

The Philosophy of Trials | What Lies Behind Life’s Hardships and Sufferings?

Why Do We Need to Be Tested? What Is the Philosophy of Trials in Our Lives?

We all face challenges in life. These challenges may darken the bright colors of our lives for days, months, or even years. Some of us are crushed under the weight of life’s hardships and calamities, while others align ourselves with these pressures and refuse to let them hinder us from fulfilling the ultimate purpose of our creation. In fact, we come to understand that there is no escape from the divine law of trial. We may have often found ourselves asking questions like, “Why am I experiencing this suffering and hardship?” “Why did I end up in debt?” “What just happened to me?”—along with dozens or even hundreds of similar inquiries, all highlighting the need to understand the philosophy of trials in life.

It is important to realize that being human is inherently tied to hardship. Angels and animals, because they act solely based on instinct, do not experience trials and tribulations. It is us—endowed with free will and the power of decision-making—who comprehend the philosophy of trials and are subjected to tests.

But the questions arise:

- Why are we tested through suffering and hardships?
- What is the philosophy of trials and how is it related to our life in the world?
- Does trial and hardship have any benefits for us?

The word *ibtalā* stems from the root *balwā* or *balā'*, meaning *imtihan*; and *imtihan* itself derives from the root (m-h-n) meaning melting. In alchemy, to purify precious metals from impurities, they must be refined in the furnace. Only after this process do the metals gain beauty, strength, and purity—their true essence becomes manifest and their value increases. Similarly, trials serve as a means to assess our essence and reality. They reveal how much impurity lies within us and to what extent the claims we make about ourselves hold true—this is something that becomes clear only through trial and testing. To grasp the philosophy of trials, stay with us.

Why Do We Need Trials?

We generally do not favor hardship and suffering—we prefer a life of comfort and ease. If we are unaware of the constructive nature of this world and fail to see it as a gym, we may easily question the philosophy of trials and wonder why we need to be tested.

As we know, our world was created based on laws and principles. Naturally, understanding these laws of creation helps us greatly in managing life and achieving our purpose. One of these divine laws is the law of trial. That is, we are tested to substantiate the claims we make so that our strengths and weaknesses are revealed. Because trial is a divine law, it applies to every one of us without exception.

We have all faced moments of fear, lost our health, or despite our efforts failed to achieve our desired outcomes [1]. Each of these scenarios can be a form of trial. The system of this world is designed to continuously assess how we prioritize our

actions and our hierarchy of love. This evaluation can manifest in various ways—sometimes through difficulties, hardships, and illnesses, and at other times through an abundance of blessings or achievements related to our sense perception, intellectual, or spiritual faculties.

Being put to the test is necessary because we might even be mistaken about our own real performance. As long as we have not faced a specific situation, we may have an incorrect perception of ourselves. Our intellect can be influenced by our estimative faculty and deceive us. Satan and the estimative faculty are always striving to feed us false information about our soul and cover up its weaknesses, or distract us with estimative perfections—thus justifying our flaws and shortcomings. As a result, we may enter the *Barzakh* assuming we are spiritually healthy, without having treated these weaknesses.

Our eternal life is the true life, and therefore we need a true measure to assess our spiritual health for the Hereafter. The only mirror capable of showing us our true condition is our heart. It is the heart that, when subjected to trial, reveals its inner identity and shows what it has truly accepted. For instance, we might call ourselves benevolent and compassionate in ordinary situations, but when faced with personal or material interests, we may easily trample on the rights of others. Or we may think we possess strong religious beliefs, but find that in a lax or secular environment, our convictions waver. Or we may believe we are cheerful and calm people, but upon losing our wealth, we may become pessimistic towards everything and everyone.

The law of trial is the method through which God measures our true worth in the face of difficulties and shows us our real selves.

How to Overcome Trials

All of us wish to succeed in trials and emerge victorious in the divine tests—but why do some people pass the tests successfully, while others admit defeat and express helplessness?

As mentioned, trial is a divine law that applies to everyone. But not everyone knows the philosophy of trials. In fact, the very first step towards succeeding in trials is accepting them. When we enroll in school, we accept that in order to advance to a higher grade, we need to succeed in our exams. Therefore, instead of feeling frustrated or hopeless, we prepare ourselves for the test. We know that the exam is designed specifically for us and matches our capacity and ability—and to move forward, it is necessary to take it.

The tests in life work exactly the same way: they are designed by our Mentor according to our capacity and ability. If we have a correct understanding of our true self, we will not feel distressed over losing certain blessings, but instead focus on their constructive and beneficial outcomes. We will see trials as equivalent to the role of our Mentor in our education—a Mentor who is fully aware of our situation and does not push us beyond our capacity. Life's trials are opportunities for us to turn many of our potential capacities into actualized abilities. If we are insightful, we can, within this short and limited worldly life, acquire many of God's names and attributes through these various trials—and use this opportunity to resemble God and achieve the purpose of our creation.

Another factor that makes enduring trials easier is remembering the brevity of worldly life compared to the eternity that lies ahead. When we understand that our

worldly lifespan—with all its ups and downs—is like our time in the mother’s womb compared to life in this world, enduring the hardships and problems of the world become easy for us. Remembering eternity and the strength that enduring these hardships builds within us makes us more resilient in facing difficulties.

In this lesson, we explained the philosophy of trials. We said that tests and trials reveal the extent to which our claims are true. The system of the world is designed to constantly test the arrangement of our hierarchy of love. However, divine trials are primarily related to the lower and natural dimensions of our being. The first condition for success in trials is accepting them. By considering the shortness of worldly life compared to the eternity ahead, we can more easily pass divine tests.

What is your opinion about the philosophy of trials? How successful do you think you have been in passing divine tests?

References

[1]. Quran, [2:155](#)