

Advice of Luqman (RA) the Wise

PodSeries - Vol 74



Achieve Noble Character

Advice of Luqman (RA) the Wise

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We pray that Allah, the Exalted, completes His favour on us and accepts each letter of this book in His august court and allows it to testify on our behalf on the Last Day.

All praise to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds and endless blessings and peace be upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad, on his blessed Household and Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following short book discusses the Wise Advice of Luqman, may Allah be pleased with him, to his child. This discussion is based on Chapter 31 Luqman, Verses 12-19 of the Holy Quran:

“And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], “Be grateful to Allah.” And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor] - then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy. And when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice.” And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do. [And Luqman said], “O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Aware. O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve. And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] from people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.””

Implementing the lessons discussed will aid a Muslim to Achieve Noble Character. According to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the heaviest thing in the Scales of Judgment Day will be Noble Character. It is one of qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which Allah, the Exalted, complimented in Chapter 68 Al Qalam, Verse 4 of the Holy Quran:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Therefore, it is a duty on all Muslims to gain and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to Achieve Noble Character.

Advice of Luqman (RA) the Wise

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verse 12

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ

وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

“And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [and said], "Be grateful to Allah." And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor] - then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy.”

“And We had certainly given Luqman...”

Scholars have debated for many generations the identity of Luqman, may Allah be pleased with him, and whether he was a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, or not. Both sides have presented proofs supporting their views.

But the important thing to note, is that Muslims should never fall into arguments over this and similar issues to the point that it creates enmity between them. In addition, believing one way or the other will not affect their faith and obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Neither will this be questioned about on the Day of Judgement by Allah, the Exalted, otherwise the Muslim nation would have been informed of this. So spending countless hours arguing, debating and publishing books discussing this issue does not make sense. Muslims should instead concentrate more on the things which when clarified will increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and concentrate on those things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of people. Unfortunately, arguing and debating over these types of issues has distracted Muslims from concentrating on more important things and issues and this is one of the reasons why the general strength of the Muslim nation has declined over time.

This issue is connected to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2518. It advises that a Muslim should leave a thing which creates doubt in them and act on the things which create no doubt in them. The vast majority of Muslims are aware of the obligatory duties and the majority of the unlawful things, such as drinking alcohol. So these things create no doubt within Muslims therefore they should act accordingly meaning, fulfil the obligatory duties and abstain from unlawful things.

All other things which are not obligatory and create a doubt in society should therefore be avoided. Allah, the Exalted, will not question why someone did not perform a voluntary deed on Judgement Day. Instead, He will question why they performed a voluntary deed. Therefore, leaving the voluntary action will have no consequences in the hereafter whereas performing a voluntary deed will namely, punishment, reward or forgiveness. It is important for Muslims to act on this short but extremely important Hadith as it will solve and prevent many problems and debates. In fact, this is the advice given in another Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1205. It advises that both the lawful and unlawful things in Islam have been made clear to mankind and all other matters of voluntary actions which create doubt should be left aside. This attitude will protect one's religion and honour.

“And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom...”

Wisdom allows one to use their knowledge in the correct way so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires to give someone good He provides them with Islamic knowledge.

There is no doubt that every muslim irrespective of the strength of their faith desires good in both worlds. Even though many muslims incorrectly believe that this good which they desire lies in fame, wealth, authority, companionship and their career this Hadith makes it crystal clear that true lasting good lies in gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. It is important to note a branch of religious knowledge is useful worldly knowledge whereby one earns lawful provision in order to fulfil their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has pointed out where good lies yet it is a shame how many muslims do not place much value in this. They in most cases only strive to obtain the bare minimum of Islamic knowledge in order to fulfil their obligatory duties and fail to acquire and act on more such as the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead they dedicate their efforts on worldly things believing true good is found there. Many muslims fail to appreciate that the righteous predecessors had to journey for weeks on end just to learn a single verse or Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, whereas today one can study Islamic teachings without leaving their home. Yet, many fail to make use of this blessing given to the modern day muslims. Out of His infinite mercy Allah, the Exalted, through his Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has not only pointed out where true good lies but He has also placed this good at one's finger tips. Allah, the Exalted, has informed mankind of where an eternal buried treasure is located which can solve all the problems they may encounter in both worlds. But muslims will only obtain this good once they struggle to acquire and act on it.

“And We had certainly given Luqmān wisdom [and said], “Be grateful to Allāh.” And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor]...”

This could also mean that being grateful to Allah, the Exalted, is wisdom.

A muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

“...indeed, Allāh is Free of need...”

Allah, the Exalted, is rich beyond needing anything whereas the creation are poor and are completely in need of Him.

The muslim who understands this divine name will seek all things from Allah, the Exalted, through sincere obedience by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. They will understand that both worldly and religious richness which are free of any defects can only be achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

A muslim must act on this divine name by striving to become independent of people and only rely on Allah, the Exalted. In fact, becoming independent of the material world and the possessions of people will lead to the love of Allah, the Exalted, and the love of people according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4102. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been given, such as good health, to lawfully fulfil their needs and the needs of their dependents and avoid laziness by relying on others, such as the government, to fulfil this duty for them.

“...Allāh is...Praiseworthy.”

Allah, the Exalted, is the One who is praised by His self-praise and by the praise of His creation. This also means that Allah, the Exalted, is the One who praises His righteous servants and handsomely rewards them for their efforts.

The muslim who understands this divine name will be far too busy in praising and obeying Allah, the Exalted, to praise himself and to worry about their rights. This will keep them away from pride which is a characteristic that leads to Hell. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265.

A muslim must act on this divine name by only performing praiseworthy actions and adopting a praiseworthy character. This is arguably the greatest tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

“And indeed, you are of a great moral character.”

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verse 13

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ

عَظِيمٌ ١٣

"And when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice."

“And when Luqman said to his son while he was instructing him...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1952, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the most virtuous gift a parent can give their child is to teach them good character.

This Hadith reminds muslims to be more concerned about the faith of their relatives, such as their children, over acquiring and imparting wealth and properties to them. It is important to understand, worldly legacies come and go. How many rich and powerful people have built massive empires only for them to be torn apart and forgotten shortly after their death? The few signs left behind from some of these legacies only endure in order to warn people not to follow in their footsteps. An example is the great empire of Pharaoh. Unfortunately, many muslims are so concerned about teaching their children how to build an empire and acquire much wealth and properties that they neglect teaching them the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience. This includes good manners towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. A muslim should not be fooled into believing they have plenty of time for teaching their children good manners as their moment of death is unknown and often pounces on people unexpectedly.

In addition, it is extremely difficult to teach good manners to children when they get older and become set in their ways. Today is the day a muslim should truly reflect on the gift they wish to impart to their children and relatives. This is how a muslim sends forward good to the hereafter but

also leaves good behind as a righteous child which supplicates for their deceased parent benefits them. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376. It is hoped that the one who is surrounded by good in this way will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

“And when Luqmān said to his son while he was instructing him, "O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allāh. Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice.””

The greatest major sin is to associate others with Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6273. Polytheism can be classified as greater and minor. The greater type is when one worships more than one God. If a person dies in this state they will not be forgiven. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 48:

“Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him...”

The minor type is when one shows off their actions. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. On Judgment Day those who performed deeds to please others besides Allah, the Exalted, will be commanded to gain their reward from them which will not be possible. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous

deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224, claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is when one publically recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publically can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech.

“And when Luqmān said to his son while he was instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allāh. Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2447, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that oppression will become a darkness on the Day of Judgment.

This is vital to avoid as those who find themselves plunged in darkness are unlikely to find their way to Paradise. Only those who will be provided a guiding light will be able to do this successfully.

Oppression can take many forms. The first type is when one fails to fulfill the commands of Allah, the Exalted, and refrain from His prohibitions. Even though this has no effect on the infinite status of Allah, the Exalted, it will cause the person to become submerged into darkness in both worlds. According to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4244, whenever a person commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin the more their heart will become encompassed by darkness. This will prevent them from accepting and following true guidance in this world which will ultimately lead to darkness in the next world. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verse 14:

“No! Rather, the stain has covered their hearts of that which they were earning.”

The next type of oppression is when one oppresses themselves by not fulfilling the trust they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of their body and other worldly blessings they possess. The greatest of which is one's faith. This must be protected and strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge.

The final type of oppression is when one mistreats others. Allah, the Exalted, will not forgive these sins until the oppressor's victim forgives them first. As people are not so merciful this is unlikely to happen. Then justice will be established on Judgment Day where the oppressor's righteous deeds will be given to their victim and if necessary the victim's sins will be given to the oppressor. This may lead to the oppressor being hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One should therefore treat others how they wish to be treated by people. A muslim should avoid all forms of oppression if they desire a guiding light in this world and in the next.

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verses 14-15

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ

أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرِ ﴿١٤﴾

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا

وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ

مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.

But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.”

“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years... But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness...”

Being kind to parents is widely known characteristic amongst muslims yet unfortunately many fail to fulfil this important duty. Allah, the Exalted, has placed being kind to parents next to solely worshipping Him in many places of the Holy Quran such as, chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 23:

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship not except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff,"¹ and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.”

In fact this same verse prohibits muslims to even utter a single word out of annoyance towards their parents. In another place of the Holy Quran Allah, the Exalted, has combined being grateful to Him with being grateful to parents. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 14:

“...Be grateful to Me and to your parents...”

Even though, there are countless Hadiths commanding treating parents kindly a single Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3662, is enough to understand its importance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, answered someone who questioned what the rights of one's parents are by declaring that they are a child's Paradise or Hell. Meaning, if one treats their parents kindly for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, they may well be admitted into Paradise because of it. But those who mistreat their parents may well be hurled into Hell because of it.

Even though, being obedient to parents, as long as it does not involve the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, is very difficult, especially, in this day and age muslims should try to remain patient and not argue with their parents. If a muslim disagrees with them they can and should still maintain respect for them at all times.

“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years... But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness...”

Any disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is a form of associating with Him.

The elders of a family, especially parents, often use a statement which they believe indicates their right guidance namely, elders know best. To be honest this statement was true in the day of the righteous predecessors as the elders at that time used to strive in gaining and acting on beneficial knowledge. They put aside their own opinions and thinking and instead adopted the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Because of their sincere efforts they were granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways...”

Therefore, this statement applied to them and the youngsters in those days benefited if they acted on the advice of these elders. But unfortunately times have changed. In this day and age the majority of elders do not seek nor act on beneficial knowledge instead the vast majority act on their

cultural practices which in most cases do not have a foundation in Islamic teachings. They flee from beneficial knowledge and are very content with these teachings based on made up cultural practices. Because of this ignorance elders are now sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Therefore, the statement elders know best no longer applies.

It is important to note this does not mean a muslim should ignore or disrespect their elders as this completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. They should instead strive to gain correct beneficial knowledge, hear the advice of others, including their elders, and then make a choice which is indicated by Islam in all their matters even if it contradicts the opinions of others. A muslim should not blindly follow their elders as this in most cases will lead them away from the teachings of Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging.”

This is possible to do while maintaining respect for others especially one's elders. If muslims do this then perhaps a day will come when this statement will once again be true.

“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years... But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness...”

Any disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is a form of associating with Him.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not based on Islam will be rejected.

If muslims desire lasting success in both worldly and religious matters they must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, certain actions which are not directly taken from these two sources of guidance can still be considered a righteous deed it is important to prioritize these two sources of guidance over all else. Because the fact is that the more one acts on things which are not taken from these two sources even if it is a righteous deed the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. An obvious example is how many muslims have adopted cultural practices into their lives which do not have a foundation in these two sources of guidance. Even if these cultural practices are not sins they have preoccupied muslims from learning and acting on these two sources of guidance as they feel satisfied with their behaviour. This leads to ignorance of the two sources of guidance which in turn will only lead to misguidance.

This is why a muslim must learn and act on these two sources of guidance which have been established by the leaders of guidance and only then act on other voluntary righteous deeds if they have the time and energy to do so. But if they choose ignorance and made up practices even if they are not sins over learning and acting on these two sources of guidance they will not achieve success.

“And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years... But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness...”

Any disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, is a form of associating with Him.

Muslims should not follow and adopt the customary practices of non-muslims. The more muslims do this the less they will follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident in this day and age as many muslims have adopted the cultural practices of other nations which has caused them to become distant from the teachings of Islam. For example, one only needs to observe the modern muslim wedding to observe how many non-muslim cultural practices have been adopted by muslims. What makes this worse is that many muslims cannot differentiate between Islamic practices based on the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the cultural practices of non-muslims. Because of this non-muslims cannot differentiate between them either which has caused great problems for Islam. For example, honour killings is a cultural practice which has nothing to do with Islam yet because of the ignorance of muslims and their habit of adopting non-muslim cultural practices Islam is blamed every time an honour killing occurs in society. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, removed the social barriers in the form of casts and brotherhoods in order to unite people yet ignorant muslims have resurrected them by adopting the cultural practices of non-muslims. Simply put, the more cultural practices muslims adopt the less they will act on the Holy Quran

and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

“...Be grateful to Me...”

A muslim must ensure they fulfill all three aspects of gratitude so that they avoid becoming a denier of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ungrateful in reality, scorns the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“...And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”

The three aspects of gratitude are to internally acknowledge Allah, the Exalted, as the sole Creator and Provider of all blessings. An aspect of this is to correct one's intention so that they only perform actions to please Allah, the Exalted. The next aspect is to praise Allah, the Exalted, via the tongue. And the final and highest aspect is to practically show gratitude through one's actions by using each blessing as prescribed by Islam in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'”

As true gratitude leads to an increase in blessings muslims should fear that showing ingratitude may cause the blessings they possess to either be taken away from them or for their blessings to be used against them by becoming a burden and a curse for them in both worlds. It is important to note, even if a muslim becomes truly grateful they will still face tests and difficulties as they are guaranteed. But if they behave in the correct way they will be guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and body in this world and a great reward in the hereafter.

“...Be grateful to Me and to your parents...”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted.

Even though there is no doubt that the source of all blessings is none other than Allah, the Exalted, none the less showing gratitude to people is an important aspect of Islam. This is because Allah, the Exalted, sometimes uses a person as a means to help others such as one's parents. As the means has been created and used by Allah, the Exalted, being grateful to them is in fact being grateful to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims must show good character and always show appreciation for any aid or support they receive from others irrespective of its size. They should show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing according to His commands as He is the source of the blessing and show gratitude to the person as they are the means which was created and chosen by Allah, the Exalted. A muslim should show gratitude verbally to people and practically by repaying their act of kindness according to their means even if it is only a supplication on their behalf. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 216.

The person who does not show gratitude to people cannot show true gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore they will not be given an increase in blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]...”

If a muslim desires an increase in blessings they must fulfill both aspects of gratitude namely, to Allah, the Exalted, and to people.

“...to Me is the [final] destination.”

The trumpet blast will lead to the death of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7381. The important thing to learn is that this is a call which no one can or will reject responding to. It will lead to the resurrection and final judgment. Therefore, muslims should respond to the call of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through sincere obedience by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verse 24:

“O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...”

Whoever responds to this call in this world will find the final call easy to endure and respond to. Whereas, the one who lives heedless to the call of Allah, the Exalted, in this world will not find peace in it and they will be forced to answer the call of the trumpet which will be a great burden for them to endure and respond to. A person can only ignore the call of Allah, the Exalted, for so long as the final call will occur, sooner or later, and no one will be able to avoid or ignore it. If this is inevitable it makes sense that one respond to it now, today, instead of living in heedlessness. If one hears the trumpet blast while heedless no action or regret will benefit them and what comes after for this person will be even more terrifying.

“...to Me is the [final] destination.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people will be resurrected on Judgment Day in the same state they died on Earth.

This means that if a person dies on good they will be resurrected on good. But if they die on evil they will be raised in an evil way.

A muslim should not live in heedlessness by believing just because they have faith in Islam it guarantees they will die and therefore be raised in a good state on Judgment Day. If they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then die in this state without sincerely repenting then they will be raised in an evil way. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to this person on Judgment Day.

From this Hadith one can understand that the way they will die will be in the same state they have lived. Meaning, if they lived in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will die in a good state and therefore be raised in a good state which includes being raised with the righteous as they practically followed in their footsteps. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

A muslim should therefore not walk the path to Hell by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and believe that they will somehow be raised with the pious and end up in Paradise.

“...and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]...”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4251, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that people commit sins but the best person who commits sins is the one who sincerely repents.

As people are not Angels they are bound to commit sins. The thing that makes these people special is when they sincerely repent from their sins. Sincere repentance includes feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the sin or a similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is important to note, minor sins can be erased through righteous deeds which has been advised in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 550. It advises that the five daily obligatory prayers and two consecutive Friday congregational prayers erase the minor sins committed in between them as long as major sins are avoided.

Major sins are only erased through sincere repentance. Therefore, a muslim should strive to avoid all sins, minor and major, and if they happen to occur to immediately sincerely repent as the time of death is unknown. And they should continue obeying Allah, the Exalted, by

fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

“...and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]...”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted. The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin

which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

“...and follow the way of those who turn back to Me...”

The only way to Allah, the Exalted, is the path of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This includes striving to acquire knowledge in order to act on his traditions. These traditions include the ones related to Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worship, and his blessed noble character towards the creation. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 4:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

It includes to accept his commands and prohibitions at all times. This has been made a duty by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Sincerity includes to give priority to his traditions over the actions of anyone else as all paths to Allah, the Exalted, are closed except the path

of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.
Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [O Muḥammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."

One must love all those who supported him during his life and after his passing, whether they are from his Family or his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them all. Supporting those who walk on his path and teach his traditions is a duty on those who desire to be sincere to him. Sincerity also includes loving those who love him and disliking those who criticise him irrespective, of one's relationship with these people. This is all summarised in a single Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 16. It advises that a person cannot have true faith until they love Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, more than the entire creation. This love must be shown through actions not just words.

“...and follow the way of those who turn back to Me...”

This verse also encourages good companionship.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the difference between a good and bad companion. The good companion is like a person who sells perfume. Their companion will either obtain some perfume or at least be affected by the pleasant smell. Whereas, a bad companion is like a blacksmith, if their companion does not burn their clothes they will certainly be affected by the smoke.

Muslims must understand that the people they accompany will have an effect on them whether this affect is positive or negative, obvious or subtle. It is not possible to accompany someone and not be affected by it. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, confirms that a person is on their companion's religion. Meaning, a person adopts the characteristics of their companion. It is therefore important for muslims to always accompany the righteous as they will undoubtedly affect them in a positive way meaning, they will inspire them to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience. Whereas, bad companions will either inspire one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, or they will encourage a muslim to concentrate on the material world over preparing for the hereafter. This attitude will become a great regret for them on Judgment Day even if the things they strive for are lawful but beyond their needs.

Finally, as a person will end up with those they love in the hereafter according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, a muslim must practically show they love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. But if they accompany bad or heedless people then it proves and indicates they love for them and their ultimate destination in the hereafter. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

“...Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.”

One must prepare for their final return by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

“...Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.”

One must prepare for their final return by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One can adopt the correct attitude when they understand the purpose of these blessings.

Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

This not only aids a Muslim in maintaining their focus on the hereafter but it also aids them whenever they lose worldly blessings. When a Muslim treats each worldly blessing, such as a child, as a means to please Allah, the Exalted, and reach the hereafter safely then losing it will not have such a detrimental impact on them. They may become sad, which is an acceptable emotion, but they will not become grieved which leads to impatience and other mental problems, such as depression. This is because they firmly believe the worldly blessing they possessed was only a means so losing it does not cause a loss in the ultimate goal namely, Paradise, the loss of which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

“...and I will inform you about what you used to do.”

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

“...and I will inform you about what you used to do.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that whoever has their deeds scrutinized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day will be punished.

It is important for muslims to understand that even though enjoying the lawful pleasures of this material world are not prohibited they often lead to the unlawful. For example, vain speech is usually the first step before sinful speech. In addition, the more one indulges in unnecessary lawful things the longer their accountability will be on Judgment Day. One should bear in mind that Judgment Day will be a difficult day. For example, the Sun will be brought within two miles of the creation. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2421. Even though, a muslim may be forgiven and saved by Allah, the Exalted, but none the less, the longer their accountability the greater stress they will endure. Seeing as Judgment Day will be fifty thousand years long, according to the Holy Quran, it does not make sense to enjoy a few decades of lawful pleasures if it means one will face a difficult accountability on a day which will last so long. Chapter 70 Al Ma'arij, verse 4:

“...during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years.”

It is therefore best to lead a simple life in order to minimize one's accountability on the Day of Judgment. It is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, that simplicity is a part of faith.

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verse 16

يَبْنِيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾

"[And Luqman said], "O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Indeed, Allah is Subtle and Aware."

“[And Luqman said], "O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth...””

It is important for Muslims to regularly assess their own deeds as no one except Allah, the Exalted, is better aware of them than themselves. When one honestly judges their own deeds it will inspire them to sincerely repent from their sins and encourage them towards righteous deeds. But the one who fails to regularly assess their deeds will lead a life of heedlessness whereby they commit sins without sincerely repenting. This person will find the weighing of their deeds on the Day of Judgment extremely difficult. In fact, it may well cause them to be hurled into Hell.

A clever business owner will always regularly assess their accounts. This will ensure their business heads in the right direction and ensures they complete all the necessary accounts such as a tax return correctly. But the foolish business owner will not regularly take accounts of their business. This will lead to a loss in profits and a failure in correctly preparing for their accounts. Those who fail to file their accounts correctly with the government face penalties which only makes their lives more difficult. But the key thing to note is that the penalty of failing to correctly assess and prepare one's deeds for the Scales of Judgment Day does not involve a monetary fine. Its penalty is more severe and truly unbearable. Chapter 99 Az Zalzalah, verses 7-8:

“So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

“[And Luqman said], "O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth...””

Unfortunately, some muslims have adopted a weak characteristic which only hinders them from improving for the better. Namely, they compare their situation and circumstances to others who are facing easier circumstances and use this as an excuse not to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a person who works full time excuses their lack of striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by comparing themselves to someone who works part time and simply claims it is easier for them to increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as they have more free time. Or a poorer muslim turns away from giving any form of charity by observing those who possess more wealth and claims that the wealthy person can more easily give charity than them. They fail to understand that these excuses may make their souls feel better but it does not aid them in this world or in the next. Allah, the Exalted, does not desire people to act according to the means of others He only desires people to act in His obedience according to their own means. For example, a person who works full time can dedicate whatever free time they possess in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if that is less than someone who works part time. In this respect what the part timer does has no effect on the one who works full time so using them as an excuse not to strive harder is simply a lame excuse. The poor muslim should simply donate according to their means even if that is much less than the wealthy person as Allah, the Exalted, will judge them on what they do and He will not judge them according to what other muslims do.

Muslims should give up these useless excuses and simply obey Allah, the Exalted, according to their own means.

“[And Luqman said], "O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth...””

Allah, the Exalted, judges people according to their intention meaning, the quality of their deed not quantity. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Therefore, muslims must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, even if it seems insignificant to them.

In reality, in most cases nothing in this material world in itself is good or bad, such as wealth. What makes a thing good or bad is the way it is used. It is important to understand that the very purpose of everything which was created by Allah, the Exalted, was for it to be used correctly according to the teachings of Islam. When something is not used correctly it in reality becomes useless. For example, wealth is useful in both worlds when it is used correctly such as being spent on the necessities of a person and their dependents. But it can become useless and even a curse for its bearer if it is not used correctly, such as being hoarded or spent on sinful things. Simply hoarding wealth causes wealth to lose value. How can paper and metal coins one tucks away be useful? In this respect, there is no difference between a blank piece of paper and a note of money. It is only useful when it is used correctly.

So if a Muslim desires all their worldly possessions to become a blessing for them in both worlds all they have to do is use them correctly according to the teachings found in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if

they use them incorrectly then the same blessing will become a burden and curse for them in both worlds. It is as simple as that.

“[And Luqman said], "O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth...””

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Every worldly blessing a Muslim possesses is only a means which should aid them in reaching the hereafter safely. It is not an end in itself. For example, wealth is a means one should use in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, fulfilling their necessities and the necessities of their dependents. It is not an end or an ultimate goal in itself.

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which is disastrous. Therefore, still possessing and concentrating on the ultimate goal will prevent them from becoming grieved.

In addition, they will understand that just like the thing they lost was only a means they firmly believe they will be provided with another means to reach and fulfil their ultimate goal by Allah, the Exalted. This will also prevent them from grieving. Whereas, the one who believes their worldly blessing is the end instead of a means will experience severe grief when losing it as their whole purpose and objective has been lost. This grief will lead to depression and other mental issues.

To conclude, Muslims should treat each blessing they possess as a means to reach the hereafter safely not as an end in itself. This is how one can possess things without being possessed by them. This is how they can keep worldly things in their hands and not in their hearts.

“[And Luqman said], "O my son, indeed if it [a deed] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth...””

Sins have been classified as minor and major. Over time many definitions have been given regarding what exactly a major sin is. One simple classification is that any sin which Islam has commanded the Islamic government to punish is classed as a major sin. Another classification is that if any sin is mentioned with Hellfire, the anger of Allah, the Exalted, or the curse of Allah, the Exalted, then it is a major sin. For example, backbiting is a major sin as it is cursed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 104 Al Humazah, verse 1:

“Woe to every backbiter, slanderer.”

Some muslims believe there are only seven major sins which have been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2766. But they fail to realize that even though these seven are major sins it does not mean that they are only seven. In fact, there are other Hadiths which mention other major sins such as, disobeying parents. This Hadith is found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6273. The seven major sins declared in the Hadith quoted earlier are: polytheism, magic, killing an innocent, dealing with financial interest, usurping the wealth of orphans, fleeing a battlefield and accusing an innocent woman of fornication.

It is important to note, that when one persists on minor sins they become major in the sight of Islam.

Major sins are only forgiven with sincere repentance whereas minor sins can be erased by avoiding the major sins and performing righteous deeds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 31:

“If you avoid the major sins which you are forbidden, We will remove from you your lesser sins...”

Sincere repentance includes regret, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, making a firm promise not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Muslims should ensure they avoid all types of sins irrespective of size as one of the traps of the Devil is that he inspires muslims to disregard small sins. One should always remember that mountains are made up of small stones.

“...Indeed, Allāh is Subtle...”

Generally speaking, Allah, the Exalted, acts in ways whereby the wisdom behind His decrees are not always obvious.

For example, often when muslims receive blessings especially, beyond their need, it distracts them from the hereafter and instead focuses their minds on this material world. So in this respect, the wisdom behind a difficulty is to refocus a muslim’s attention on what is truly important which is preparing for the hereafter. This is like a person who is so preoccupied with their phone that they cross a road without seeing an oncoming vehicle. Another person violently pulls them away from the oncoming car which causes them distress yet, saves their life. Even though being pulled violently causes distress and even pain but it is only done in order to refocus their attention on the life threatening danger namely, the oncoming car. Similarly, a muslim faces emotional and physical difficulties in order to refocus their attention on more important things such as the hereafter. If a muslim was left to only face times of ease without difficulties there is no doubt that they would become lost in enjoying the excess of this material world. This neglect in the long run would be disastrous for them. So they face a small difficulty in order to protect them from greater difficulties namely, the difficulties of the hereafter. Therefore, muslims should remember this truth every time they face a difficulty so that they leave the difficulty refocused on more important things and act correctly over this blessing instead of demonstrating impatience and heedlessness to this vital benefit. This is in fact one of the biggest favours of Allah, the Exalted.

“...Indeed, Allāh is Subtle...”

Generally speaking, Allah, the Exalted, acts in ways whereby the wisdom behind His decrees are not always obvious.

It is important for muslims to understand a simple thing which can aid them with patiently facing destiny and the difficulties it brings. A person happily takes a bitter medicine which their doctor prescribes fully trusting in their knowledge, experience and choice all the while believing that their doctor knows what is best for them. This is true even though they are only human and prone to errors. Yet, many muslims fail to place this same level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, even though His knowledge is infinite and His choices always the wisest. Muslims should try to accept destiny and the troubles it brings just like they take the bitter medicine without complaining knowing it is best for them. They should understand that the troubles and difficulties they face are best for them even if they do not understand or observe the wisdoms in them just like they do not understand the science behind the bitter medicine they happily take. Even though in most cases, they will never understand the science behind the bitter medicine they take a time will certainly come, whether in this world or in the hereafter, when the wisdom behind the bitter difficulties they faced will be revealed to them. So a muslim should anticipate this time patiently knowing all will be revealed shortly. Pondering deeply over this can increase one's patience when dealing with difficulties. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

“...Allāh is...Aware.”

Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of all things including the inner intention and feelings of a person as well as their outward actions.

The muslim who understands this will ensure they not only perform righteous deeds but will do so with the correct intention knowing that they might be able to fool people but Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their intention and inward state and will hold them accountable according to it.

A muslim must act on this divine name by striving to gain and act on useful worldly and religious knowledge sincerely for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, they must constantly supervise their inward and outward states. Through this they will become aware of their faults and strive to rectify them. A muslim should not live heedless to the purpose of their creation. They should instead live in full awareness and therefore obey Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verse 17

يَبْنِيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا

أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾

“[And Luqman said], “O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

“[And Luqman said], “O my son, establish prayer...Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

In this day and age this has become far too common. Many give up their obligatory prayers for trivial reasons all of which are undoubtedly rejected. If the obligation of the prayer has not been removed for the one who is engaging in battle how can it be removed from anyone else? Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 102:

“And when you [i.e., the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer, let a group of them stand [in prayer] with you and let them carry their arms. And when they have prostrated, let them be [in position] behind you and have the other group come forward which has not [yet] prayed and let them pray with you, taking precaution and carrying their arms...”

Neither is the traveller or the sick exempt from offering their obligatory prayers. The traveller has been advised to reduce the amount of cycles in some of the obligatory prayers in order to reduce the burden for them but

they have not been exempt from offering them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 101:

“And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer...”

The sick have been advised to perform dry ablution if contact with water will harm them. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 6:

“...But if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and do not find water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and hands with it...”

In addition, the sick can perform the obligatory prayer in a way which is easier for them. Meaning, if they cannot stand they are allowed to sit and if they cannot sit they can lay down and offer the obligatory prayer. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 372. But again, no complete exemption is granted to the sick unless one is mentally ill which prevents them from comprehending the obligation of the prayer.

The other major issue is that some muslims delay their obligatory prayers and offer them beyond their correct times. This clearly contradicts the Holy

Quran as the believers have been described as those who offer their obligatory prayers on time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 103:

“...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.”

Many believe that the following verse of the Holy Quran refers to those who unnecessarily delay their obligatory prayers. This has been discussed in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, volume 10, pages 603-604. Chapter 107 Al Ma’un, verses 4-5:

“So woe to those who pray. [But] who are heedless of their prayer.”

Here Allah, the Exalted, has clearly cursed those who have adopted this evil trait. How can one find success in this world or the next if they have been removed from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted?

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 512, that delaying one's obligatory prayers unnecessarily is a sign of hypocrisy. The Holy Quran has made it clear that one of the main reasons people will enter Hell is failing to establish the obligatory prayers. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

“[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.”

Abandoning the obligatory prayers is such a serious sin that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2621, that whoever commits this sin has disbelieved in Islam.

In addition, no other good deed will benefit a muslim until their obligatory prayers are not established. A Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 553, clearly warns that one's good deeds are destroyed if they miss the afternoon obligatory prayer. If this is the case for abandoning one obligatory prayer can one imagine the penalty of abandoning them all?

Observing the obligatory prayers at their correct times has been advised to be one of the most beloved deeds to Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 252. From this one can determine that delaying the obligatory prayers beyond their time or completely missing them is one of the most hated deeds by Allah, the Exalted.

It is an important duty for all elders to encourage the children under their care to offer the obligatory prayers from a young age so that they establish them before it becomes legally binding on them. Those adults that delay this and wait until children are older have failed in this extremely important duty. The children who were only encouraged to offer the obligatory prayers when it became obligatory on them very rarely established them quickly. In most cases, it takes years for them to fulfil this important duty correctly. And the blame falls on the elders of the family especially, the parents. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 495, that families must encourage their children to offer the obligatory prayers when they turn seven years old.

Another major issue many Muslims face is that they may offer the obligatory prayers but fail to do so correctly. For example, many do not complete the stages of the prayer correctly and instead rush through it. In fact, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 757, clearly warns that the one who prays like this has not prayed at all. Meaning, they are not recorded as a person who offered their prayer and therefore their obligation has not been fulfilled. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 265, clearly warns that the prayer of the one who does not settle in each position of the prayer is not accepted.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, described the one who does not bow or prostrate correctly in the prayer as the worst thief. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Muwatta Malik, Book number 9, Hadith number 75. Unfortunately, many Muslims who have spent decades offering their obligatory and many voluntary prayers like this will find that none of them have counted and thus they will be treated as

one who did not fulfil their obligation. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 1313.

The Holy Quran indicates the importance of offering the obligatory prayers with congregation usually at a Mosque. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“...and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

In fact, due to this verse and Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some reliable scholars have declared this obligatory on muslim men. For example, one Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550, clearly warns that the muslims who would not offer their obligatory prayers with congregation at the Mosque were considered hypocrites by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even threatened to burn the houses of the men who failed to perform their obligatory prayers at the Mosque with congregation without a valid excuse. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1482. Those muslims who are in a position to perform this important deed should do so. They should not fool themselves into claiming they are performing other righteous deeds such as helping their family with house chores. Even though, this is a tradition of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 676, but it is important not to rearrange the importance of his traditions according to one's desires. Whoever does this is not following his traditions they are only following their own desires even if they are performing a righteous deed. In fact, this same Hadith concludes by

advising that when it was time for the obligatory prayer the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would leave for the Mosque.

“[And Luqman said], “O my son, establish prayer...Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 528, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the five obligatory prayers erase one's sins just like taking a bath five times a day would clean the body of dirt.

The first thing to note is that this Hadith refers to minor sins only as major sins require sincere repentance.

In addition, it is important for muslims to not only purify their outer beings of minor sins by establishing the five obligatory prayers but also fulfill the other aspect of purification namely, inner purification. This is indicated by the fact that the five obligatory prayers were spread across the day instead of being put together. Meaning, a muslim should repeatedly inwardly turn to Allah, the Exalted, throughout the day just like their body turns to Allah, the Exalted, five times a day through the obligatory prayers. This inner purification involves correcting one's intention so that they are only perform actions in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is the foundation of Islam and is what Allah, the Exalted, assesses when judging an action. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. Those who act for the sake of other people will be told to gain their reward from them on Judgment Day which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Finally, this inner purification includes learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that one removes the bad characteristics they possess, such as envy and instead adopt good characteristics, such as patience. The outer purification is important but if a muslim desires to achieve success and overcome all difficulties in both worlds they must purify their inner being as well as their outer being.

“[And Luqman said], “O my son...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. The people on the lower level keep disturbing the people on the upper level whenever they desire to access water. So they decide to drill a hole in the lower level so that they can access water directly. If the people on the upper level fail to stop them they will all surely drown.

It is important for muslims to never give up commanding good and forbidding evil according to their knowledge in a gentle way. A muslim should never believe that as long as they obey Allah, the Exalted, other misguided people will not be able to affect them in a negative way. A good apple will eventually get affected when placed with rotten apples. Similarly, the muslim who fails to command others to do good will eventually be effected by their negative behavior whether it is subtle or apparent. Even if the wider society has become heedless one should never give up advising their dependents such as their family as not only will their negative behavior affect them more but this is a duty on all muslims according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Even if a muslim is ignored by others they should discharge their duty by persistently advising them in a gentle way which is supported by strong evidence and knowledge. Only in this way will they be protected from their negative effects and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. But if they only care about

themselves and ignore the actions of others it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance.

“[And Luqman said], “O my son...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the one who contradicts their own advice when commanding good and forbidding evil will be punished in Hell.

Instead of following in the footsteps of the righteous predecessors by advising only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, many people advise for other reasons, such as to gain popularity and worldly things. For example, some scholars often strive to be in the spotlight of gatherings and events and are not pleased with a seat which is to one side as they desire a central seat. When their intention became like this Allah, the Exalted, removed the positive effect of their advice and thus they now have little positive influence over their listeners. They should have shown a practical example instead of saying one thing and doing another. This caused their advice to become ineffective.

Muslims should strive to always act on their own advice before commanding others to do so as behaving in this manner is hated by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 61 As Saf, verse 3:

“Greatly hateful in the sight of Allah is that you say what you do not do.”

This does not mean one must become perfect before advising others as this is not possible. Instead, they should correct their intention and prove this through their actions by striving to act on their own advice before advising others. Only with this attitude will they avoid the punishment mentioned in this Hadith. The failure in acting on this principle has caused the advice of muslims to become ineffective even though the number of advisers has dramatically increased over the years.

“[And Luqman said], “O my son...enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised the importance of objecting to evil things in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. This Hadith clearly shows that it is a duty on all muslims to object to all forms of evil according to their strength and means. The lowest level, as mentioned in this Hadith, is rejecting the evil with one's heart.

This shows internally approving evil actions is one of the ugliest of those things which are forbidden. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4345, that the one who is present when an evil is committed and denounces it is like the one who was not present. But the one who was absent and approved the evil deed is like the one who was present when it was committed.

The first two aspects of objecting to evil, mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion, are through one's physical actions and speech. This is only a duty on a muslim who has the strength to do so for example, they will not be harmed by their actions or words.

It is important to note, objecting to evil with one's hand does not refer to fighting. It refers to correcting the evil actions of others, such as returning the rights of someone which have been unlawfully violated. The one who is in a position to do so yet, refrains from doing so has been warned of a punishment in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4338.

The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised muslims in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, that they should not fear the creation in respect to speaking the truth. In fact, the one who allows the fear of the creation to prevent them from objecting to evil things has been described as the one who hates themselves and will be criticized by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4008. It is important to note, this does not refer to the one who remains silent out of fear of being harmed as this is an acceptable excuse but it refers to the person who remains silent because of the status people hold in their eyes.

A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4341, advises that a person can give up objecting to evil things through their actions and speech when others obey their greed, follow their incorrect opinions and desires and when they prefer the material world over the hereafter. It does not take a scholar to conclude this time has arrived. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 105.

“O you who have believed, upon you is [responsibility for] yourselves. Those who have gone astray will not harm you when you have been guided...”

But it is important to note, a muslim should continue with this important duty in respect to their dependents as this is a duty on them according to a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928, and in respect to those they feel physically and verbally safe from, as this is the superior attitude.

Objecting to evil things which are apparent is what the main Hadith under discussion refers to. Meaning, it does not grant permission to muslims to spy on others in order to find evil things to object to. Spying and anything associated with it in this respect are forbidden. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed...do not spy...”

It is important to note, that a muslim must object to evil according to the teachings of Islam and not their own desires. A muslim may believe they are acting for sake of Allah, the Exalted, when they are not. This is proven when they object to evil in a way which contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, what is considered a good deed may well become a sin because of this negative attitude.

A muslim must object to evil in a gentle and fair way preferably in private in accordance to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The opposite of these characteristics will only push people away from sincerely repenting and may lead to further sins as a result of angering them.

“[And Luqman said], “O my son...and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that real patience is shown at the onset of a difficulty.

It is important to understand that true patience is shown throughout a calamity meaning, from the very onset of the difficulty onwards. Accepting the reality of a difficulty, such as the death of a loved one, eventually, with the passing of time occurs with everyone. This is acceptance not true patience.

Muslims should therefore ensure they encounter difficulties while patient believing that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is for the best even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind the choices. Instead, they should reflect on the many times when they believed something was good yet, it ended up being bad and vice versa. Understanding the extreme short sightedness and limited knowledge of humans and the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, can aid a muslim to show patience from the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

In addition, it is important for muslims to continue showing patience till the end of their life. This is because a person can easily lose the reward of patience even if they were patient from the onset by demonstrating impatience further down the line. This is an extremely deadly trap of the Devil. He patiently waits for decades just to ruin the reward of a muslim. The Holy Quran makes it clear that a muslim will gain reward for what they bring to Judgment Day, meaning, take with them when they die it does not declare they will gain reward after simply doing a deed, such as showing patience at the onset of a difficulty. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed...”

“[And Luqman said], “O my son...and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

A Hadith found in Musnad Ahmad, number 2803, advises that being patient over the things one dislikes leads to a great reward. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit].”

Patience is a key element required in order to fulfil the three aspects of faith: fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny. But a higher and more rewarding level than patience is contentment. This is when a muslim deeply believes that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses the best for His servants and they therefore prefer His choice over their own. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

A patient muslim understands that anything which effected them, such as a difficulty, could not have been avoided even if the entire creation aided them. Similarly, whatever missed them could not have affected them. The

one who truly accepts this fact will not exult and grow proud over anything they obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, allocated that thing to them. Nor will they grieve over anything which they fail to obtain knowing Allah, the Exalted, did not allocate that thing to them and nothing in existence can alter this fact. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register¹ before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allah, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 79, that when something occurs a muslim should firmly believe it was decreed and nothing could have changed the outcome. And a muslim should not have regrets believing they could have prevented the outcome if they somehow behaved differently as this attitude only causes the Devil to encourage them towards impatience and complaining about destiny. A patient muslim truly understands that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen is best for them even if they do not observe the wisdom behind it. The one who is patient does desire a change in their situation and even supplicates for it but they do not complain about what has occurred. Being persistently patient can lead a muslim to a greater level namely, contentment.

The one who is content does not desire things to change as they know the choice of Allah, the Exalted, is better than their choice. This muslim firmly believes and acts on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It

advises that every situation is best for the believer. If they encounter a problem they should show patience which leads to blessings. And if they experience times of ease they should show gratitude which also leads to blessings.

It is important to know that Allah, the Exalted, tests those He loves. If they show patience they will be rewarded but if they are angered it only proves their lack of love for Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2396.

A muslim should be patient or content with the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and hardship. This will reduce one's distress and provide them with much blessings in both worlds. Whereas, impatience will only destroy the reward they could have received. Either way a muslim will go through the situation decreed by Allah, the Exalted, but it is their choice whether they desire reward or not.

A muslim will never reach full contentment until their behaviour is equal in times of difficulty and ease. How can a true servant go to the Master namely, Allah, the Exalted, for a judgment and then become unhappy if the choice does not match their desire. There is a real possibility that if a person gets what they desire it will destroy them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

A muslim should not worship Allah, the Exalted, on the edge. Meaning, when the divine decree matches their wishes they praise Allah, the Exalted. And when it does not they become annoyed acting as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

“And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face [to unbelief]. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss.”

A muslim should behave with the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as if they would behave with a skilled trustworthy doctor. The same way a muslim would not complain taking bitter medicine prescribed by the doctor knowing it is best for them they should accept the difficulties they face in the world knowing it is best for them. In fact, a sensible person would thank the doctor for the bitter medicine and similarly an intelligent muslim would thank Allah, the Exalted, for any situation they encounter.

In addition, a muslim should review the many verses of the Holy Quran and the Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which discuss the reward given to the patient and content muslim.

Deep reflection on this will inspire a muslim to remain steadfast when facing difficulties. For example, Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“...Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit].”

Another example is mentioned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2402. It advises that when those who patiently faced trials and difficulties in the world receive their reward on Judgment Day those who did not face such trials will wish they patiently faced difficulties such as their skin being cut off with scissors.

In order to gain patience and even contentment with what Allah, the Exalted, chooses for a person they should seek and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they reach the high level of excellence of faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Excellence in faith is when a muslim performs deeds, such as the prayer, as if they can witness Allah, the Exalted. The one who reaches this level will not feel the pain of difficulties and trials as they will completely be immersed in the awareness and love of Allah, the Exalted. This is similar to the state of the women who did not feel pain when cutting their own hands when they observed the beauty of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 31:

“...and gave each one of them a knife and said [to Joseph], "Come out before them." And when they saw him, they greatly admired him and cut their hands and said, "Perfect is Allah! This is not a man; this is none but a noble angel.””

If a muslim cannot reach this high level of faith they should at least try to reach the lower level mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier. This is the level where one is constantly aware they are being observed by Allah, the Exalted. The same way a person would not complain in front of an authoritative figure they feared, such as an employer, a muslim who is constantly aware of the presence of Allah, the Exalted, will not complain about the choices He makes.

“[And Luqman said], “O my son...and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4168, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims not to question destiny as this opens the door to the Devil. He encourages muslims to challenge the choice of Allah, the Exalted, as they do not observe the wisdom behind it because of their short sightedness. This in turn leads to impatience and the loss of reward. One should reflect on their past experiences where they believed something was good when it in fact was bad and vice versa in order to inspire them to remain patient as they will be shown these benefits sooner or later. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

“[And Luqman said], “O my son establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] resolve.””

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 159, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, gave a short but far reaching piece of advice. He advised people to sincerely declare their belief in Allah, the Exalted, and then remain steadfast on it.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith means that they must strive in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of their life. It consists of fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, which relate to Him, such as the obligatory fasts and those which relate to people, such as treating others kindly. It includes refraining from all the prohibitions of Islam which are between a person and Allah, the Exalted, and those involving others. A muslim must also face destiny with patience truly believing Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“...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.”

Steadfastness can include refraining from both types of polytheism. The major type is when one worships something other than Allah, the Exalted.

The minor type is when one shows off their good deeds to others. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989. Therefore, an aspect of steadfastness is to always act for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

It includes obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times instead of obeying and pleasing oneself or others. If a Muslim disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by pleasing themselves or others they should know neither their desires nor people will protect them from Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the one who is sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, will be protected from all things by Him even if this protection is not apparent to them.

Remaining steadfast on one's faith includes following the path set out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and not adopting a path which deviates from this. The one who strives to adopt this path will not need anything else as this is enough to keep them steadfast on their faith.

As people are not perfect they will undoubtedly make mistakes and commit sins. So being steadfast in matters of faith does not mean one has to be perfect but it means they must strive to adhere strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as outlined earlier, and to sincerely repent if they commit a sin. This has been indicated in chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“...so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness...”

This is further supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987, which advises to fear Allah, the Exalted, and to erase a (minor) sin which has occurred by performing a righteous deed. In another Hadith found in Imam Malik's Muwatta, book 2, Hadith number 37, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised muslims to try their best to remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even though they will not be able to do it perfectly. Therefore, a muslim's duty is to fulfil the potential they have been given through their intention and physical actions in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They have not been commanded to achieve perfection as this is not possible.

It is important to note, that one cannot remain steadfast in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through their physical actions without purifying their heart first. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3984, the limbs of the body will only act in a pure way if the spiritual heart is pure. Purity of heart is only achieved by gaining and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Steadfast obedience requires one to control their tongue as it expresses the heart. Without controlling the tongue steadfast obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is not possible. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407.

Finally, if any deficiency in the steadfast obedience of Allah, the Exalted, occurs one must make sincere repentance to Allah, the Exalted, and seek the forgiveness of people if it involves their rights. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 13:

“Indeed, those who have said, “Our Lord is Allah,” and then remained on a right course - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verse 18

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ

فَخُورٍ ١٨

“[And Luqman said] And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] from people and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

“[And Luqman said] And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] from people...”

This contradicts showing sincerity to others.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Islam is sincerity towards the general public. This includes desiring the best for them at all times and showing this through one's words and actions. It includes advising others to do good, forbidding them from evil, to be merciful and kind to others at all times. This can be summed up by a single Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 170. It warns that one cannot be a true believer until they love for others what they desire for themselves.

Being sincere to people is so important that according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 57, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, placed this duty next to establishing the obligatory prayer and donating the obligatory charity. From this Hadith alone one can understand its importance as it has been placed with two vital obligatory duties.

It is a part of sincerity towards people that one is pleased when they are happy and sad whenever they are grieved as long as their attitude does not contradict the teachings of Islam. A high level of sincerity includes one

going to extreme limits to make the lives of others better, even if this puts themselves in difficulty. For example, one may sacrifice purchasing certain things in order to donate the wealth to the needy. Desiring and striving to always unite people on good is a part of sincerity towards others. Whereas, dividing others is a characteristic of the Devil. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 53:

“...Satan certainly seeks to sow discord among them...”

One way of uniting people is to veil the faults of others and advise them privately against sins. The one who acts in this way will have their sins veiled by Allah, the Exalted. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1426. Whenever possible one should advise and teach the aspects of religion and the important aspects of the world to others so that both their worldly and religious lives improve. A proof of one's sincerity to others is that they support them in their absence for example, from the slander of others. Turning away from others and only worrying about oneself is not the attitude of a muslim. In fact, this is how most animals behave. Even if one cannot change the whole society they can still be sincere in helping those in their life, such as their relatives and friends. Simply put, one must treat others how they desire people to treat them. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

“...And do good as Allah has done good to you...”

“[And Luqman said] And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] from people...Indeed, Allah does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

In a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that a person who possesses even an atom's worth of pride in their heart will not enter Paradise. He clarified that pride is when a person rejects the truth and looks down on others.

No amount of good deeds will benefit someone who possesses pride. This is quite obvious when one observes the Devil and how his countless years of worship did not benefit him when he became proud. In fact, the following verse clearly connects pride with disbelief so a muslim must avoid this evil characteristic at all costs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”

The proud is the one who rejects the truth when it is presented to them simply because it did not come from them and as it challenges their desires and mentality. The proud person also believes they are superior to others even though they are unaware of their own ultimate end and the ultimate

end of others. This is plain ignorance. In reality, it is foolish to be proud of anything seeing as Allah, the Exalted, created and granted everything a person owns. Even the righteous deeds one performs are only due to the inspiration, knowledge and strength granted by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud of something which does not innately belong to them is plain foolishness. This is just like a person who becomes proud over a mansion they do not even own or live in.

This is the reason why pride belongs to Allah, the Exalted, as He alone is the Creator and innate Owner of all things. The one who challenges Allah, the Exalted, in pride will be thrown into Hell. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

A muslim should instead follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and adopt humility. The humble truly recognise that all the good they possess and all the evil they are protected from comes from no one except Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, humility is more fitting for a person than pride. A person should not be fooled into believing humility leads to disgrace as no one has been more honoured than the humble servants of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has guaranteed an increase in status for the one who adopts humility for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2029.

“[And Luqman said]...and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

This verse does not criticise being happy in good situations or by extension, being sad in difficult situations. It instead criticises the extreme of these two emotions namely, exulting and despairing.

One thing which can help a person to avoid this extreme behaviour is by adopting a balanced state of mind. This is when one tries to control their emotions in such a way that they do not allow themselves to experience extreme emotional states as these often lead to stress and mental disorders. This has been indicated in chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 23, of the Holy Quran:

“In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you...”

Islam does not prohibit one from showing emotions as this is a part of being human. But it advises a balanced state of mind whereby one does not swing from one extreme emotion to another. Being sad in difficult situations is acceptable but one should not despair, which is extreme sadness, as this often leads to other mental disorders, such as depression. And being happy is acceptable but one should not become overly happy namely, exultant, as this can often lead to sins and regrets in both worlds. A muslim

should strive to obtain a balanced state of mind by remembering the countless blessings they still possess in times of difficulty which prevents extreme sadness namely, despair. And in times of ease they should remember that they will be held accountable for the thing that pleases them and if they misuse it or fail to fulfil the duties linked to it they may face punishment over it. This will prevent one from becoming overly happy namely, exultant.

A balanced state of mind is always best which prevents the negative effects of extreme moods. This will take a muslim closer to true peace of mind and the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and facing destiny with patience.

“[And Luqman said]...and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

This is often the behaviour of the one who shows off their deeds.

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3989, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that even slightly showing off is polytheism.

This is a minor type of polytheism which does not cause one to lose their faith. Instead it leads to the loss of reward as this muslim acted for the sake of pleasing people when they should have acted to please Allah, the Exalted. In fact, these people will be told on Judgment Day to seek their reward from those they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

If the Devil cannot prevent one from performing righteous deeds he will attempt to corrupt their intention thereby destroying their reward. If he cannot corrupt their intention in an obvious way he tries to corrupt it through subtle ways. This includes when people subtly show off their righteous deeds to others. Sometimes it is so subtle that the person themselves are not fully aware of what they are doing. As gaining and acting on knowledge is a duty on all, according to a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224,

claiming ignorance will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgment Day.

Subtly showing off often occurs through social media and one's speech. For example, a muslim might inform others they are fasting even though no one directly asked them if they were fasting. Another example is when one publically recites the Holy Quran from memory in front of others thereby showing others they have memorized the Holy Quran. Even criticizing oneself publically can be considered showing off one's humility to others.

To conclude, showing off subtly destroys a muslim's reward and must be avoided in order to safeguard their righteous deeds. This is only possible by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as how to safeguard one's speech.

“[And Luqman said]...and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, Allāh does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1999, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves beauty.

Islam does not prohibit a muslim from dedicating energy, time and money in beautifying themselves as this can be considered fulfilling the rights of their body. This has been commanded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5199. But the key thing which differentiates acting in this manner to acting in a disliked or even sinful manner is when one is excessive, wasteful or extravagant when beautifying themselves. A good way to determine this is that beautifying oneself should never cause one to neglect fulfilling one's duty to Allah, the Exalted, or people which is not possible to fulfill without gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge. And in reality correcting one's physical appearance so that they appear clean and smart is not expensive nor does it take much time or effort.

In addition, it is more important to understand that true beauty which Allah, the Exalted, loves is connected to internal beauty meaning, one's character. This beauty will endure in both worlds whereas one's outer beauty will eventually fade away with the passing of time. One should therefore prioritize obtaining this true beauty over external beauty by striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they eliminate any bad traits, such as envy, from their character and adopt good characteristics, such as generosity. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the

Exalted, by fulfilling His commands, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and will aid them in fulfilling the rights of people, such as their dependents.

Chapter 31 - Luqman, Verse 19

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَأَغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ



“[And Luqman said] And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”

“[And Luqman said] And be moderate in your pace...”

This could be referring to one's attitude when they decide to perform certain actions/tasks. Meaning, one should not be lazy or too hasty.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2012, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that thinking things through is from Allah, the Exalted, while being hasty is from the Devil.

This is an extremely important teaching to understand and act on as Muslims who perform much righteous deeds often destroy them through hastiness. For example, they may utter some evil words in a fit of rage which may cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The vast majority of sins and difficulties, such as arguments, occur because people fail to think things through and instead act in a hasty way. The sign of intelligence is when one thinks before speaking or acting and only proceeds when they know their speech or action is good and beneficial in worldly or religious matters.

Even though, a muslim should not delay in performing righteous deeds yet, they should still think things through before performing them. This is because a righteous deed may receive no reward simply because its conditions and etiquettes have not been fulfilled because of one's hastiness. In this respect, one should only move forward in any matter after they have thought things through.

The one who behaves in this manner will not only minimize their sins and increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, but they will minimize the difficulties they encounter, such as arguments and disagreements, in all aspects of their life.

“[And Luqman said] And be moderate in your pace [to acquire things]...”

In a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2142, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a muslim should be moderate when seeking worldly things as what is destined for them will surely reach them.

It is important to understand that Islam does not encourage muslims to completely abandon the material world as it is a bridge which connects one to the hereafter. How can one possibly reach the hereafter without crossing this bridge? Islam instead teaches muslims to take from this world in order to fulfill their necessities and the necessities of their dependents while avoiding excess, waste and extravagance and then dedicate their efforts in preparing for the hereafter by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience.

It is important to remember that the things one will obtain in this world, such as their provision, have already been apportioned to them over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. A muslim must understand that they will not be able to obtain more or less than this amount irrespective of their efforts. Therefore, they should strive to obtain what they need and avoid the unlawful and excess of this world as this may lead to punishment in both worlds.

“[And Luqman said]...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared that whoever is silent is saved.

This means the one who is silent from vain or evil speech and only speaks good words will be saved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is important to understand as the main reason people will enter Hell is because of their speech. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. In fact, it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day which has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

Speech can be of three types. The first is evil speech which should be avoided at all costs. The second is vain speech which only causes one to waste time which will lead to a great regret on Judgment Day. In addition, the first step of sinful speech is often vain speech. So it is safer to avoid this type of speech. The final type is good speech which should always be adopted. Based on these aspects two thirds of speech should be removed from one's life.

In addition, the one who speaks too much will only reflect on their actions and the hereafter a little as this requires silence. This will prevent one from assessing their deeds which inspires one to perform more

righteous deeds and sincerely repent from their sins. This person will then be prevented from changing for the better.

Finally, those who speak too much often discuss worldly things and things which are entertaining and fun. This will cause them to adopt a mentality whereby they dislike discussing or listening to serious issues like death and the hereafter. This will prevent them from preparing adequately for the hereafter which will lead to a great regret and a potential punishment.

All of this can be avoided if one simply remains silent from sinful and vain speech and instead only speaks good words. Therefore, the one who is silent in this way will be saved from trouble in this world and from punishment in the next world.

“[And Luqman said]...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2018, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned the types of people he dislikes and who will be furthest from him on Judgment Day.

The first type is the one who talks excessively. This is disliked as the one who talks excessively is much more likely to utter vain and useless words which may not be sinful but they often lead to sins. In addition, they only waste time which will be a great regret for the speaker on Judgment Day. And the one who excessively talks is more likely to commit sins. A muslim should remember that it only takes a single evil word to cause them to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314.

The next type of person mentioned in the main Hadith under discussion is the loud-mouthed who speaks excessively and artificially in order to boast and show-off through their speech. This person desires to show others how much knowledge they possess thereby attracting attention to themselves. This person will often intend to please people through their actions instead of Allah, the Exalted. This will result in them losing reward for their righteous actions. In fact, they will be told on Judgment Day to gain their reward from those who they acted for. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

“[And Luqman said]...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2016, the mother of the believers, the wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, described some of the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. She advised that he was neither obscene nor loud-mouthed.

First of all, all muslims must understand that it is a duty on them to adopt the noble characteristics of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...”

And Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often.”

A muslim must never act or speak in an obscene way as this is hated by Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 464. Behaving in this manner is the very essence of bad character. And as good character will be the heaviest thing in the scales of Judgment Day according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2003, one can predict the evil outcome of the one who reaches the Day of Judgment as an obscene person. In addition, the one who is obscene in speech is much more likely to enter Hell as it only takes a single obscene word to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgment Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. Put simply, true faith and obscenity can never gather in a single heart.

A muslim should not be loud-mouthed as this leads to the loss of respect from others especially, one's relatives. The loud-mouthed often comes across aggressive and can easily frighten others which contradicts the behavior of a true muslim. A muslim must be gentle and kind when conversing with others as this shows the true and peaceful nature of Islam.

“[And Luqman said]...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”

A person can often behave in this way when they lose control over their emotions.

In a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6116, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised a person not to get angry.

In reality, this Hadith does not mean a person should never get angry as anger is an innate characteristic which is even found in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. In fact, in some rare cases anger can be useful for example, in self-defence. This Hadith actually means that a person should control their anger so it does not lead them to sins. In addition, this Hadith shows that anger can lead to many evils and controlling it leads to much good.

Firstly, this advice is a command to adopt all the good characteristics which will encourage one to control their anger, such as patience. This Hadith also indicates that a person should not act according to their anger. Instead, they should struggle with themselves in order to control it so that it does not lead them to sins. Controlling anger for the sake of Allah, the

Exalted, is a great deed and leads to divine love. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 134:

“...who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good.”

There are many teachings within Islam which encourage muslims to control their anger. For example, as anger is linked to and inspired by the Devil a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282, advises that an angry person should seek refuge in Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil.

An angered Muslim has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2191, to cling to the ground. This could mean that they should prostrate on the Earth until they calm down. In fact, the more one takes an inactive body position the less chance they will lash out in anger. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. Acting on this advice allows one to imprison their anger within themselves until it passes so that it does not negatively affect others.

A Muslim who is angered should follow the advice given in the Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4784. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the angry muslim to perform ablution. This is because water counters the innate characteristic of anger namely,

heat. If one then offers prayer this would help them control their anger further and lead to a great reward.

The advice discussed so far helps an angry muslim to control their physical actions. In order to control one's speech it is best to refrain from speaking when angered. Unfortunately, words can often have more of a lasting effect on others than physical actions. Countless relationships have been fractured and broken because of words spoken in anger. This behaviour often leads to other sins and crimes as well. It is important for a muslim to note the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3970, which warns that it only takes a single evil word to cause a person to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day.

Controlling anger is a great virtue and the one who masters this has been described by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a strong person in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6114. In fact, the one who swallows their anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they do not commit a sin because of their anger, will have their heart filled with peace and true faith. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4778. This is a characteristic of the sound heart which is mentioned in the Holy Quran. It is the only heart which will be granted safety on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88 and 89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

As mentioned earlier, anger within limits can be useful. It should be used for repelling harm to one's self, faith and possessions which if done correctly, according to the teachings of Islam, is counted as anger for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This was the state of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was never angered for the sake of his own desires. He only became angry for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, which is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. The character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1739. This means he would be pleased with what it was pleased with and angered with what it was angered with.

It is important to note, that becoming angered only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, is praiseworthy but if this anger causes one to exceed the limits then it becomes blameworthy. It is absolutely vital for one to control their anger according to the teachings of Islam even when they are angered for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4901, warns of a worshipper who angrily claimed Allah, the Exalted, would not forgive a specific sinful person. As a result this worshipper will be sent to Hell while the sinner will be forgiven on Judgment Day.

The origins of evil consist of four things: failing to control one's desire, fear, evil appetites and anger. Therefore, the one who accepts the advice of this Hadith will remove a quarter of evil from their character and life.

To conclude, it is vital for muslims to control their anger so it does not cause them to act or speak in a way which will lead them to a great regret in both this world and the next.

“[And Luqman said]...and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”

This also warns against speaking to others in an intimidating manner.

In a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters.

This is an important characteristic which must be adopted by all muslims. It should be used in all aspects of one's life. It is important to understand that being gentle benefits the muslim themselves more than anyone else. Not only will they receive blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, and minimize the amount of sins they commit, as a gentle person is less likely to commit sins through their speech and actions, but it benefits them in worldly affairs also. For example, the person who treats their spouse gently will gain more love and respect in return than if they treated their spouse in a harsh manner. Children are more likely to obey and treat their parents with respect when they are treated gently. Colleagues at work are more likely to help the one who is gentle with them. The examples are endless. Only in very rare cases is a harsh attitude required. In most cases, gentle behaviour will be much more effective than a harsh attitude.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, possesses countless good qualities yet, Allah, the exalted, specifically highlighted his gentleness in the Holy Quran as it is a key ingredient

required to affect others in a positive way. Chapter 3 Al Imran, verse 159:

“So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you...”

A muslim must remember that they will never be better than a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, nor will the person they interact with be worse than Pharaoh yet, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Mosa and the Holy Prophet Haroon, peace be upon them, to deal with Pharaoh in a kind manner. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 44:

“And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah].”

Therefore, a muslim should adopt gentleness in all affairs as it leads to much reward and affects others, such as one's family, in a positive way.

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