

A Bahá'í Compilation on Tests and Trials

A Note About This Compilation

Though I selected the introductory passage, the other passages were taken from a collection put together by an Indian lady (I forgot her name) who was the receptionist of the Universal House of Justice when I served there at the Bahá'í World Centre (BWC) in 1995. She was kind enough to share her personal collection on tests and trials and the 19 passages here are taken from that collection.

I would also like to thank **Doctor Amr'u'llah Khelghati** who suggested that I add prayers specifically for tests and trials, as well as **my aunt Fahimeh (Lynn) Nowbar** for encouraging me to add passages explaining the nature of tests and the difference between tests that we create ourselves compared to the ones send to us by God...

Intro

“... from time immemorial, even unto eternity, God hath tried, and will continue to try, His servants, so that light may be distinguished from darkness, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, guidance from error, happiness from misery, and roses from thorns...”
Baha'u'llah (*Book of Certitude*)

A short Compilation on Tests and Difficulties (19 selected passages)

1. “Were it not tests, the courageous could not be separated from the cowardly. Were it not for tests, the people of faithfulness could not be known from the disloyal. Were it not for tests, the intellectuals and the faculties of the scholars in great colleges would not develop. Were it not for tests, nothing would progress in this contingent world.”
‘Abdu'l-Baha’

2. The chosen ones of God... should not look at the depraved condition of the society in which they live, nor at the evidences of moral degradation and frivolous conduct which the people around them display. They should not content themselves merely with relative distinction and excellence. Rather they should fix their gaze upon nobler heights by the counsels and exhortations of the Pen of Glory as their supreme goal. Then it will be readily realized how numerous are the stages that still remain to be traversed and how far off the desired goal lies - a goal which is none other than exemplifying heavenly morals and virtues.

3. While he would urge you to courageously meet and overcome the many obstacles that stand in your way, he would at the same time advise you that in case of failure and no matter what befalls you, you should remain radiantly content at, and entirely submissive

to the Divine Will. Our afflictions, tests and trials are sometimes blessings in disguise, as they teach us to have more faith and confidence in God, and bring us nearer to Him.

4. We should not, however, forget that an essential characteristic of this world is hardship and tribulation and it is by overcoming them that we achieve our moral and spiritual development. As the Master says, sorrow is like furrows, the deeper they go, the more plentiful is the fruit we obtain.

5. Has not Baha'u'llah assured us that sufferings and privations are blessings in disguise, that through them our inner spiritual forces become stimulated, purified, and ennobled? Remain, therefore, confident that your material hardships will far from hindering your activities for the Cause, impart to your heart a powerful impetus to better serve and promote its interests.

6. Let not the world and its vileness grieve you. Happy is he whom riches fill not with vain glory, nor poverty with sorrow.

Baha'u'llah, *Bahá'í year book*, p. 42

7. O ye beloved of God! When the winds blow severely, rains fall fiercely, the lightning flashes, the thunder roars, the bolt descends and storms of trial become severe, grieve not; for after this storm, verily, the divine springtime will arrive, the hills and fields will become verdant, the expanses of grain will joyfully wave, the earth will become covered with blossoms, the trees will be clothed with green garments and adorned with blossoms and fruits. Thus blessings become manifest in all countries. These favors are results of those storms and hurricanes.

'Abdu'l-Baha, *Bahá'í World Faith* p. 395

8. Grieve thou not over the troubles and hardships of this nether world, nor be thou glad in times of ease and comfort, for both shall pass away.

'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections of p.* 177

9. Tests are benefits from God, for which we should thank Him. Tests do not come to us by chance, they are sent to use by the Divine Mercy for our own perfecting.

'Abdu'l-Baha

10. Men who suffer not, attain no perfection. The plant most pruned by the gardeners is that one which, when the summer comes, will have the most beautiful blossoms and the most abundant fruit.

11. The laborer cuts up the earth with his plough, and from that earth comes the rich and plentiful harvest. The more a man is chastened, the greater is the harvest of spiritual virtues shown forth by him. A soldier is no good General until he has been in the front of the fiercest battle and has received the deepest wounds.

12. “Freedom is not a matter of place. It is a condition. I was thankful for the prison and the lack of liberty was very pleasing to me, for those days were passed in the path of service under the utmost difficulties and trials, bearing fruits and results. “Unless one accepts dire vicissitudes he will not attain. To me prison is freedom; troubles rest me; incarceration is an open court; death is life and to be despised is honor. Therefore, I was happy all that time in prison. When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed freedom, for self is the greater prison. When this release takes place, one can never be imprisoned.

They used to put my feet in stocks so, “and he put out his feet before him to illustrate and laughed as though it were a joke he enjoyed. “I would say to the guard ‘You cannot imprison me, for here I have light and air and bread and water. There will come a time when my body will be in the ground and I shall have neither light nor air nor food nor water, but even then I shall not be imprisoned.’ The afflictions which come to humanity sometimes tend to center the consciousness upon the limitations. This is a veritable prison. Release comes by making of the will a door through which the confirmations of the spirit come.” This sounded so like the old theology that the modern within me rebelled doubting if the discipline really compensated for the effort. “What do you mean by the confirmations of the spirit?” I asked.

13. The confirmations of the spirit are all those powers and gifts with which some are born and which men sometimes call genius, but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his life with radiant acquiescence.” Radiant acquiescence--that was the quality with which we were suddenly seemed inspired as Abdul Baha bade us good-bye. It was a remarkable experience, hearing one who had passed along the prison path for forty years declare, “There is no prison save the prison of self”; and it drove convictions to the heart as this white-robed messenger from the East pointed the way out; not by renunciations, but by radiant acquiescence--the shining pathway out of the “greater prison of self.”
‘Abdul’-Baha, *Divine Philosophy* p. 22

14. O ye cohorts of God! In the moment of catastrophe, find ye patience, resignation and submission. The more the calamities are intensified the less become ye disturbed. Withstand ye, with perfect assurance, the flood of trials and calamities, through the power of His Highness, the Almighty.
‘Abdul’-Baha, *Tablets of p. 45*

15. O maid-servant of God! Everything of importance in this world demands the close attention of its seeker. The one in pursuit of anything must undergo difficulties and hardships until the object in view is attained and the great success is obtained. This is the case of things pertaining to the world. How much higher is that which concerns the Supreme Concourse! That Cause involves every favor, glory, and eternal bliss in the world of God. The seeker after the great guidance and eternal happiness necessarily will encounter difficulties. He must be patient under such circumstances. The chosen

believers of the past quaffed the chalice of suffering and sank deep in the ocean of trials until they attained to that blessed station and sublime beatitude. *Ibid p. 45*

But regarding the tests: Undoubtedly they must be violent so that those souls who are weak may fall back, while the souls who are firm and sincere may shine forth from the horizon of the Most Great Guidance like unto the sparkling stars.

Ibid p. 470

16. Job was like unto pure gold. Assuredly gold is purified by being submitted to the fire and if it contain any alloy or imperfection, it will disappear. That is the reason why violent tests become the cause of the everlasting glory of the righteous and are conducive to the destruction and disappearance of the unrighteous. The wisdom of all these tribulations that poured successively upon thee was this, that thou shouldst be prepared and made ready for this Cause, that thou mightiest expect the attainment to the greatest guidance, for all these trials were but a preparation for thine entrance into the Most Exalted Paradise and the beginning of obtaining this most great benefit.

Unless the season of winter appear, thunder roll, lightening flash, snow and rain fall, hail and frost descend and the intensity of cold execute its command, the season of the soul-refreshing spring would not come, the fragrant breeze would not waft, the moderation of temperature would not be realized, the roses and hyacinths would not grow, the surface of the heart would not become a delectable paradise, the trees could not bloom, neither would they bring forth fruits and leaves. That was the beginning of the manifestation of those roses, hyacinths, buds, blossoms, and fruits.

Therefore, be not distressed on account of those adversities which fell upon thee; nay, rather, arise this eminent bounty and the enjoyment of this highest gift of the almighty God. Consequently gird up the loins of thine endeavor, that thereby some results might be produced, some fruits gathered, the lamp of everlasting life ignited and the gifts of the Lord of the Kingdom be manifest, so that thou mayest accomplish again, with great yearning and exaltation, the worship of the Lord of Host.

Ibid p. 665

17. Whatsoever occurreth in the world of being is light for His loved ones and the fire for the people of sedition and strife. Even if all the losses of the world were to be sustained by one of the friends of God, he would still profit thereby, whereas true loss would be borne by such as are wayward, ignorant and contemptuous. Although the author of the following saying had intended it otherwise yet We find it pertinent to the operation of God's immutable Will; "Even or odd, thou shalt win the wager." The friends of God shall win and profit under all conditions, and shall attain true wealth. In the fire they remain cold, and from water they emerge dry. Their affairs are at variance with the affairs of men. Gain is their lost, whatever the deal. To this testifieth every wise one with a discerning eye, and every fair-minded one with a hearing ear.

Baha'u'llah

18. “The more difficulties one has in the world, the more perfect one becomes. The more you plow and dig the ground, the more fertile it becomes. The more you cut the branches of a tree, the higher and straighter it grows. The more you put gold into the fire, the purer it becomes. The more you sharpen the steel by grinding, the better it cuts. Therefore, the more sorrows one has the more perfect one becomes. That is why at all times the prophets of God had tribulations and difficulties to withstand. The more often the captain of a ship is in a tempest and difficult the sailing, the greater his knowledge becomes. Therefore, I am happy that you have had many sorrows. Strange I am happy that you have had many sorrows. Strange it is that I love you and still I am happy that you have sorrows--Faith is the magnet that attracts divine confirmations.”

‘Abdul’-Baha

19. Be not grieved if affairs become difficult and troubles wax intense on all sides! Verily, thy Lord changeth hardship into facility, troubles into ease and afflictions into greatest composure.

If thy daily living become difficult, soon (God) thy Lord will bestow upon thee that which will satisfy thee. Be patient in time of afflictions and trial, endure every difficulty and hardship with a dilated heart, attracted spirit and eloquent tongue in remembrance of the Merciful. Verily this is the life of satisfaction, the spiritual existence, heavenly repose, divine benediction and celestial table! Soon thy Lord will extenuate thy straitened circumstance even in this world.

‘Abdul’-Baha, *The Divine Art of Living* p. 93

Prayers for Assistance with Tests (9 selected prayers)

1. Dispel my grief by Thy bounty and Thy generosity, O God, my God, and banish mine anguish through Thy sovereignty and Thy might. Thou seest me, O my god, with my face set towards Thee at a time when sorrows have compassed me on every side. I implore Thee, O Thou Who art the Lord of all being, and overshadowest all things visible and invisible, by Thy Name whereby Thou hast subdued the hearts and the souls of men, and by the billows of the Ocean of Thy mercy and the splendors of the Daystar of Thy bounty, to number me with them whom nothing whatsoever hath deterred from setting their faces toward Thee, O Thou Lord of all names and Maker of the heavens!

Thou beholdest, O my Lord, the things which have befallen me in Thy days. I entreat Thee, by Him Who is the Dayspring of Thy names and the Dawning-Place of Thine attributes, to ordain for me what will enable me to arise to serve Thee and to extol Thy virtues. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, Who art wont to answer the prayers of all men!

And, finally, I beg of Thee by the light of Thy countenance to bless my affairs, and redeem my debts, and satisfy my needs. Thou art He to Whose power and to Whose dominion every tongue hath testified, and Whose majesty and Whose sovereignty every understanding heart hath acknowledged. No God is there but Thee, Who hearest and art

ready to answer.

by Bahá'u'lláh

2. Lauded and glorified art Thou, O my God! I entreat Thee by the sighing of Thy lovers and by the tears shed by them that long to behold Thee, not to withhold from me Thy tender mercies in Thy Day, nor to deprive me of the melodies of the Dove that extolleth Thy oneness before the light that shineth from thy face. I am the one who is in misery, O God! Behold me cleaving fast to Thy Name, the All-Possessing. I am the one who is sure to perish; behold me clinging to Thy Name, the Imperishable. I implore Thee, therefore, by Thy Self, the Exalted, the Most High, not to abandon me unto mine own self and unto the desires of a corrupt inclination. Hold Thou my hand with the hand of Thy power, and deliver me from the depths of my fancies and idle imaginings, and cleanse me of all that is abhorrent unto Thee.

Cause me, then, to turn wholly unto Thee, to put my whole trust in Thee, to seek Thee as my Refuge, and to flee unto Thy face. Thou art, verily, He Who, through the power of His might, doeth whatsoever He desireth, and commandeth, through the potency of His will, whatsoever He chooseth. None can withstand the operation of Thy decree; none can divert the course of Thine appointment. Thou art, in truth, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.

by Bahá'u'lláh

3. Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!

by The Báb

4. Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth but God sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.

by The Báb

5. I adjure Thee by Thy might, O my God! Let no harm beset me in times of tests, and in moments of heedlessness guide my steps aright through Thine inspiration. Thou art God, potent art Thou to do what Thou desirest. No one can withstand Thy Will or thwart Thy Purpose.

by The Báb

6. O Lord! Thou art the Remover of every anguish and the Dispeller of every affliction. Thou art He Who banisheth every sorrow and setteth free every slave, the Redeemer of every soul. O Lord! Grant deliverance through Thy mercy, and reckon me among such servants of Thine as have gained salvation.

by The Báb

7. O Lord, my God and my Haven in my distress! My Shield and my Shelter in my woes! My Asylum and Refuge in time of need and in my loneliness my Companion! In

my anguish my Solace, and in my solitude a loving Friend! The Remover of the pangs of my sorrows and the Pardoner of my sins!

Wholly unto Thee do I turn, fervently imploring Thee with all my heart, my mind and my tongue, to shield me from all that runs counter to Thy will in this, the cycle of Thy divine unity, and to cleanse me of all defilement that will hinder me from seeking, stainless and unsullied, the shade of the tree of Thy grace.

Have mercy, O Lord, on the feeble, make whole the sick, and quench the burning thirst.

Gladden the bosom wherein the fire of Thy love doth smolder, and set it aglow with the flame of Thy celestial love and spirit.

Robe the tabernacles of divine unity with the vesture of holiness, and set upon my head the crown of Thy favor.

Illumine my face with the radiance of the orb of Thy bounty, and graciously aid me in ministering at Thy holy threshold.

Make my heart overflow with love for Thy creatures and grant that I may become the sign of Thy mercy, the token of Thy grace, the promoter of concord amongst Thy loved ones, devoted unto Thee, uttering Thy commemoration and forgetful of self but ever mindful of what is Thine.

O God, my God! Stay not from me the gentle gales of Thy pardon and grace, and deprive me not of the wellsprings of Thine aid and favor.

Neath the shade of Thy protecting wings let me nestle, and cast upon me the glance of Thine all-protecting eye.

Loose my tongue to laud Thy name amidst Thy people, that my voice may be raised in great assemblies and from my lips may stream the flood of Thy praise.

Thou art, in all truth, the Gracious, the Glorified, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.

by **`Abdu'l-Bahá**

8. He is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful! O God, my God! Thou seest me, Thou knowest me; Thou art my Haven and my Refuge. None have I sought nor any will I seek save Thee; no path have I trodden nor any will I tread but the path of Thy love. In the darksome night of despair, my eye turneth expectant and full of hope to the morn of Thy boundless favor and at the hour of dawn my drooping soul is refreshed and strengthened in remembrance of Thy beauty and perfection. He whom the grace of Thy mercy aideth, though he be but a drop, shall become the boundless ocean, and the merest atom which the outpouring of Thy loving-kindness assisteth, shall shine even as the radiant star.

Shelter under Thy protection, O Thou Spirit of purity, Thou Whom art the All-Bountiful Provider, this enthralled, enkindled servant of Thine. Aid him in this world of being to remain steadfast and firm in Thy love and grant that this broken-winged bird attain a refuge and shelter in Thy divine nest that abideth upon the celestial tree.

by `Abdu'l-Bahá

9. O my Lord, my Beloved, my Desire! Befriend me in my loneliness and accompany me in my exile. Remove my sorrow. Cause me to be devoted to Thy beauty. Withdraw me from all else save Thee. Attract me through Thy fragrances of holiness. Cause me to be associated in Thy Kingdom with those who are severed from all else save Thee, who long to serve Thy sacred threshold and who stand to work in Thy Cause. Enable me to be one of Thy maidservants who have attained to Thy good pleasure. Verily, Thou art the Gracious, the Generous.

by `Abdu'l-Bahá

On the Nature of Tests

This section is intended to cover the different types of tests, namely those sent to us by God and then those we create ourselves and can not blame Him for. However, in the spirit of quoting Scripture directly, I am researching the exact passages rather than paraphrase. So please check this page again at a later date. Thank you.

{Source: <http://www.alteraeon.com/ouch-archive/cjus009/teststrials.html> | Ryan Kazemi's Family Website}