How to develop: STEADFASTNESS (ISTIQAMAH) & Determination (Azeemat)

Life is full of choices. We can choose and opt for a way that not only gives us harmony and peace in this world but guarantees abundant rewards in the hereafter as promised by Allah swt.

None of us have the picture-perfect life. The posts in social media are but a just a deception. Trials, tribulations, hardships, fear, anxiety are all a part of our lives and even more for those who have chosen to work in the way of iqamat-e-deen and dedicated themselves for the cause of Allah.

Quran, Seerah and the Islamic history are brimming with such examples. Not a single soul who have chosen this way had an easy and an uncomplicated life. The examples Allah swt has set for us are not only for our enlightenment but to guide us. What we learn from our beloved Prophet, may Allah peace and blessings be upon him is that patience, perseverance, and Determination (Azeemat) is the key. It not only makes the worldly trials and tribulations light like foam from the sea but makes us worthy of immense rewards from Allah in the Hereafter.

So, what is **STEADFASTNESS (ISTIQAMAH) & Determination (Azeemat)** and how can we develop such traits?

Determination (Azeemat) is a reflex and a defining trait that will help us survive through tough times. It is the ability to be not backed down by challenges, losses or adversities and to perceive each failure as a learning or a new opportunity. Determination (Azeemat) is a decisive factor in defining whether we want to play victim and cave into the life's circumstances or be an optimist and embrace the failure and move on. Determination (Azeemat) plays an important role in our lives. Determination (Azeemat) will make us capable of changing something negative to something positive as well as minimize the stress level at that moment.

Whereas **STEADFASTNESS (ISTIQAMAH)** is endurance, forbearance, perseverance. The beauty of patience lies within enduring calamities whilst striving to normalize our life and carry on. Also, it is Istiqamah, when we withhold ourself against all summons of haram and immorality holding a strong will and if this is through excessive training and exaggerated practise, it is referred to as steadfastness and perseverance.

The absence of Determination (Azeemat) and perseverance have a long-term negative impact on our health leading to stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, chronic pain, isolation, and pessimism. When we face stressful situations, unable to meet the deadlines juggling between jobs, kids, financial restrictions, loss of partners- be it pandemic or post pandemic, most Muslims succumb to pressure and barely manage to thrive through such stressful circumstances. While some

women are naturally resilient most of us could acquire the following skills to help us to sail through the storms of life.

Now, the question arises if this is so essential, how can we develop perseverance and Determination (Azeemat)?

First and foremost, we should develop the ability to view every adversity such as illness, trauma, personal affliction, or even natural disaster, in the larger perspective and accept it as a part as Qadr. Allah plans and decrees what is best for His creation.

Allah (SWT) says in the Quran –
"No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of Decrees (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfooz), before we bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah. [Surah Al-Hadid, Verse 22]

Secondly, we should put our complete trust and faith in *Allah (*SWT) and looks for comfort in Him alone during the difficult times. Our firm believe should be that *Allah (SWT)* is the best disposer of all affairs and will guide us to that which is good. Rather than being overwhelmed and reacting with grief and anger and complaining about our situation, We should display high level of endurance and seeks help from *Almighty Allah (SWT)* to rebound quickly from the adversity.

Allah (SWT) says in the Quran "Say: 'Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Maula (Lord, Helper and Protector).' And in Allah let the believers put their trust" (Surah Towbah, Verse 51).

Thirdly, we should be truly grateful and thankful to *Allah (SWT)*, despite being in an unsatisfactory position. We should realize that it could have been much worse and try to be content with what we already have.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said: "How wonderful is the case of a Believer! There is good for him in whatever happens to him -and none, apart from him, enjoys this blessing. If he receives some bounty, he is grateful to Allah and this bounty brings good to him. And if some adversity befalls him, he is patient, and this affliction, too, brings good to him". [Sahih Muslim]

Fourthly, Instead of blaming ourselves for our failures and trying to do it all on our own, we should reach out to *Allah (SWT)* for guidance in times of need. Our beloved *Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said, "Seek help from Allah (SWT) and do not lose heart, and if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don't say: If I had not done that, it would not have happened so and so, but say: Allah (SWT)*

did that what He had ordained to do and your "IF" opens the (gate) for the Satan." [Sahih Muslim]

Furthermore, we should continue to persevere and instead of viewing it as the end of the road, we should channel our energy and thoughts to overcome challenges and turn them into opportunities.

Allah (SWT) says in the Quran, "Oh you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer, for God is with those who patiently persevere. [Surah Baqrah, Verse 153]

Most importantly, we should work towards restoring our inner sense of equilibrium and happiness by reviving our connection with *Allah (SWT).* We should turn to the Quran and Sunnah when our faith is low and try to find peace within the chaos. We should seek *Allah*'s grace and mercy by asking for His forgiveness repeatedly and by seeking repentance.

For the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said: If anyone continually asks pardon, Allah will appoint for him a way out of every distress, and a relief from every anxiety, and will provide for him from where he did not reckon. [Sunan Abu Dawood]

Furthermore, we should develop a strong social and emotional network that she can fall back on when we are in a stressful state. We should be optimistic and cheerful and constantly strive to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually, mentally and physically. *The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) taught us to apply a smile to every occasion as a smile can bring a cheer, reduce the stress and infuse us with positive feelings.*

Eventually we should understand that everyone experiences difficult times and feelings .It is part of our life.

Eventually, we should understand and comprehend what patience, perseverance and Determination (Azeemat) is and why they are a valuable trait in the life of a Muslim. We should plan strategies to develop Determination (Azeemat) and perseverance, changing our perspective and outlook of life, practice and implement it in all walks of life be it in our daily life challenges or in the field of Dawah

Lastly but not the least, we should try to gain these qualities through excessive prayer as Allah swt has instructed us abundantly in his book.