spiritual well-being and practice. It provides the lens through which to form one’s outlook *and* actions to bring about the best outcome. Allah commands us, “And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”⁶ It is human to struggle, to be thrown off track, to be troubled with doubt, to complain when there is no end in sight, and to even become consumed with fear at times. *Tawakkul* is the means by which we right our course and stay on it, and bring about resolve and contentment. The benefits of *tawakkul* are many, and among them is that you hand over to Allah whatever burdens your heart and mind. Realize that you are not broken, abandoned, or forgotten, but that Allah has actually given you exactly what you need. Knowing this, the believer acknowledges with certainty and confidence, “And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return.”⁷

The concept of reliance on Allah is a familiar one, given its frequent mention in the Qur’an and Sunnah. We recite these verses and supplications ardently, yet often we may not entirely comprehend the scope of *tawakkul* and are yet to connect our hearts fully to Allah’s consoling and empowering words. The question is, “How do

³ “So whatever thing you have been given, it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. But what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who have believed and upon their Lord rely.” Qur’an 42:36.

⁴ Qur’an 65:3.

⁵ Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid, *Reliance on Allaah* (n.p.: Zad Group, n.d.), 3, accessed April 2020, https://d1.islamhouse.com/data/en/ih_books/single2/en_Reliance_on_Allah.pdf.

⁶ Qur’an 3:159.

⁷ Qur’an 11:88.

I live *tawakkul*? How do I implement it in my daily life to achieve its benefits?” *Tawakkul* involves placing complete trust in Allah, above and beyond all others, including oneself. As Muslim scholar Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393) stated, “Complete reliance on Allah is the sincere dependence of the heart on Allah in the servant’s endeavors in pursuing his interests and safeguarding himself against anything that may be harmful to his well-being, both in this life and in the *ākhirah* (after life).”⁸ However, when our inner voice resonates loudly and becomes further emboldened by Shaytan’s whispers, we may erroneously place our emotions, logic, and that which seems immediately tangible ahead of our reliance on Allah and what is often beyond our perception of divine wisdom and decree. *Tawakkul* is a leap of faith into that very unknown. Hence, the answer to this question lies in two key aspects upon which this trust is hinged: How well do I know Allah? And what is my relationship with Him?

To know Allah is to place your trust in Him

To know Allah is to know and acknowledge His names and attributes. Pause and reflect when reciting them and call upon Him by these names. Only then can one develop a meaningful connection to Allah—one that will inculcate complete reliance on Him. He is Eternal (*al-Ḥayy*) and the Sustainer of all that exists (*al-Qayyūm*). His knowledge is All-Knowing (*al-‘Alīm*). He is the Most Powerful (*al-Qadīr*), the One who is Self-Sufficient (*al-Ghanī*), the One who provides abundantly (*al-Razzāq*), and the One who is most Noble and Generous (*al-Karīm*). Allah is our Guardian (*al-Wakīl*): “To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs.”⁹ He is always in control over all of His creation. Thus, the greater our awareness of Allah, the greater our certainty in Him and our love for Him—and the stronger our *tawakkul*.

⁸ Ahmad Farid, *The Purification of the Soul* (London: Al-Firdous, 1996), 105.

⁹ Qur’an 4:171.

The fruits of *tawakkul*

Allah repeatedly commands us in the Qur'an to place our trust and reliance on Him. Hence, *tawakkul* is an act of submission to the Master. It is the foundation and perfection of our belief and worship in the Oneness of Allah (*tawhīd*) by not relying on anyone else: “But if they turn away, [O Muhammad], say, ‘Sufficient for me is Allah; there is no deity except Him. On Him I have relied, and He is the Lord of the Great Throne.’”¹⁰ Just as supplicatory prayer (*du‘ā*) is a means to receiving our desired outcome, so too is the possession of *tawakkul*, as Allah answers the call of those who place their trust in Him. By submitting our hearts and giving complete authority to Allah, the believer also gains the love of Allah: “Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him].”¹¹ Bringing calm to the heart, *tawakkul* frees us from being perturbed by the tremors of life. *Tawakkul* is the source of contentment, ease, and protection Allah grants to the believers, relieving them from fear and doubt. It is a means to come closer to Allah and to raise one’s level of faith (*imān*) and certainty (*yaqīn*).

No disaster strikes except by permission of Allah. And whoever believes in Allah, He will guide his heart. And Allah is Knowing of all things. And obey Allah and obey the Messenger; but if you turn away, then upon Our Messenger is only [the duty of] clear notification. Allah—there is no deity except Him. And upon Allah let the believers rely.¹²

Thus, if we are tested with hardship, or our worldly provision is taken away, or if we do not see the desired or immediate outcome of a particular *du‘ā*, we must remain optimistic that Allah’s treasures are boundless and He will remove that hardship and replace any loss with something better. The Prophet’s Companion, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693), reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “No Muslim makes supplication—unless he is someone who has cut off his relatives—but that he is given one of three things: either his supplication is answered quickly, or it is stored up for him in the next world, or an evil equal to it is averted from him.” It was said, “Then many supplications will be made.” He replied, “Allah has more

¹⁰ Qur’an 9:129.

¹¹ Qur’an 3:159.

¹² Qur’an 64:11–13.

still to give.”¹³ Hence, perhaps the greatest fruit of *tawakkul* is that one is satisfied with the outcome, regardless of its specifics, knowing that it comes from the One who loves His servants and knows what is best for them.

Three types of people

Scholars who specialize in Islamic spirituality divide people into three categories in terms of their approach to *tawakkul*.¹⁴ The first type of person is one who relies wholly on Allah, without personally asserting any effort toward the end goal himself. The term used to describe this concept is *tawākul*. This is contradictory to *tawakkul* as understood from the Qur’an and Sunnah. The noble Companion, ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 687/1288), reported that the people of Yemen traveled for Hajj without sufficient provision, claiming to depend solely on Allah to provide for them. When they resorted to begging the people of Medina to take care of them, Allah revealed the verse, “And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah.”¹⁵

The second type of person takes the means to achieve the desired outcome, while relying solely on those means, and not on Allah. Prophet Noah, peace be upon him, could not convince his own son to seek refuge in Allah from the flood in the safety of the ark. His son defiantly said, “I will take refuge on a mountain to protect me from the water.” [Noah] said, “There is no protector today from the decree of Allah, except for whom He gives mercy.” And the waves came between them, and he was among those who drowned.¹⁶ This action is sinful because it goes against *tawhīd* for one to rely on other than Allah, and therefore, it contradicts *tawakkul*. This is likened to one who seeks the recommended or necessary medical treatment for an ailment and places his trust solely on the means—the medicine and the doctor—but does not trust in Allah as the One who ultimately provides the cure through those very means, giving them their effectiveness and potency.

¹³ Al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, hadith no. 107, <https://sunnah.com/adab/31/107>.

¹⁴ Al-Munajjid, *Reliance on Allah*, 9-14.

¹⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1523, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/25/11>.

¹⁶ Qur’an 11:43.

The third group of people are those who take the necessary means to achieving the desired outcome *and* place their trust in Allah to grant them success. This is the correct understanding of *tawakkul* as taught and practiced by the Prophet ﷺ and every prophet before him. We might wonder why Mary was instructed to shake the date palm as she was in the throes of giving birth. “And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates. So eat and drink and be content.”¹⁷ It was, no doubt, her reliance on Allah and His divine wisdom in directing her to that action that provided her with the necessary means to give her ease in her time of difficulty. Likewise, during any time of uncertainty and fear, the people of *tawakkul* are those who remain steadfast in their hope in Allah to bring them through the test, while they use every permissible means to achieve that end. We must remain optimistic and completely trust that Allah will bring us relief from our hardship whilst, at the same time, we must make every effort to take the necessary measures needed to achieve this. This includes increasing our acts of worship, such as *du‘ā’*, seeking forgiveness (*istighfār*), giving charity (*ṣadaqa*), and being of service to others to the best of our ability.

The great scholar, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) summarized the concept of *tawakkul* as follows: “*Tawakkul* comprises of reliance on Allah, in order for Him to help the person do what they are ordered to do, as well as reliance on Allah in giving the person what they cannot achieve. *Isti‘ānah* (seeking help) is in actions, and *tawakkul* is broader than that.”¹⁸ Therefore, making *du‘ā’* is an important and ever-present aspect of the means we take to exercise *tawakkul*. It is also important to note that reliance on Allah is essential for *all* matters, both worldly and religious, to seek a good outcome in this world and in the Hereafter.

Follow in the footsteps of the ones who led by example

The Qur’an and Sunnah are replete with accounts and valuable lessons about *tawakkul*, illustrating how our greatest role models understood and implemented it in their lives. Prophet Abraham, peace be upon him, found coolness and tranquility in the middle of the fire when he placed his trust in Allah, reciting the words,

¹⁷ See Qur’an 19:23–26.

¹⁸ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmoo’ Al-Fataawa* (8/177)

“Allah (Alone) is sufficient for us and He is the Best Disposer of affairs.” These were also the words of the Prophet ﷺ when he and his companions were informed of a great army gathering against them at Uhud.¹⁹ He ﷺ made sure to take the necessary means available—strategic planning, armor, and *du‘ā* - to seek the help and protection of Allah.

When faced with the imminent danger of migrating (*hijra*) to Medina, the Prophet ﷺ placed his complete trust in Allah to guide him to safety. He then meticulously carried out protective measures to achieve it. Along with his closest Companion, Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 634/1236), he escaped from Mecca, taking a guide with them, and choosing an alternate route to avoid capture. They made arrangements for sufficient provision and sought refuge in a cave until it was safe to resume the journey to Medina. Seeing Abū Bakr’s concern for his safety, the Prophet ﷺ reassured Abū Bakr of their unwavering trust in Allah to protect them.

If you do not aid the Prophet—Allah has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Mecca] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his companion, “Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.” And Allah sent down his tranquility upon him and supported him with angels you did not see and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowest, while the word of Allah—that is the highest. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.²⁰

The sea itself was made a path to safety for Moses, peace be upon him, when he was commanded to strike it with his staff. We see the certainty and *tawakkul* of Moses (as) when he said, “Nay, surely! With me is my Lord, He will guide me.”²¹ As difficult as it is to imagine, the mother of Moses was divinely inspired to place her infant in a river in order to save his life. How amazing is His wisdom that Allah then kept Moses (as) safe, raising him in the home of the very same tyrant from whom she was desperate to secure his escape.²² These are historic accounts. Although we may be blessed with the comforts of life and, therefore, not fully

¹⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4287

²⁰ Qur’an 9:40.

²¹ Qur’an 26:62.

²² See Qur’an 28:7–13.

comprehend the extent of the adversity these exemplary believers overcame with *tawakkul*, they provide consolation and hope to us all. To those among us who find themselves in the midst of a storm, be it calamity, injustice, loss of life or provision, place your trust in Allah and stay the course with hope and confidence to weather the storm. Allah is with you too.

Life lessons

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “If you all depend on Allah with due reliance, He would certainly give you provision as He gives it to birds who go forth hungry in the morning and return with [a] full belly at dusk.”²³ This hadith teaches us that *tawakkul* begins with the heart’s firm reliance on Allah. Strengthened with *tawakkul*, the believer sets forth on the path to attain his goal, be it safety, sustenance, knowledge, etc. One may not know where that path will take him, nor have the knowledge of how or when he will reach his goal, but his reliance on Allah keeps him steadfast with the certainty that Allah will provide, just as He does for the birds. No doubt this example depicts heightened vulnerability and need. The nest appears feeble and unable to withstand harsh weather and predators. The eggs are fragile and the bird has limited capacity and significant responsibility to shoulder. Yet, we see Allah’s perfection in His plan, His mercy, and generosity for all of His creation such that no one who seeks from Him returns empty-handed.

Tawakkul involves the coming together of both one’s spiritual and material means.²⁴ The renowned hadith scholar and theologian Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 812/1408) noted that this hadith teaches us that not only is *tawakkul* an essential component of faith, but it is also of the utmost importance in acquiring sustenance.²⁵ It begins in the heart, and manifests in action, be it for survival, well-being, or any benefit. The means are those actions that are within the bounds of permissibility, beginning with seeking the help of Allah through acts of worship along with practical steps within one’s capacity. This may include seeking counsel and the help of trustworthy people: family, friends, and specialists in a particular field, such as

²³ *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, no. 2344, *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic) according to al-Tirmidhī.

²⁴ Abū Bakr Jābir al-Jazāirī, *Minhāj Al-Muslim: A Book of Creed, Manners, Character, Acts of Worship and Other Deeds*, vol. 1 (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2001), 301.

²⁵ Farid, *Purification of the Soul*, 105.

medical professionals. Placing one's trust in another person is called *tawakl*, which is a category of the means one takes, while relying on Allah to provide both the means and the end result.

And cooperate [assist one another] in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression.²⁶

Thus, one carries out the actions while the heart remains firmly reliant on Allah. Trust that your provision is guaranteed, but you may have to struggle and strive for it. Every action and effort exerted with *tawakkul* is an action on the Path of Allah and is being recorded and rewarded. Hence, *tawakkul* supports the believer's confidence, courage, strength, motivation and productivity because of their reliance on Allah to help them achieve their goals.

And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed.²⁷

Taking the means – daily checklist

The following is by no means an exhaustive list. However, it outlines and briefly touches on a few key reminders and practices we can use to nurture our *tawakkul* on a daily basis.

1. Make *du'ā'*

Du'ā' is the greatest act of worship and a significant component of *tawakkul*. "...so worship Him and rely upon Him. And your Lord is not unaware of that which you do."²⁸ Call upon Allah and when you do, pray with certainty that you will be heard and answered.²⁹ Develop a meaningful connection with Allah, asking Him sincerely and with an understanding of the supplications in the Qur'an and Sunnah, along with your own heartfelt words. Internalize your *du'ā'* the way you may have internalized your anxiety and fear, and trust that Allah will turn your *du'ā'* into a means of relief and comfort. *Du'ā'* is the weapon of the believer, but it is only as

²⁶ Qur'an 5:2.

²⁷ Qur'an 62:10.

²⁸ Qur'an 11:123.

²⁹ "And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you.'" Qur'an 40:60.

strong as the one who recognizes how to best use it to maximize its benefit. We often make the mistake of limiting our *du‘ā* to our own limited perception. Don’t be afraid to ask Allah—He moves mountains for those who ask. In light of this, it’s clear that *tawakkul* leads to a life of confidence and certainty, because although tomorrow is not certain, Allah surely is! Among the numerous prescribed *du‘ā* taught by the Prophet ﷺ is the *du‘ā* of ‘seeking guidance’ or *istikhāra*, to ask Allah to guide one to the best action:

O Allah! I ask guidance from Your knowledge, And Power from Your Might and I ask for Your great blessings. You are capable and I am not. You know and I do not and You know the unseen. O Allah! If You know that this job is good for my religion and my subsistence and in my Hereafter (or said: If it is better for my present and later needs), Then You ordain it for me and make it easy for me to get and then bless me in it. And if You know that this job is harmful to me in my religion and subsistence and in the Hereafter (or said: If it is worse for my present and later needs), then keep it away from me and let me be away from it. And ordain for me whatever is good for me and make me satisfied with it). The Prophet ﷺ added that then the person should name (mention) his need.³⁰

Ibn al-Qayyim reported from his Shaykh, Ibn Taymiyya that he said: “Predestined issues are enveloped by two things: reliance on Allah before it happens, and contentment with Allah afterwards; whoever relies on Allah before the action, and is content with that has been decreed after it, has completed servitude.”³¹

2. Have firm resolve

The Prophet ﷺ was instructed by Allah, “And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely upon Him.”³² This verse arms us with confidence to proceed with the tasks ahead. It allows us to remain focused on the goal and to maintain stability, day after day. Imagine riding a jet-ski into open water; keep moving at a steady speed and the water will become a firm highway, but stop and go, and you will be rocked by the waves onto an unsteady and

³⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 45, no. 1166, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/19/45>.

³¹ Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madaarij As-Saalikeen* (2/122)

³² Qur’an 3:159.

undefined path. Similarly, *tawakkul* closes the door to questions and doubts, to inaction, stress, and dissatisfaction with oneself and others. Drop the baggage that slows you down and busy yourself with good deeds to avoid wasting time and regret. Remember, *tawakkul* has two actions—one is in the heart and the other involves seeking the means available.

The Companion Anas ibn Mālik (d. 93/712) reported: A man said, “O Messenger of Allah, should I tie my camel and trust in Allah, or should I leave her untied and trust in Allah?” The Prophet ﷺ, said, “Tie her *and* trust in Allah.”³³

3. Sincerely believe in Allah’s forgiveness

Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, struck a fatal blow to a man while trying to save the life of another. He turned to Allah and sought forgiveness, and Allah forgave him: “‘My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me,’ and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”³⁴ The door to repentance is open but it demands of us sincerity and that we place our complete trust in Allah that He will forgive us; it is one’s level of *tawakkul* here that will generate hope and motivation toward good deeds. The prescribed daily *du‘ā* for *istighfār* embodies this trust in Allah:

The Prophet ﷺ said, “The supreme supplication for seeking forgiveness (*sayyid al-istighfār*) is to say: ‘O Allah! You are my *Rabb*. There is no true god except You. You have created me, and I am Your slave, and I hold to Your Covenant as far as I can. I seek refuge in You from the evil of what I have done. I acknowledge the favors that You have bestowed upon me, and I confess my sins. Pardon me, for none but You has the power to pardon.’ He who supplicates in these terms during the day with firm belief in it and dies on the same day (before the evening), he will be one of the dwellers of Paradise (*janna*); and if anyone supplicates in these terms during the night with firm belief in it and dies before the morning, he will be one of the dwellers of *janna*.”³⁵

³³ Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, hadith no. 2517.

³⁴ Qur’an 28:16.

³⁵ Al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn*, bk. 20, hadith 7, <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/20/7>; also reported by al-Bukhārī.

The more one humbles himself as a servant of Allah, the more noble one becomes in the sight of Allah. Our repeated falling down and getting back up become badges of honor when we return to Allah sincerely with repentance (*tawba*).

4. Hold firm to the five daily prayers

Allah gives us the opportunity to converse with Him and to unburden our hearts and minds at least five times a day. *Ṣalāh* (prescribed prayer) contains praise of Allah, affirmations of His greatness, reminders from His Book, and an immense opportunity to make *du‘ā’*; all of which serve to strengthen our *tawakkul*. By reflecting on the words we recite in every unit of prayer, “It is You we worship and You we ask for help”³⁶ and “*Allāhu Akbar*” (Allah is the greatest), we are able to increase our faith and thus *tawakkul*. Our five daily prayers are a means to stay on course, gain reward and forgiveness, and gain closeness to Allah (swt).

5. Internalize the reality of the unseen

This is the very essence of belief in the unseen: “...the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah, who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.”³⁷ We don’t always have the knowledge or the insight to make sense of every situation. We may feel trapped in the dense trees and thorny bushes with no end in sight, but internalizing the reality of the unseen will increase our *tawakkul* in Allah, Who will guide us out of the forest into the clear. It may be beyond our rational minds to comprehend and some things may seem unfair or counterintuitive, but Allah, in His infinite knowledge and wisdom, is steering us to good even if we cannot see it. Reflect on the stories in *Sūrah al-Kahf* (the Chapter of the Cave). Each of the encounters of Moses (as) appeared to be the exact opposite of what was actually so.³⁸ What comes from Allah is the truth, and that which contains the greatest wisdom and good. This aspect of *tawakkul* gives us the confidence and the ability

³⁶ Qur’an 1:5.

³⁷ Qur’an 2:2–3.

³⁸ Qur’an 18:60–82.

to accept His decree as the best outcome, no matter how things may appear at the time.

6. Know that you are equipped

Find comfort in the reality that Allah will never burden you with more than you are capable of: “Allah does not charge a soul except [with that which is within] its capacity.”³⁹ Knowing this brings ease as we become confident that we will get through what is ahead because our Master knows us like no other. He has equipped us, He wants ease for us and He will provide us with ease even during the most challenging of situations.

7. Exercise patience

The topic of patience is a very comprehensive discussion, but for the purpose of this daily checklist, we remind ourselves that it is a necessary component of *tawakkul*. Without exercising patience every day and in all situations of prosperity and adversity, we are unable to fully depend on Allah. But by staying persistent, consistent, and engaged in action in the face of hardships and challenges, we are able to develop and maintain the faith and discipline needed to rely entirely on Allah. Let us not be of those who in the face of hardship abandon patience in favor of despair:

Man is not weary of supplication for good [things], but if evil touches him, he is hopeless and despairing.⁴⁰

8. Increase in gratitude

As is the case with patience, gratitude is a necessary component of *tawakkul*. Without it, we are unable to fully rely on Allah and his decree. There is ample and extensive discussion in the Qur'an and Sunnah urging the believers to develop this

³⁹ Qur'an 2:286.

⁴⁰ Qur'an 41:49.

beautiful quality in their outlook on life, showing gratitude to Allah for all that He has blessed His creation with. When gratitude flourishes and manifests itself from within, *tawakkul* slowly ensues as we exhibit a complete trust in Allah that He has blessed us and answered our call.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, “Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.”⁴¹

For a more detailed understanding of the divine gift of gratitude, [read here](#).

9. Stay optimistic

Pessimism is contradictory to *tawakkul*. It's about changing our perception. We often see the world through a lens colored by our own experiences, but what has not come our way today, may await us in the future. Think of the positives we are experiencing today and remember that with every hardship, Allah has promised ease.⁴² Allah's Messenger ﷺ visited a sick Bedouin and said to him, “Don't worry, *ṭahūr* (i.e., your illness will be a means of cleansing of your sins) if Allah wills.” The Bedouin said, “*Ṭahūr*! No, but it is a fever that is burning in the body of an old man and it will make him visit his grave.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Then it is so.”⁴³

10. Have a good opinion of Allah

In order to have *tawakkul* we have to know Allah and to trust Him in every aspect of our journey through this life to our final return to Him. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, “Allah said, ‘I am to my slave as he thinks of Me’ (i.e., I am able to do for

⁴¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, bk. 55, hadith 82, no. 2999, <https://sunnah.com/muslim/55/82>.

⁴² Qur'an 94:5–6; also see Roohi Tahir, “Overcoming Pessimism with Faith,” *Yaqeen*, April 17, 2017, <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/roohi-tahir/overcoming-pessimism-with-faith/>.

⁴³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, bk. 97, hadith 96, no. 7470, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/97/96>.

him what he thinks I can do for him).”⁴⁴ Learn, study, and reflect on the beautiful names and attributes of Allah to strengthen your relationship with Him and increase your *tawakkul*.

11. Know that Allah loves those who rely upon Him

At times, we erroneously interpret a test from Allah as an indication that He doesn’t love us, or that we have been abandoned. But tests come to all people, in all stations of life, whether by way of prosperity or adversity, and regardless of one’s level of faith. Every test is designed to bring us closer to Allah because He loves His servants and wants the best outcome for us: “Your Lord [O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)] has neither forsaken you nor hated you.”⁴⁵ Remember, Allah loved His Messengers yet they endured what seemed like insurmountable losses, challenges, and setbacks because such difficulties raised them to the greatest heights of nobility.

12. Perform your daily *adhkār*

The Prophet ﷺ has taught us a number of *du‘ā*’s to make at prescribed times throughout a twenty-four hour period, as well as on specific occasions. Developing a daily regimen that includes these serves as a frequent reminder to seek the protection of Allah and to help one entrust all affairs to Him. For example, when leaving home, we should recite, “In the Name of Allah, I have placed my trust in Allah, there is no might and no power except by Allah.”⁴⁶

13. Engage in the tranquility of *dhikr*

The more we engage in the remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), the more awareness we have of Allah and His presence in our lives. Allah tells us to find tranquility in remembrance: “Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are

⁴⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 7505, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/97/130>.

⁴⁵ Qur’an 93:3.

⁴⁶ *Sunan Abi Dāwūd*, no. 5095.

assured.”⁴⁷ This reassurance is a sign of and a means of strengthening one’s *tawakkul*.

Conclusion

‘Abd Allah Ibn Mas‘ūd stated that the verse in the Qur’an that exhibits the greatest reliance on Allah and submission of one’s affairs to Him is: “And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out, and will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah, then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.”⁴⁸ One may have the impression that *tawakkul* is only required during adversity, but *tawakkul* is a constant state of the believer’s heart. All of us are in constant need of Allah, and whether the test be that of prosperity or difficulty, all tests from Allah are opportunities for us to rely on Him. *Tawakkul* is a way of life for the believer—one that combines certainty of faith and contentment. Hence, Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr said: “Reliance on Allah is what gathers the whole of the religion together.”⁴⁹ No doubt, many of us are experiencing great turbulence today. We pray for the help of Allah to come soon with relief for all those enduring pain, hardship, and loss. *Tawakkul* in Allah is the greatest of gifts which reassures us and reminds us of exactly how to stay the course until we reach our ultimate destination.

Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Qur’an 13:28.

⁴⁸ Qur’an 65:2–3; also al-Munajjid, *Reliance*, 41.

⁴⁹ Al-Munajjid, *Reliance*, 3.

⁵⁰ Qur’an 60:4.